

# Minsthorpe Community College

Minsthorpe Lane, South Elmsall, West Yorkshire, WF9 2UJ

**Inspection dates** 4–5 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Standards reached by students are rising quickly. The proportion who gained five A\* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics reached 70% in 2013 (10% above the national average). Students, given their starting points, achieve well in English, mathematics and across a wide range of other subjects.
- Teaching is good. Students are effectively challenged and engaged in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Students are proud of their college, dress smartly and generally work hard. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Students are sensitive to each other's needs and support one another well.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Almost all students who leave the college progress to further education, employment or training. The numbers going to university have risen year-on-year and almost all students who do are the first individuals from their family to go onto higher education.
- The college leadership is driving forward well-thought-out strategies to improve teaching and students' achievement. Leaders and managers are passionate about being true to their motto, 'No child left behind'.
- Governors are proud of the college's place in the community and determined to ensure that the quality of teaching improves further to support better student achievement. They have the skills to challenge and support the college leadership.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is still a small amount of teaching that requires improvement and not enough is outstanding.
- The college's development plans are not clear enough to accurately measure how successful any actions taken have been.
- Students' literacy is not improving effectively in all subjects and opportunities to develop numeracy are underdeveloped. Students' speaking skills are not as strong as they could be.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 part lessons involving 44 teachers. Eight of these were joint observations with six different senior and middle leaders. An assembly and two registration periods were also observed.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and vice-chair and another three members of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders, staff and various groups of students.
- Inspectors looked closely at a range of college documents, including information about teachers' performance and minutes of meetings. They examined college and departmental plans, as well as records of observations of the quality of teaching and progress of students.
- Inspectors analysed 40 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and considered the analysis of surveys recently carried out by the college.

## Inspection team

Pankaj Gulab, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter Bailey	Additional Inspector
Janet Pruchniewicz	Additional Inspector
Anthony Nicholson	Additional Inspector
Lyn Field	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This college is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children looked after by the local authority, from forces families and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is above the national average.
- The percentage of students for whom English is an additional language is much lower than the national average, as is the figure for students from minority ethnic families.
- The proportion of special educational needs students supported through school action is high compared to the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- The college uses alternative provision for a number of students at the following institutions:
  - Wakefield College, The Hub, Elite Training, SESKU Centre, Engage Training, The Rural Unit
  - Wakefield TA Centre, Tackling Tempers, Reverse the Cycle, Bentley Training Centre and The Able Project.
- Minsthorpe Community College has four community elements: adult education; Happy Days Children's Centre; a sports and fitness centre and a training and conference centre.
- Minsthorpe leads the Three Counties Alliance School Centred Initial Teacher Training partnership.
- The college collaborates with Hemsworth Arts Community Academy for some of its sixth-form provision.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by improving the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding and none requires improvement by:
  - encouraging teachers to find different interesting ways to engage students so that they are more eager to learn
  - providing opportunities for students to improve their speaking skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
  - ensuring that the programme for literacy is consistently implemented across all subjects and the college's numeracy strategy is developed further.
  - ensure that the plans the college makes for improvement clearly measure the success of the actions taken.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The 2013 group of Year 11 students arrived in the college with significantly below average standards in English and mathematics. By the time they reached the end of Year 11, these students achieved broadly average standards, slightly above in English and just below in mathematics. The proportion of students who secured five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics rose 20 percentage points in the last year to 70%, 10% above the national average. The progress of the current Year 11 students as seen in their work and supported by college data suggests that these standards will be just as good at the end of this academic year.
- In English, the proportion making at least expected progress is well above average. The proportion making more than expected progress is close to the national picture. In mathematics, the number of pupils making expected progress is about average, but the number making more than expected progress is below that found nationally. Progress seen in books and lessons as well as the college tracking show these proportions in mathematics will rise to above the national figures at the end of this year.
- The achievement students supported by the pupil premium has risen year-on-year and the gap between them and their fellow students is closing quickly. In 2013 students who were known to be entitled to free school meals were about a grade behind their peers in both English and mathematics examinations but this gap was considerably narrower than the year before. The information provided by the college suggests that the gap will continue to close rapidly for the current and future cohorts of students, and this view is supported by inspection evidence.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is good in many subjects. The support they receive in classrooms and through small-group tutoring is effective.
- Students with weaker literacy are effectively supported in English but less so in other subjects where the literacy development is not as effective. The numeracy policy has yet to be implemented across the curriculum. Additional money provided to support students lagging behind in literacy skills is used to provide one-to-one support for students. This is having a positive impact on their reading skills. Arrangements to support students reading widely and more often are very successful in Year 7 and 8 but less so for older students.
- A number of students, whose learning needs are judged by the college to be best served by alternative education, are placed with various organisations that specialise in supporting students with specific interests. Their progress is well monitored and arrangements are in place to ensure they are safe and succeed. Students in these placements are gaining appropriate qualifications to help them with their futures.
- The performance of the most able students improved in the 2013 GCSE examinations, with more students securing A\* to A grades than in previous years; however, this proportion remains below that found nationally and is an area for improvement. Specific strategies to support the most able are becoming effective, with more students on target to secure these grades.
- The college is selective in the way it operates its early entry policy, only putting forward students who are ready to take their examination. The effectiveness of this policy is demonstrated by the high numbers who have secured their target grade in English in exams taken early. This careful focusing on students' progress is indicative of the college's strength in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- Overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. The college operates an open entry sixth-form policy providing appropriate opportunities for students to continue their studies regardless of the grades they have secured at the end of Year 11. The curriculum offer is designed to offer both academic and vocational courses at every level. Over half of the students in the college sixth form study vocational courses and achieve well. The progress of those on academic courses is less strong in particular subjects. This is being addressed by the leaders in the sixth form through closer monitoring and effective support. Strong success is recorded in almost all the vocational courses. The majority of students who stay on to Year 13 progress to university or further education.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teachers use the student class information file effectively to plan their lessons. The file clearly identifies individuals and groups that may be underachieving. This detailed picture allows teachers to focus their planning on the needs of students. This contributes to students making good progress.
- Learning is most effective where teachers' love for their subjects and knowledge are very evident in the way they challenge and engage students. Relationships are positive and there is a strong measure of respect between teachers and students. This allows the teachers to drive forward uncompromising expectations and clear ways of helping students to achieve. This was seen in a number of English lessons. In one, students studied a poem and evaluated a website for persuasive language for healthy eating. They used technical language to analyse and describe each type of communication. Students made notes as they listened to the contribution of others in the class. They worked together, showing genuine respect for the skills of others and demonstrating a serious commitment to learning. All of this led to outstanding progress.
- Where learning is less successful, the expectations of what students should achieve are not clearly conveyed by the teacher. Questions asked are closed and do not give students the opportunity to contribute more fully. This leads to individuals feeling they do not have to apply themselves to the work set. On these occasions, students do not see the relevance of the work and it does not challenge them; as a result, progress is less than good.
- Marking is effective across most of the college. Students benefit from teachers' clear comments on what they are doing well in their work and what they need to do to improve. There is also consistent evidence that students reflect on teachers' comments and act on them. In a few classes, students do not respond to the teachers' or peers' comments and this reduces the positive impact of marking for those students.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support students' learning, including those with special educational needs. They are guided well by teachers and sensitive to giving students the time to work things out for themselves before intervening.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of students is good. In general, students apply themselves positively when teachers' expectations are clear. They listen attentively, cooperate with their classmates and answer questions willingly. They show an eagerness to learn and are curious enough to ask questions around the topic being explored. This is not always the case because sometimes students require additional encouragement to get on with their work. They are inclined to talk to their friends about other things in between applying themselves to the work the teacher has set, and this results in them learning at a slower pace.
- Students' social skills are well developed. They gather in groups during breaks and lunchtimes, conversing sensibly with their friends, being sensitive to the needs of others as they move from classroom to dining areas and outside. This is true even on narrow staircases and corridors. Students are courteous and polite to staff and one another. They engage positively with visitors and give their opinions honestly when asked.
- Students are proud of being part of the college and dress smartly. This pride is not always represented positively in the care they take with their work in books. Some students do not pay enough attention to writing clearly, laying out work neatly or completing and presenting it well.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students in all year groups say they feel very safe. They say bullying is rare and that they have every confidence, should any occur, that the adults in the college would deal with it effectively. While some have heard homophobic name calling, they know that teachers will deal with it effectively if brought to their attention. Students are clear about how to stay safe when using the internet and mobile communications.

- The support for students and their well-being is very strong in the college. Students consider how their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development has been promoted during a reflection slot at the end of every week. They add this as a leaf to a SMSC tree on their classroom wall.
- Attendance has improved compared to the same time last year but is still below the national average. The number of students away from school for a significant amount of time is also dropping and is now closer to the national average. Bullying records show that the number of reported incidents is dropping fast and is now well below last year's figures. Internal referrals have also dropped and rewards points for positive behaviour have more than doubled.
- A small number of parents responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They and those involved in the college's own surveys are positive about the college's work and confirm students' views about safety.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The new Principal, in post just over two months, is effectively leading his senior team in uncompromisingly driving forward improvement in the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Everyone in the college is fully supportive of what he is doing and fully subscribe to the college motto, 'No child left behind'. Subject leaders talk about the college being the 'bedrock' of the community. Many contribute to the adult education programme for parents as a means of supporting parents to help their children with learning at home.
- Subject leaders are involved in considering how well their subject is performing through a system driven by senior leaders. This information helps leaders and managers to have a clear picture of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. This, in turn, has been used to put together the college improvement plan. The plan is clear about what actions it intends to take but is more general about the impact of these actions. A small number of subject leaders are not yet as effective as their colleagues.
- Targets set for students are appropriately challenging and tracked at regular intervals through a very effective system that provides clear analysis of the progress of both individual students and groups. This accurate information is the backbone that drives teachers' planning for delivering lessons. The college is good at accurately predicting its results. Tracking data suggest achievement will continue to improve.
- The leadership and management of teaching are well organised. Senior leaders and leading practitioners form a large team and ensure their work is designed to directly address the training needs of individuals. They constantly reflect on the work they do, monitoring the impact through lesson observations, looking at work in books and speaking to students. Many teachers contribute to the training programme delivered for the school-based initial teacher-training programme. This helps them to focus on their best practice, which in turn benefits their own leadership and classroom practice. High levels of expertise now exist; this inspires other colleagues.
- College senior and subject leaders who joined inspectors in lesson observations accurately judged the strengths and weaknesses of the impact of teaching activities. This reflects the broad spectrum of teachers who know what needs to be done to promote learning effectively. Performance management arrangements are robust and based on national teachers' standards. They effectively contribute to raising achievement.
- The curriculum offers a good range of subjects and is responsive to the needs of students. Adjustments made to the curriculum will make it easier for more students to secure the English Baccalaureate qualification at the end of this academic year. Both academic and vocational courses are on offer at Key Stage 4, with the opportunity for students to continue studying the same courses into the sixth form. The college's strong advice, guidance and information arrangements ensure that few students do not know what to do next with regards education, training or employment. The strength of this guidance is exemplified by the students being offered role-play opportunities around what to do when coming to collect GCSE results.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors show great commitment to the college and work hard to keep themselves up to date on the progress that students are making. This is supported by the detailed way in which students' progress is tracked and analysed by the college. Governors regularly attend briefing sessions held for them across the year when particular aspects of the college's work are explored in detail. These mornings are used by governors to visit their link subject areas and experience some of the positive learning atmosphere in the college. They have taken clear action to ensure the effectiveness of the pupil premium expenditure and are appropriately targeting the reduction of the gap in performance between those supported and their peers. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the college and actions proposed are explored at termly meetings. Governors have reviewed the performance management policy which now links performance and pay.



## 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>	137011
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	430944

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>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,543
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	241
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bev Semper
<b>Principal</b>	Ray Henshaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01977 657600
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