



# Carterton Community College

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 123236  
**Local Authority** Oxfordshire  
**Inspection number** 292620  
**Inspection dates** 18–19 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Peter Sanderson HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Other secondary	<b>School address</b>	Upavon Way
<b>School category</b>	Community		Carterton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		OX18 1BU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01993 841611
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	743	<b>Fax number</b>	01993 843710
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mick Sullivan
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julie Tridgell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–16	18–19 October 2006	292620

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Carterton Community College is a smaller than average comprehensive school. Most students are of White British background. Very few speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is below that found in most schools. Over one third of students are from Royal Air Force families and this causes a greater movement of students in and out of the college than that seen in most schools. By the end of Year 11 as many as twenty percent of the year group may have joined the school after the start of Year 7. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is similar to the national average. The school has a small education support base for students identified as requiring special provision for their learning difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Carterton Community College provides students with a good education. The headteacher leads the college very well and has the support of staff, parents and governors. She has been instrumental in driving up standards. Since her appointment there has been an increased focus on monitoring and self evaluation. This has enabled her to clearly identify the college's strengths and weaknesses. With the good support of other senior leaders, effective systems for monitoring teaching, using assessment information to set students targets and track their progress have been introduced. This, combined with effective staff training linked to performance management is having an impact on raising standards

Standards at the end of Year 9 have been rising at a rate faster than that seen nationally in recent years and are now above the national average. Year 11 examinations results improved significantly in 2006 and standards are now above the national average. All students make good progress in their learning during their time at the college. This good progress is supported by a curriculum that generally meets the needs and interests of all students. However, the college recognises the need to extend the range of vocational courses it offers.

The overall quality of teaching is good although there is variation between subjects leading to variation in student achievement. Most teaching is good but in some lessons the teaching activities do not fully capture students' interest or provide sufficient challenge for all and so only satisfactory progress is made. Effective use of attainment information ensures that most students are aware of their targets, how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across the school.

Students' personal development and well being are good. They behave well and there are good relationships with teachers. Students enjoy their time at college and attendance is above the national average. As one parent said 'My son really enjoys Carterton Community College, he is always keen to go and enjoys his studies'. Students have a good appreciation of the importance of keeping healthy. Many actively participate in the range of out of college hours sporting activities and the student healthy eating committee has been involved in the development of the new lunchtime catering arrangements. Students also welcome the opportunity to be involved in the active college council. Students are well cared for and they feel safe in the college.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure every lesson challenges all students and contains interesting and engaging activities.
- Ensure all teachers make full and effective use of attainment information to improve student's learning
- Further develop the range of vocational courses offered by the college.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above the national average and achievement is good. Attainment on entry to the college is similar to the national average. Standards at the end of Year 9 have been improving at a faster rate than that seen nationally in recent years. Students now make good progress during their first three years at the college achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 9. There was a dip in the English Year 9 test results in 2006 caused by a fall in reading performance but the college is taking effective action to address this issue.

There was a significant improvement in Year 11 examination results in 2006 which were above the national average. This followed two years when standards at the end of Year 11 were below average. The college has taken effective action to reduce the variation in student achievement between different subjects in recent years although some variation still remains. For example the Year 11 examination results in 2006 indicate that students made very good progress in English, art and geography but less than expected progress in modern languages and history. The college's recently introduced tracking system shows that this variation between subjects is being reduced. The progress made by all groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, between Years 7 to 11 is good.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students have good opportunities for personal development. They are at ease and confident with other young people and adults. Good teaching and their involvement in assessment and target setting ensure that they fully engage in learning and are keen to do well. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the college. Moral, social and cultural development is good as a result of their college experiences. Students value the spiritual development that arises, for example, from memorable experiences on residential visits and some have an uplifting sense of personal worth when effort is recognized by awards. However, spiritual development is satisfactory because it is rarely emphasized as a significant element in college life and a lead is not taken by teachers when opportunities for reflection arise.

The status and strong organization of the college council allows students to exchange views maturely and to take appropriate control and responsibility for their college life. Older students help younger ones, for example, through their role as prefects and mediators. Students enjoy and value their time at college and attendance is above average.

Students know a lot about being healthy and staying safe as a result of an extensive scheme of lessons devised by the college. They feel safe from bullying because of a wide range of support and prevention strategies. Preparation for economic well-being and contributing to their community is secured by their positive college experiences.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good although there is variation between subjects. Lessons are generally well planned and expectations are high. Teachers share the lesson intentions with students and clearly explain what is expected of them during the lesson. In most lessons interesting activities are used to engage students, there is a high pace of learning and consequently they make good progress. However, in some lessons planned activities do not fully engage students or challenge them sufficiently and learning is only satisfactory. Teachers review effectively students' understanding of their learning at the end of lessons and this enables them to gauge what skills they should introduce them to in following lessons. The quality of teaching across the college is being further improved by a structured mentoring programme and links with neighbouring specialist schools.

The college uses attainment information well to set targets for all students in all subjects. Students are generally aware of these targets and what they need to do to achieve them. In many lessons teachers clearly explain to students what they need to learn or be able to do in order to improve their performance. Reference is often made to national curriculum levels or examination grades. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across the whole school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The college provides a good curriculum that generally meets the needs and interests of all its students. A good range of academic courses is offered to students in Years 10 and 11. An alternative curriculum has also been developed for a small number of students for whom academic courses are not appropriate. For the first time this year all Year 10 students are following a half GCSE course in physical education with the opportunity of gaining a full award through a series of seminar days. The college is also part of a consortium developing specialist diplomas and is intending to lead on the development of engineering courses. The college is aware of the need to further extend the range of vocational courses on offer to all students.

The college provides a range of extra curricular activities, especially in sport and offers residential trips and subject specific visits which is complementary to the work done in lessons.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Students benefit from good care, guidance and support. Year heads work closely with senior management to monitor and improve the quality of students' experiences in college, in tutor times and in lessons. The progress of students towards their targets

is monitored closely so that signs of underachievement trigger support and mentoring. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported. Information about strategies that should be used to address their needs are clearly communicated to teachers. This enables them to make good progress. Special programmes for a few students with behaviour difficulties keeps them engaged with education, whilst protecting others from disruptive behaviour. The college scrupulously follows required procedures to check all staff in order to safeguard students. Child protection procedures are clear and carefully maintained. Appropriate personal education plans are in place to support children in care. Good communications with parents enable them to be partners in children's learning. Links with outside support agencies are well managed, including links with RAF support networks.

Good careers guidance and work experience programmes assist students with their future choices.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the college very well. She is providing a clear sense of direction that is focussed on improving teaching, raising achievement, and promoting the importance of success for all students. The newly restructured senior leadership team provides good support and similarly shares this sense of purpose.

The college's systems for self-evaluation are good and strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified. Key priorities for improvement have been identified and addressed through a clear and well written improvement plan. Recently introduced systems for monitoring teaching and tracking student progress are beginning to have a positive impact on improving student achievement. The recent rise in Year 11 examination results is evidence of this impact and demonstrates that the college has good capacity for further improvement.

The overall quality of middle management is good, however, there is variability in effectiveness across the college. This is evident in the differences in the rigour with which heads of department monitor and evaluate teaching and student progress in their subjects. The college has recently re-organised its middle management structure and this, combined with effective training, is beginning to ensure greater consistency of good practice.

The governors know the college well and provide challenge as well as support for the college leadership team. Efficient use is made of resources and financial systems are now secure following a period of significant overspend.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much to all of you who spoke to us and answered our questions during the recent inspection of your college. We very much appreciate the help that you gave us. Now that we have finished the inspection I am writing to tell you of our findings.

We thought your college provides you with a good education. You are taught well and you are making good progress in your learning. Year 11 students did very well in their GCSE examinations last summer and we think that you will do equally well, if not better when you are in Year 11. Your headteacher leads the school very well. She wants the very best for all of you and she is well supported by other senior teachers in the school.

Many of you spoke positively about the college and told us you are enjoying your time there. We thought you behaved well around the college and many of you are willing to get actively involved in lessons. Your teachers take good care of you and ensure that you feel safe. We were impressed with the active college council and the involvement you have had through the healthy eating committee in developing the new catering arrangements.

Although your college is good it could become even better and so we have identified three areas we would like it to improve. Many of your lessons are pitched at the right level for you and contain activities that are interesting and enjoyable. However, this is not always the case and so we have asked the college to ensure that all your lessons are as good as the best. Most, but not all of you know your targets, how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve. We have asked the college to ensure that all of you know this information. Finally we have asked the college to extend the range of vocational courses available to you in Years 10 and 11.

Thank you again and I wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sanderson

Her Majesty's Inspector