

Catmose College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136530
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	382066
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2012
Lead inspector	Trevor Riddiough HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	815
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Curtis
Headteacher	Stuart Williams
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2008
School address	Huntsmans Drive Oakham LE15 6RP
Telephone number	01572 770066
Fax number	01572 770066
Email address	office@catmosecollege.com

Registered childcare provision	Puffins Day Nursery
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	28
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	19–20 November 2008



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Introduction

Inspection team

Trevor Riddiough

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jill Smith

Additional inspector

Keith Selby Thomas

Additional inspector

Clifford Walker

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed 31 lessons taught by 29 teachers, of which six were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. They also sat in on two tutor groups and one assembly. Inspectors carried out brief visits to a series of other lessons and held meetings with senior leaders and other staff, groups of students, and members of the governing body. They observed the college's work and looked at the tracking of students' progress, performance data, students' work, whole-college and subject development plans, numerous policies, college documents, incident logs, and case studies. Provision at the Puffins Nursery was also visited. Completed questionnaires from 192 parents and carers, 142 students and 46 staff were received and analysed.

Information about the school

This college is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most students are from White British backgrounds, and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is very low. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is broadly average. More students have statements of special educational needs than average. The college holds specialist visual arts status. The college offers full day care for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It also provides specialist provision for 25 students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly with moderate learning difficulties, as well as educational and recreational opportunities for adult learners. The college is a member of a soft federation with a local primary school. The college meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Catmose College is an outstanding school led by an inspirational and visionary Principal, with strong and effective leadership and management at all levels, including the governing body. This is a highly successful school that is relentless in its quest to improve further.
- The very strong ambition of its leaders is shared so that all staff who responded to the survey said they are proud to be a member of the college and they know what it is trying to achieve.
- Achievement has risen steadily so that results at the end of Key Stage 4 are well above average.
- Teaching is outstanding. Almost all lessons are good with just under half outstanding. Teachers consistently expect all students to be challenged and give their best. Because of excellent relationships, students show confidence in responding to this challenge. Lessons are well paced, relevant and enjoyable, providing many opportunities for extending the learning. Staff use modern technologies well to support their teaching and students also have good opportunities to use these in lessons.
- Learning is also aided by the students' outstanding behaviour and the maturity students show in terms of staying safe and helping one another in their work. The college values all individuals and nurtures their unique talents. As a result, students develop into mature and thoughtful citizens, able to cope effectively with challenges.
- Provision for students in the specialist provision is highly effective in supporting students' progress through a fully inclusive and integrated approach to its work.
- Provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. These lay secure foundations for their personal development.
- Intelligent management systems, a track record of improvement and relentless belief in the potential of every individual mean that the college has outstanding capacity to improve. The college's commitment to inclusion is therefore strong, and all aspects of the college's work are subject to rigorous, ongoing evaluation, so that the college's motto, 'equal value, outstanding progress,' is a reality here.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share the excellent practice in teaching more widely across the college to increase the proportion that is outstanding.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensure that planning is more effectively focused on next steps in children's learning and progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students start at the college with levels of attainment that are generally just above average. They progress exceptionally well and, by the end of Year 11, attainment is high in most subjects, with only slight variations year by year. The college has established a track record for enabling its students to attain consistently well above national average standards in GCSE examinations. Even more students are on track to achieve these high results again this year, than previously. Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive well-targeted support based on early diagnosis of need and, as a result, they too make exceptional progress. There are few differences in the achievement of different groups of students in the college and where gaps do occur robust action is taken to close them. This has happened in science.

In the specialist provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs, students achieve exceptionally well. They mature into confident young people who work hard and thoroughly enjoy their time at college. These students are provided with frequent opportunities to work independently and make their own choices. For example, in an English lesson students composed slogans and drew story boards when preparing a radio advertisement to promote a new product of their invention.

Inspectors observed good or outstanding progress in almost all the lessons they observed. In discussions, students speak knowledgeably about their work and describe their next steps to improve it. Students' attitudes to learning and their ability to apply themselves in lessons are excellent. For example, in a science lesson, students worked hard and supported each other productively in small groups to develop their fine skills in practical chemistry. In a French lesson students engaged in a debate persuasively, using a range of tenses. Activities are generally well planned and students have regular opportunities to discuss, reflect and extend their learning. Consequently they make rapid progress. Parents and carers reflect these views in their feedback where the large majority feels that their child makes good progress at the college.

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Quality of teaching

Teachers' planning, students' highly positive attitudes to their learning, constructive relationships and consistently high expectations ensure that virtually all students make rapid and sustained progress. Teachers plan a good range of activities that sustain students' interest and develop higher-order learning skills. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace that challenge learners, yet allow time for deeper thinking and reflection. Skilful use of questioning assesses the learning and extends it further. High expectations promote good development of the students' ability to work independently. Students appreciate that teachers are there to support them and are not afraid to seek help. Questionnaires from parents and carers indicate that the vast majority believe that their child is well taught in this school.

Features of the best practice include a drama lesson where younger students display real ability to appraise their classmates' efforts or an English lesson where the subject leader and a less experienced colleague team-teach to a double group. Assessment of students' learning is understood by senior leaders as a critical element to promote student progress. This has been successfully developed by subject leaders and incorporated into class teaching. This highly effective assessment practice ensures that students' progress is effectively tracked and maintained. The development of communication in literacy skills is strong and, under the direction of the subject leader for English, all curriculum areas promote this aspect successfully.

The planned curriculum makes a positive impact on learning. The range of qualifications, options and enrichment opportunities on offer respond very well to the needs and interests of students. These contribute to the positive attitudes of the students and to their engagement in lessons. This is typified by one student who commented, 'We all like Wednesdays because it's electives day!' Teaching promotes students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development well. For example, in a Year 8 history lesson on the English Civil War, students were given the opportunity to reflect on the strength of propaganda posters for and against the Cavaliers and their moral purpose. The arts specialism has emphasised a common approach to develop creative thinkers in all aspects of the curriculum.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students behave very well in and around the college, reflecting their courtesy and maturity. They are welcoming, confident and comfortable with their teachers, visitors and other adults. Students contribute positively to the orderly and caring community and show respect for the inclusive ethos of the college. They were very keen to point out that they are trusted to behave as adults and appreciate the benefits of doing so. They enjoy open access to the college's facilities at all times and their teachers are always available. Disabled students and those with special educational needs participate in all aspects of college life and achieve exceptionally well because of this. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary and contributes to highly effective learning. Some students, and their parents and carers, say that in a small number of lessons students behave poorly and this affects their learning. The college is tracking

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incidents of poor behaviour and has a comprehensive picture of this to tackle it with a range of rewards, sanctions and teaching which engages students. This is managed well and there are clear procedures which staff and students follow resulting in the very high standards that are set for behaviour being maintained consistently.

Students feel listened to and their attitudes towards bullying are commendable. Students have a very clear awareness of what constitutes different types of bullying and were surprised when asked if there was much bullying in the college. They have an open, mature acceptance that bullying might happen and are secure in their knowledge of how to deal with it. Parents and carers all say that students feel very safe in college and students confirm this in their questionnaire responses, as well as in their comments to inspectors. A major factor here is the students' adept management of their own behaviour in the classroom and in social situations. Students are punctual to college; their overall attendance is above average and has improved steadily over time.

Leadership and management

The Principal, senior team and governing body members maintain a critical eye on the day-to-day work of the college while securing its future success. The college's transformation plan is fundamental to this long term success and provides a thorough overview of how well the college is doing in every area of its operation and crucially identifies those that it will focus on next. The move to its new premises in 2011 was managed exceedingly well with no discernable detriment to students' achievement. The formation of the federation with a local primary school gives both schools access to a range of expert staff and resources. These developments have enhanced the college's popularity and standing in the local community such that it is oversubscribed. This is reflected in the very positive responses from the vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire. One such parent commented: 'as a new parent at the college we have been impressed with the standard of teaching and learning, the commitment of the staff, and the range of extra-curricular activities. We are also impressed with the pastoral care.'

Central to the success of the college has been the establishment of ambitious target setting, linked to detailed tracking of students' progress. This leads to effective interventions for all identified individuals and groups so that all students are supported to achieve extremely well. Consequently, the college is highly effective in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. The oversight of the tracking data, its analysis and its use to improve learning is the responsibility of both senior staff and team leaders. This means it is easy for leaders to gain a full overview, and for teachers to use this information to plan highly effective lessons.

The Principal and his leadership team encourage staff and students to put forward ideas and take risks by trying out new and innovative strategies for learning. This is exemplified by a comment made by a newly qualified teacher while reflecting and being self-critical of her lesson which was outstanding: 'I took a risk. It didn't work

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as well as I thought, but it will be better next time.’ Sharing this good practice, the college peer coaching system and paired observations have contributed to the overall improvement of the quality of teaching and learning. The college acknowledges that there is still some work to be done to ensure that even more lessons taught are outstanding. In those subject areas that have required improvement, bespoke support is given and this has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching. This has promoted a strongly positive morale and a sense of pride for all who work in the college.

The specialist provision is exceptionally well led and assessment information is used fully to ensure the curriculum and qualifications available are relevant and engaging. The college provides extensive provision for social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. This is reflected in and out of lessons equally. There is a strong sense of a cohesive and caring society which recognises its responsibility to those in the college and the wider communities. Assemblies, tutor groups and all other interaction promote the benefits of reflection and understanding.

The curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to students’ learning. Its breadth ensures that the needs of all students are met and its construction, a balance of the more formal element, vocational courses and the ‘electives’ programmes ensure that the ethos of the college is fully reflected in its offer. With an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and academic support programmes it provides a range of memorable activities including visual and performing arts, overseas trips and college community programmes. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and robust, with good attention given to child protection issues.

The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides full day care provision for 28 children aged 0-5 years in a safe and engaging environment. Secure routines, good and trusting relationships and high-quality care ensure children settle and flourish. Teaching is good and children progress well, with provision for personal, social and emotional development particularly effective. Children’s behaviour is outstanding. Those who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well so they progress in line with their peers. Social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is highly effective. For example, children made a dragon and tasted Chinese food to celebrate Chinese New Year and the Year of the Dragon.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well-managed. It is in the early stages of developing its relationship with the federated primary school. Staff are skilled, well qualified and deployed effectively. The exciting environment and range and quality of resources encourage children to engage in investigative, problem-solving and creative activities. There is a positive balance of activities led by adults and those initiated by children themselves across all areas of learning.

Although detailed, improvement plans, evaluations and day-to-day planning do not always focus clearly on next steps in children’s learning and progress. Assessment is thorough and involves parents and carers. Partnerships with parents and carers are good and the nursery keeps them well-informed on a daily basis. Parents’ comments such as, ‘Staff seem genuinely to care’, ‘This is a good place’ and, ‘He loves coming’ reflect their positive views.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	2

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



3 February 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Catmose College, Oakham LE15 6RP

Firstly, thank you for the warm welcome you gave us during the inspection. We found it very helpful to talk with you, look at your work and visit your lessons. You helped us to understand what it is really like to be a student at your college. We were particularly pleased to see you enjoying being in your new premises and making the most of the excellent facilities now available to you. We also enjoyed visiting the nursery provision at 'Puffins' to see the younger children at work.

We found that your college provides you with an outstanding education. Results at GCSE level are consistently well above average. You told us that you really enjoy coming to college and that you feel very safe. There are excellent relationships between yourselves and your teachers. You are well supported by your teachers, both academically in your lessons and personally so that you are well prepared for the next stage of your lives. Your behaviour in classes and towards each other is exemplary. The curriculum provides you with some interesting courses and the 'electives' programmes provide you with some challenging activities and memorable experiences. You take on a wide range of activities, including opportunities to show leadership skills and help younger students.

In the nursery, children make good progress and develop good personal skills that will really help them when they start school.

Your college is extremely well led by your Principal and his team of leaders who are determined to ensure that it provides the best for every one of you. Even outstanding schools have areas to work on. I have therefore asked your Principal and senior staff to work on helping you to enhance your learning by making sure that all of your lessons are of the very highest quality. We have asked staff at the nursery to plan more for children's progress. By maintaining the very high standards set by the college you can help your teachers secure the further improvements we have requested.

You can be proud to attend an outstanding college where everyone wants the best for you. I wish you all success in the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Catmose College.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector

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