

Linton Village College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136442
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	395343
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2012
Lead inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

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	828
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Bowen
Headteacher	Caroline Derbyshire (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2007
School address	Cambridge Road Linton Cambridge CB21 4JB
Telephone number	01223 891233
Fax number	01223 894476
Email address	lintonvc@lvc.org

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

Gulshanbir Kayembe	Additional Inspector
Gillian Scobie	Additional Inspector
Alan Radford	Additional Inspector
Michael Lafford	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors saw 33 lessons taught by 31 teachers and made a number of shorter visits to classrooms. They held meetings with groups of students, staff and governors. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at relevant documents, plans and records related to behaviour, safety and students' achievements. As part of the inspection, the team analysed questionnaire responses from staff, students and 405 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The college is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and serves a largely rural community. Many students travel in from neighbouring villages and towns. The large majority of students are White British. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is about average. However, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs or receiving support from external agencies is well above national averages. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The college meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected for students' achievement. The school became an academy in February 2011. It currently holds the Artsmark Gold and International School awards.

The after-school club and pre-school based on the college campus are not managed by the college's governing body and are separately inspected.

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

- Linton Village College provides an outstanding, all-round education for its students. Consequently all groups of students achieve exceptionally well and develop into thoughtful, mature and responsible young people by the time they leave.
- Standards of attainment are significantly above average and all groups of students achieve outstandingly well. There is a high level of independent learning and students make excellent use of literacy and numeracy skills to support their work across the curriculum.
- Teaching is outstanding overall and rarely less than good. Assessment information is used exceptionally well to challenge students to achieve their very best. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use this particularly well to probe and extend students' understanding. Much of the marking is of a high standard but occasionally comments for improvement are not precise enough, especially in English, to help students fully understand how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve. Teaching is supported very successfully by a thoughtful and thought-provoking curriculum.
- Students' behaviour is exceptionally good and contributes to the strong relationships and very positive ethos in the college. In lessons, students' very positive attitudes mean that they maintain a high level of focus on their work. The discussions they have with one another are meaningful and of high quality, thus, significantly benefiting their learning. Students feel safe and nearly all parents and carers agree.
- The Principal leads by example, setting the highest of expectations for all in order to achieve the college's mission of being a 'world-class centre of learning'. Leaders at all levels have worked successfully together to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection and to maintain high levels of achievement. This reflects the skilful management of the performance of staff and students.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To ensure that written feedback to students follows the example of the best and is, therefore, always clear and precise so that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In most years, students begin at the college with attainment that is above national averages. By the end of Key Stage 4, students reach even higher standards. Most students take academic qualifications such as GCSEs and a high proportion in current Years 11 and 10 are on track to attain five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. The gap between the attainment of boys and girls is narrower than the gap nationally because the curriculum appeals well to their needs. Many boys, for example, relish triple science and business and enterprise subjects. Almost all students make exceptional progress as they move through the college and this is particularly evident in business and enterprise, humanities, languages and science subjects. Students also make significant progress in mathematics and this has been getting stronger over the last few years. Their progress in English, including reading, is good and improving with many students now making excellent progress. Students' progress is as strong in Key Stage 3 as it is in Key Stage 4. This means that students are very well prepared for the greater demands of Key Stage 4.

Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make significant progress in their learning. This is because class teachers have high expectations of them and plan diligently for their specific needs. Students in Year 7 who join with weaker reading skills are now making excellent progress in reading and spelling as a result of a structured phonic (letters and sounds) programme. The student centre tailors learning carefully to the needs of individuals with disabilities and those who have special educational needs. The college makes excellent use of the special school located on the same site to provide specialist input and teaching where required to very good effect. For example, some students in Key Stage 4 are timetabled for courses offered at the special school.

Learning and progress in lessons are strong. Students' learning is promoted particularly well by the opportunities to articulate difficult ideas and clarify their understanding through discussion with their teachers and one another. This is reflected in the extensive explanations students provide and the depth of their understanding. In a Year 8 English lesson, students rapidly identified a wide range of oral techniques used in a persuasive argument. They used highly technical language with precision and could explain what it meant. Disabled students and those with

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special educational needs participated confidently in the discussion both because of the encouragement of the class teacher and the high quality support of the teaching assistant. The great majority of parents and carers are very positive about their children's progress. A high proportion of students agree that they learn a lot in lessons.

Quality of teaching

Teachers know their students very well and plan work that extends and challenges their learning exceptionally well. They are particularly good at assessing how well students are taking in new ideas and intervening at just the right moment to clarify a misconception or identify an example to embed a key learning point. Active engagement in well thought out and interesting activities ensures that students learn from first-hand experiences. For example, in an outstanding science lesson, Year 11 students worked on a range of carefully constructed experiments to help them revise. These were specially designed to help them unpack very challenging ideas in chemistry, which students did with growing confidence. The teacher's questioning and use of examples and analogies helped students' understanding considerably. Students readily ask questions and demonstrate a high degree of independence as learners and this support their success in examinations. Time is very well used in lessons and pace is skilfully tailored to the needs of different groups. Support from teaching assistants is directed very astutely to enable disabled students and those with special educational needs to access the curriculum and make rapid progress. They are encouraged to play an active role in lessons and fellow students accept this as the norm.

The great majority of parents and carers are positive about the teaching and agree that their children's particular needs are met. While most students agree that the teachers help them a lot, a small minority are not sure how well they are doing at school. This is because there is some inconsistency in marking and students are not always given precise enough feedback on where they are in their learning and what they need to do to improve. Nonetheless, students are often given excellent opportunities to reflect on their own learning and how they feel about it. Their social skills and ability to collaborate with one another are promoted extensively across the college. Discussions about moral issues are frequent and exceptionally well managed to heighten students' awareness. The college's specialism of business and enterprise permeates most of the curriculum. For example, a link with a local food producer led to a competition with an Olympic theme and publication of the winning recipe from a group of students for 'Pork Powerballs'.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' behaviour around the college is exemplary and they get on exceptionally well with one another. These features are typical and contribute to the college's very positive and inclusive ethos. During break and lunch times, students mingle with one another in a very pleasant, calm and sociable manner. The very large majority of parents, carers and students are very positive about behaviour within the college.

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Behaviour in lessons is most conducive to learning. Though a small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about lessons being disrupted by bad behaviour, there was no evidence, either from direct observations or elsewhere, to substantiate their view. Lessons are calm and orderly, and behaviour records indicate that disruptions to learning are very rare. Students are frequently asked to work in groups or pairs and this they do with great maturity discussing their work animatedly and sharing ideas very willingly. It is very rare to see students lose concentration or go even slightly off task.

There is little evidence of bullying including prejudice based bullying such as racism or homophobia. Incidents that do occur are quickly dealt with and students express confidence in staff to deal with such issues. They are aware that bullying of all kinds, including cyber-bullying, is wrong and work actively with the school to ensure that no form of bullying is tolerated. Students' behaviour is safe around the college and in practical lessons such as science. They show a high degree of awareness of risk and automatically take the appropriate precaution. Students' learning and progress are supported by high levels of attendance.

Leadership and management

The college is outstandingly well led and managed. All staff responding to the Ofsted questionnaire say that they are proud to work at the college and know what they and the college are trying to achieve. Hence, the ambition and high expectations are very well understood. Systems, policies and procedures are exceptionally well embedded and individual performance very well understood by leaders. Students' progress is tracked diligently and support and intervention are both swift and carefully tailored to the needs of any who are at the risk of falling behind. A wide range of partnerships enables the college to provide external support and/or placements to suit any individual need.

The system for reviewing the performance of faculties is very well established and includes leaders at all levels as well as governors. This ensures that there is shared understanding of the key messages and insights about how well each faculty is doing. Action plans from these focus well on areas identified for improvement and faculty leaders, in partnership with senior leaders, monitor robustly the implementation of these plans. Governors challenge school leaders from a very well informed position on how well the college is performing. They have worked in strong partnership with college leaders to secure further improvement in the quality of teaching. Professional development and coaching are used very successfully to maintain the college at the forefront of innovation. Given the college's track record, it has excellent capacity for continued improvement.

Equality of opportunity is promoted exceptionally well through the focus on individuals and by carefully tracking the performance of different groups. Every student is valued and the college willingly puts enormous time and resource in supporting individuals whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Safeguarding arrangements are robust, and health and

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safety arrangements are implemented very effectively. For example, all of the required checks have been carried out on staff and governors to confirm their suitability to work with students.

The extensive range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors makes a significant contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students who, for example, have visited the townships in South Africa and hosted students from these townships have developed profound insights about issues of racism and poverty. Lessons build as a matter of course on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences of students from enrichment activities and help to provide a very rounded education. The college is building further on this and actively working to develop a link with a culturally diverse school in Peterborough.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.

10 May 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of Linton Village College, Cambridge, CB21 4JB

Thank you for your polite and warm welcome to your college during inspectors' recent visit. We really enjoyed talking to you about your college life and hearing your views.

Linton Village College is an outstanding school because it not only helps you to make exceptionally good progress in your learning and achieve outstandingly well, but it also enables you to enjoy a wide range of exciting enrichment and extra-curricular activities. These, together with the opportunities in lessons, make a significant contribution to your personal development. We were very impressed with your recipe for Pork Powerballs. You rightly feel very safe in the college and nearly all of your parents and carers agree that this is the case. Your excellent behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning help you to achieve really well. You express yourselves fluently and work together exceptionally well.

The teaching is outstanding. Teachers provide you with a wide range of activities which you enjoy and which enable you to learn exceptionally well. Their subject knowledge is strong and their questioning is very precise. This helps you to think more deeply about your work and to grapple with difficult ideas. We were particularly impressed with your ability to discuss your work and use precise and often difficult technical vocabulary.

The leadership of the college is outstanding. Senior leaders, faculty heads and governors keep a close check on how good the college is performing and how well you are doing. They take very swift action to support anyone who is falling behind. Your Principal sets an excellent example for all to follow.

Even in an outstanding school, there is room for improvement. We have asked your Principal to make sure that all teachers give you precise feedback on how to improve your work when they mark it and tell you how well you are performing. We hope you continue to enjoy your time at Linton Village College and keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Gulshan Kayembe
Lead inspector

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