

Uppingham Community College

London Road, Uppingham, Oakham, LE15 9TJ

Inspection dates 05 – 06 June 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. They make good progress overall to reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 11.
- Achievement in mathematics is improving well and students are now making particularly good progress in this subject.
- The school is successfully closing the gap in achievement between students eligible for support through the pupil premium and their classmates.
- Teaching is good overall with some outstanding practice. There is a positive climate for learning across the school and lessons are often planned so that there is a clear structure to students' learning.
- When teachers set challenging work that encourages students to develop their thinking skills, students make very rapid progress.
- Students' behaviour is excellent. They enjoy school greatly and have an appetite for learning. Their mature and thoughtful behaviour is evident both in lessons and at break times.
- Leaders, managers and the governing body work well together to drive improvements across the school. Leaders in charge of subjects are fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders set clear targets for teachers to help improve their practice in the classroom and provide good quality training for staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough. At times, work is not set at the right level of difficulty, particularly for the most able students, and teachers do not always check students' understanding during lessons.
- There is too much variation in the quality of marking. As a result, students are not always sure about how to improve their work.
- Systems for checking on the impact of the training provided for teachers are not fully developed. A minority of staff do not adopt the best practice recommended by leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 37 lessons taught by 37 teachers. Six of these observations were carried out jointly with members of the school’s leadership team. Inspectors also carried out some shorter visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of students and eight members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 67 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Responses to questionnaires completed by 58 staff were also analysed and considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including national published assessment data and the school’s own data, the school’s self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies, behaviour policies, and records and documents relating to setting targets for teachers to improve their work.
- At the time of the inspection, Year 11 students were either on study leave or taking part in examinations and were therefore not observed in lessons.

Inspection team

Julie Price Grimshaw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Hazel Pulley	Additional Inspector
Robert McDonough	Additional Inspector
Renee Robinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Uppingham Community College is slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The great majority of students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The school converted to become an academy school in April 2011. When its predecessor school, also known as Uppingham Community College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school is designated as a Specialist Technology Academy.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional support for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services. The majority of students in the school entitled to this support are from service families.
- At present, the school does not receive funding through the Year 7 'catch-up' premium.
- A few students in Years 10 and 11 attend alternative provision. These are a motor vehicle course at 'Lunar Racing' in Rockingham, and courses such as construction at Tresham College of Further and Higher Education.
- The school works in conjunction with its feeder primary schools as part of the 'Midshires Partnership'.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, so that all students make rapid progress, by making sure that
 - the work set is at the right level of difficulty for students and encourages them to develop their thinking skills
 - teachers check students' understanding throughout lessons
 - all marking and feedback give clear guidance to students on how to improve their work.
- Develop systems for checking on the impact of training provided by the school, so that all staff adopt best practice in their teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When students join their school, their attainment is generally above average. They make good progress across the school and achieve well. Over the past few years, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been above the national average.
- The school's information on students' progress shows that the current Year 11 students are on track to reach above average standards. Progress in all year groups and in different subjects is good.
- Achievement in mathematics has risen over the past few years. Examination results in 2012 showed a substantial improvement on the previous year. The proportion of students gaining the highest grades (A* and A) was significantly above average in mathematics, as well as in biology, chemistry, modern languages and geography.
- Achievement in English dipped in 2012 but is now improving. Students have good literacy skills and apply these well across a range of subjects.
- All groups of students achieve well. The school has worked successfully to close the gap in attainment between those eligible for the pupil premium and that of other students. Students known to be eligible for free school meals achieve approximately half a grade lower in English and two thirds of a grade lower in mathematics than other students at GCSE. This represents a good improvement on previous years.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well, regardless of their starting points or the nature of their needs. The school keeps a check on their progress and makes sure that they have all the support they need in order to succeed.
- Those students who attend alternative provision achieve well. Over recent years, all of these students have passed their courses.
- The school has a policy of entering students early for examinations where there is secure evidence that they will benefit from this. No students are disadvantaged by this policy and all have the opportunity to gain the highest grades they can in their examinations. This reflects the school's good promotion of equality of opportunity.
- When students, particularly the most able, are given work that challenges and motivates them, they make extremely rapid progress. However, there is not yet enough of this excellent practice in teaching across the school to ensure that students' overall achievement is outstanding.

The quality of teaching is good

- There is a positive climate for learning across the school. Relationships between teachers and students are consistently good.
- Teachers generally plan lessons that provide a clear structure for students' learning, based on what they already know and can do. Students know what is expected of them and make good progress as a result. Teaching supports the development of students' literacy skills effectively in

most subjects.

- Teachers use resources well to support students' learning. There is good use of information and communication technology in some lessons to enhance teaching and learning, particularly in the school's specialist area of design and technology.
- There is good use of questioning in many lessons to extend students' learning and check their understanding. Where practice is most effective, teachers tailor questions for individual students and then involve others in discussions arising from the answers. This good practice is not yet widespread across the school.
- Where teaching is best, for example, in many mathematics lessons, staff plan interesting and challenging activities that fascinate and motivate students, encouraging them to find out things for themselves and develop their thinking skills. Consequently, they are totally engaged in their learning, ever-keen to find out more and more, and this leads to very rapid progress. However, when the work set is too easy or too hard, students' progress slows.
- In an outstanding mathematics lesson observed during the inspection, students took a major role in leading the learning, explaining to their classmates how they had tackled various mathematical problems. As a result, all students in the group made outstanding progress. In contrast, a few lessons in other subjects were dominated by 'teacher talk' and students did not have enough opportunities to find things out for themselves. This limited their learning.
- A minority of teachers do not check students' learning often or thoroughly enough during lessons. Sometimes students are asked to assess their own understanding simply by putting up their hand if they feel they do, or do not, understand the work without the teacher checking on the accuracy of this. This means that, at times, teachers move on to new tasks too soon, or give out more of the same sort of work to students when they are actually ready to move on.
- Leaders have worked to encourage best practice in marking and feedback, but nevertheless there are inconsistencies in the quality of feedback given by teachers. Students appreciate clear guidance on how to improve their work, but at times teachers' comments are too brief and lack detail. A small minority of teachers do not mark students' work regularly enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is impeccable. They are mature, thoughtful and considerate towards each other at all times and their conduct, even when unsupervised by adults at break times, is excellent.
 - Politeness and courtesy are the norm in this school. Students are exceptionally well-mannered and treat all adults with respect. There have been very few exclusions over recent years.
 - Students' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They respond extremely well when given opportunities to find things out for themselves, both individually and in groups. When teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are very high, students rise to the challenge and make rapid progress.
 - Students have a very clear awareness of the different forms of bullying. They do not feel that bullying is an issue at the school but have total confidence in the school's procedures for dealing with any such incidents should they occur. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay
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safe, including when using the internet.

- Attendance is above average and students arrive at school, and at their lessons, on time.
- Behaviour is well-managed by all staff and the students appreciate the school's systems for rewarding excellent behaviour. This is a very caring and nurturing school where staff are committed to helping students overcome any barriers to learning that may exist.
- All of those who responded to the Parent View questionnaire were unanimous in their view that their children were happy and safe at the school. This is reflected in the views of the students themselves, who clearly take pride in their school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher effectively leads a committed team of leaders who show strong determination to bring about improvements. Leaders in charge of subjects are given a very active role in checking the quality of teaching and learning within their departments. They have regular meetings with senior leaders to discuss their ongoing work which helps to inform the school's view on the overall quality of its work.
 - There is a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching across the school. Good systems have been established for managing teachers' performance. The targets set to help improve their practice are clear and specific, and are linked securely to students' achievement. This helps leaders to make decisions about teachers' pay progression so that high quality teaching can be rewarded.
 - Leaders provide training sessions using high-quality resources and communicate expectations clearly to staff. However, the systems for checking that this training is having an impact on teachers' practice are not fully developed. There is not enough focus on making sure that all teachers are taking on board the school's guidance on best practice. For example, in spite of the fact that staff had been given good advice on the best use of questioning in the classroom, a minority did not act on this, missing opportunities to extend students' learning and check understanding.
 - There is a good range of subjects and activities that appeal to students' interests. Together with high quality careers advice and guidance, this provides a firm foundation for life after school. There is much emphasis on the school's specialism in technology, with all students studying at least one area of technology at Key Stage 4. Students benefit from the opportunity to follow vocational courses at other providers.
 - Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, especially through the arts.
 - The school benefits from the input of an external consultant who helps to identify priorities to help move the school forward.
 - The school's work with its feeder primaries within the Midshires Partnership is having a positive impact on students' transition to secondary education. New students in Year 7 are able to settle very quickly and immediately focus on learning and making progress.
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■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are extremely committed to the school and have a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They have a secure knowledge of national data on students' achievement and explore issues about the school's results through conversations with senior leaders. Governors are frequent visitors to the school, with each being linked to a particular subject area. They hold discussions with subject leaders, focusing on students' progress.
 - The governing body is very familiar with the school's systems for managing staff performance and members understand the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching. They take an active interest in these procedures and make sure that pay awards are not given unless deserved. They manage the school budget well and are aware of how the pupil premium is being spent, as well as its impact on achievement of those eligible students. Governors make sure that all statutory requirements are met, including those related to safeguarding.
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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	136629
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	411935

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	848
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Thompson
Headteacher	Jan Turner
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01572 823631
Fax number	01572 821193
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