

John Ferneley College

Scalford Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 1LH

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, supported by staff and governors, provides strong and determined leadership that is driving improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Their capacity to improve the college further is strong.
- Good achievement has been sustained, and in some cases reinstated, as a result of effective checks on teaching and accurate assessments of students' progress.
- Students make good progress in most subjects, including English and mathematics. Standards are currently rising in both of these subjects.
- The college is very successful at developing the skills of its middle leaders through well-chosen training, both in college and through the wider Mowbray Education Trust.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students and plan lessons that interest and challenge them to succeed.
- Students behave well in lessons and are respectful to one another, to adults and visitors. They take great care of the environment.
- Governors are highly effective at holding leaders to account. They have an excellent understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. They work closely with leaders to make sure improvement initiatives are having an impact.
- The work the school does to keep students safe is good and students feel safe. Careful checks are made on their safety when learning off-site.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress of disadvantaged students in Key Stage 3 in mathematics is not yet as good as it is in English.
- Students do not make good progress in GCSE history at Key Stage 4.
- Students do not get enough opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- Not all teachers use the new marking policy effectively to help students improve their work.
- Some teachers do not give enough consideration to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of their students when teachers plan learning activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 46 lessons, six of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to lessons in the course of their observations of students' behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Inspectors took account of the 35 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the responses to the college's own commissioned surveys of parental opinion.
- The information from 50 staff questionnaires was taken into consideration.
- Meetings were held with three groups of students, governors, the Chief Executive of the Mowbray Education Trust, senior and subject leaders, and teaching and other staff.
- Inspectors observed the work of the college. They looked at students' books and documents including the college's own data, leaders' evaluations of the college's strengths and weaknesses, and monitoring information on how well students are making progress. They also checked planning documents, records of checks on the quality of teaching, records of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Mark Mayne	Additional Inspector
Guy Shears	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This college is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- John Ferneley College converted to become an academy school on 1 November 2011. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good. On 1 April 2014 the college became part of the Mowbray Education Trust, a multi-academy trust comprising five schools.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in care.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is above average.
- The college uses alternative off-site provision to enhance the curriculum in Key Stage 4. Currently, 30 students attend the Melton Learning Hub for one day each week where they undertake work-related courses. A small number of others study agriculture at Brooksby Melton College or Gaz's Autos for motor vehicle experience.
- The college runs a breakfast club at the start of each day which give students opportunities for extra learning and a free meal.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement, particularly in mathematics and history, by:
 - giving disadvantaged students in Key Stage 3 practical mathematical problems so they can see the relevance of the learning and are motivated to deepen their understanding
 - consistently giving students meaningful feedback about their work that challenges them to improve it
 - checking that students respond to the feedback they receive
 - providing more opportunities for students to apply their numeracy skills in different subjects
 - including spiritual, moral, social and cultural components in planned learning activities.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is an energetic and inspirational leader who is completely committed to the success of her students and the wider community of Melton Mowbray. With a highly competent team of senior leaders, she is driving improvements in teaching and engendering an ethos of good achievement and behaviour in which 'no child is left behind'.
- A system of senior leaders spending time in other schools and good use of external training ensure that the college 'grows its own' future leaders. The management of teachers' performance is rigorous and effective. Staff have received high-quality training designed to improve their individual and collective skills.
- Leaders responsible for subjects carry out thorough, detailed checks on the quality of teaching and learning along with senior leaders and governors. Leaders are aware, for example, that the new marking policy is not being used in the same way by all teachers. In response they have planned refresher training for teachers, and middle leaders are reminding staff of expectations.
- The college has recently revised its targets for students' achievement and they are now more aspirational. The students have responded well to this new challenge and make good use of the many ways that the college is supporting them to reach their targets. Leaders rigorously check the accuracy of the assessment information provided by subject teachers and use the results to provide additional help to any students who need it.
- The college makes good use of the pupil premium to help disadvantaged students achieve well. Leaders are aware through their effective monitoring that the impact in English in Key Stage 3 is greater than that in mathematics. As a result, changes have been made to the way the additional funding is being used so that disadvantaged students spend more time with teachers in mathematics.
- The curriculum has been adapted well to ensure that it matches the abilities and interests of all students. The wide range of courses on offer includes off-site work-related courses with trusted local providers. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of students' learning at the alternative provision and their attendance and behaviour are checked daily.
- The teaching of British values such as tolerance, respect and democracy is clearly evident in the college's personal, social and health education sessions. Staff are aware of the dangers of radicalisation and conversations with students revealed that the college has been effective in fostering positive relationships, tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.
- The college gives students very good information, advice and guidance to help them make decisions about the next stage in their learning or employment. They can each have a number of individual meetings with an impartial careers adviser before making choices about their future. In 2014, all students went on to further education, apprenticeships or employment with additional training.
- The college's arrangements to keep students safe are effective and meet all national requirements, including in the breakfast club, which is free to every student. The breakfast club is well attended and helps to promote a cohesive learning community at the start of each day as well as ensuring that all students have access to a nutritious meal.
- As part of the Mowbray Education Trust, the college receives excellent support in developing leadership and is subject to a range of quality assurance activities. Headteachers from all the schools in the trust work together under the guidance of the Chief Executive to validate the college's own evaluations of its performance. This leads to the college having a very accurate view of where it needs to improve. This in turn is then reflected in an accurate self-evaluation document that provides the prompts for succinct and well-structured action plans.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is extremely effective. The governors have a very clear strategic view of where the college is going and how it is going to achieve its goals. Without encroaching on day-to-day operational issues, they engage in a wide range of monitoring and evaluation activities in order to hold leaders to account.
- The governors have a very good understanding of both national performance data and how students' progress is tracked in the college. They question leaders on areas of underperformance and explore good practice. Governors play a key role in deciding how the pupil premium and Year 7 'catch-up' premium are spent and know that it is having less impact in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4.
- Governors know how leaders and managers promote improvements in teaching and they ensure that good teaching is rewarded and underperformance is challenged. The college budget is well managed and plans are well formulated.
- Governors work well within the Mowbray Education Trust and ensure that all the best practice it has to offer is shared across the schools. The Chair of the Governing Body has been innovative in ensuring that the governors' skills match the complex task of governance well by running recruitment events for new governors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students' attitudes to learning are positive, especially when they are working in pairs or groups when they demonstrate good social skills and cooperate well to promote each others' learning. Students respond well to staff instructions and their strong relationships with teachers lead to an excellent climate for learning.
- Learning is seldom disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Staff use the behaviour policy consistently well to ensure students understand what is expected of them. On the rare occasions when disruptions do occur it is because the work students are being asked to do does not challenge or interest them enough.
- The college does not use a bell system to mark the end and start of lessons. Despite this, punctuality to lessons is good and students move to lessons quickly and courteously.
- The college buildings provide inspiring spaces for learning and the students show great respect for their environment. There is no litter or graffiti and the breakfast club and extra-curricular activities are well attended.
- Parents are positive in their views about behaviour and the very large majority agree with students that incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Leaders monitor all aspects of behaviour closely and keep extensive and detailed records. The use of disciplinary procedures has declined.
- Attendance has been broadly average for some time. The college works closely with primary schools and families to reduce the number of sessions missed. It uses an effective reward system to promote good attendance, which is improving.

Safety

- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe in the college and are clear about what to do if they have any concerns.
- Students say bullying in any form, including the use of derogatory or homophobic language, is rare and that staff deal with any that does occur effectively. A group of Year 11 girls told inspectors that if problems occur it is most often to do with social media and that it starts outside and is brought into the college. They also appreciated how difficult it can be for the college to get to the bottom of such issues.
- Students understand the different forms bullying can take and say they have been taught how to keep themselves and others safe from each type.

- Staff make stringent checks on the safety of students attending courses off site and careful recording shows that their behaviour and attendance are good when learning elsewhere.
- Students have a good understanding of how to stay safe in a wide range of situations. They are well aware of the risks associated with using the internet, for example, and clear on how best to avoid them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across a wide range of subjects and year groups. As a result, the progress students make is good. Teachers set and maintain high standards for the quality of students' work and the pace at which they progress, as well as for their behaviour and attitudes. Attainment is improving slowly in history as teachers are being supported to improve their teaching and assessment to ensure that progress is more rapid.
- Many teachers question students during lessons to check and deepen their understanding. During the inspection, teachers asked searching follow-up questions and insisted that students thought long and hard about them.
- Teachers have a wide range of target and assessment information available to them, and incorporate this into their seating plans for their classes. They are becoming increasingly adept at using this information to challenge students at the right individual level to accelerate their learning. This is especially the case for those who are below the target the college has set for their achievement and the most able, for whom 'killer objectives' provide additional challenges.
- Teaching is supported well by other adults in the classroom. Planning is undertaken jointly to support students who are disabled or have special educational needs, so teaching meets those needs effectively. In a Year 8 'nurture group', basic literacy skills were being taught and students were writing a letter to a travel company. The quality of support was excellent and high expectations from staff and students ensured that students made rapid progress. The students' enthusiasm was clear and one was overheard to say, 'I want to finish this and get a Level 6; I've never had a Level 6!'
- Teachers make sure the most-able students are challenged to achieve as well as possible. In a drama lesson preparing for GCSE examinations, students were using the grade criteria for A and A* to review each other's work and provide detailed and supportive feedback. This was combined with very specific written feedback from the teacher that gave clear ideas about how students could reach the highest possible grade.
- Staff use homework to consolidate learning and to generate interest outside the classroom. Some parents raised concerns about the consistency of homework setting and how quickly it is marked. Conversations with students indicated that some shared these concerns, but inspectors found that homework was generally used well to support learning.
- Students' achievement, and particularly that of boys, is further promoted by the 'scoreboard' sessions which run after college on at least two days per week. 'Scoreboards' highlight students' strengths and areas for development in each of their subjects and they take these with them to revise key topics. The session that inspectors visited was attended by 60 Year 11 students. Some groups were receiving additional teaching and coaching from subject staff while others were working independently and enjoying a hot drink and biscuits. Two boys said that if they had gone straight home they would probably have done no work but now they are revising for 3 extra hours each week.
- The teaching of literacy is developed well in subjects other than English. Teachers plan opportunities to develop students' subject-specific vocabulary, ensure that reading takes place in their classes and mark students' work to improve their spelling and punctuation. However, numeracy skills are not developed so well across the curriculum beyond science and geography.
- Most teachers establish an excellent rapport in their classes which helps to create a relaxed and productive learning environment and supports students' spiritual, moral and social development. Some

teachers, however, do not consider how these aspects, and the students' cultural development, can be further developed through their subject teaching.

- Teachers do not all interpret the new marking policy in the same way. Marking is usually thorough and the feedback given to students is generally helpful. However, some teachers do not write comments that challenge students to improve their work and some do not check that the improvements have taken place.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Overall, students' attainment when they enter the college is broadly average. They make good progress in all year groups and in most subjects, especially English and mathematics, as a result of good teaching that interests and engages them. The college's reliable data indicate that attainment in 2015 will be higher than in 2014 and students' progress is continuing to increase.
- Students left Year 11 in 2014 with GCSE results that were above average. The college has successfully addressed a dip in standards in mathematics, and the current Year 11 students are once again achieving well.
- The most-able students are making good progress and more are on track to attain at the highest levels in 2015. This is a result of consistently good teaching and a more rigorous focus on the challenge of the work they are given by teachers, exemplified by the use of 'killer objectives' and challenging questioning.
- The attainment of disadvantaged students is improving. In 2014, these students in Year 11 were more than a GCSE grade behind others at the college and other students nationally in English. In mathematics, the gap between disadvantaged students and other students at the college was again just over a GCSE grade and a similar difference to other students nationally. College data indicate that the gaps are closing rapidly in Years 10 and 11 because of carefully-planned teaching and revision strategies.
- Disadvantaged students made less progress from their starting points than other students in the college and other students nationally in 2014 but they are now making much better progress. In Key Stage 3 there is almost no difference between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged and other students in English, but there are gaps in mathematics and they are closing too slowly.
- The college entered some students early for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics in 2014. They were entered when the college believed them to be ready and it did not hamper the chances of the most able to achieve the highest possible grades. Early entry is no longer being used.
- In 2014, attainment in history and modern foreign languages was below that of other subjects because of some staffing instability and weaker teaching in these subjects. Observations of learning in the classroom and a thorough look at students' work confirmed that students are now making good progress in languages.
- Students who spend some of their time studying at other sites make good progress in their studies.
- The progress made by disabled students and those who have special educational needs has varied in the past. The college's assessment data and observations of students' learning show they are now achieving as well as others. Some students who have a statement of special educational needs are doing particularly well.
- The Year 7 'catch-up' funding (government funding for those entering secondary school with below-average standards in English and mathematics) is used successfully to help students to improve their literacy and mathematical skills.

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	137617
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	453314

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1089
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Roberts
Headteacher	Christine Stansfield
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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