

# Southmoor Community School, Mathematics and Computing College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108861
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	309820
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Blake HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Philip Ingram
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Ryhope Road Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR2 7TF
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5537600
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5537603

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects of its work: the quality of teaching, the impact of curriculum initiatives on raising standards and improving students' progress, and the impact of the governors' curricular role in school. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), nationally published student performance data, lesson observations, scrutiny of students' work books and additional documentation provided by the school, and discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, middle managers, chair of governors and students. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its SEF, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

## Description of the school

Southmoor Community School, Mathematics and Computing College has marginally more students than the average size secondary school. Although the vast majority of students are of White British heritage, there are small numbers of students from a range of different ethnic groups. The number eligible for free school meals is just above the national average. Few students have English as an additional language, with broadly average numbers having learning difficulties and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational needs.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Southmoor Community School, Mathematics and Computing College, provides a good and improving standard of education for its students. Some aspects of its work are outstanding.

The students start at the school in Year 7 with broadly average standards, which are maintained throughout Key Stage 3. Standards at Key Stage 4 are also broadly average, but are improving because of the school's success in information and communication technology (ICT), one of its specialist subjects, and other GCSE subjects with a vocational focus. Standards in the core subjects remain close to average, but are also improving. Overall progress is good, and the school achieves well against suitably challenging targets. Those students with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress relative to their capabilities.

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Some school-based initiatives are outstanding; for example, the promotion of the 'students' voice' in identifying ten learning principles that are used throughout the school to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The students feel safe because staff are quick to deal with any anti-social behaviour that occurs. The school is aware that some bullying still occurs, but has targeted a range of actions in its development plan to address this issue. Other initiatives are also helping to improve behaviour, particularly the lunch time programme of physical and recreational activities, and the use of school facilities to read quietly or complete work tasks. The number of students using the ICT suite at lunch time is particularly impressive. The school is very committed to encouraging healthy eating, and recent student questionnaires show that food options are rated very highly. The most significant outcome of these successful school-based initiatives is the very high level of student enjoyment of school. The importance given to promoting the 'students' voice', and the influence that this has had on improving provision is a significant factor in their enjoyment of school. Attendance, which is average, has improved since the previous inspection because of effective action to target persistent absentees. The school is very actively involved in the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) initiative, with its work being recognised locally and nationally as an example of very effective practice. The overwhelming majority of parents and students rate behaviour as good, and inspectors agree with this. However, a small minority of parents responding in the pre-inspection questionnaire have some concerns about the behaviour of a small minority of students. There is an active school council, which plays an effective part in school life. Students have a confidence that their voice is listened to, and acted upon when issues are raised. There is a range of enterprise opportunities, with post-16 transition rates generally good.

The quality of teaching is good, and has improved since the previous inspection because of the concerted effort of staff to improve their practice, and the significant contribution of students to the learning principles, which are used consistently by teachers in lessons throughout the school. This ongoing student contribution has brought about a cohesive approach to teaching that takes good account of the students' learning needs. Teachers have good subject knowledge that is used well to provide a range of activities that help the vast majority of students to make good progress in their learning. Almost all lessons seen are characterised by very good relationships, which contribute very positively to the students' good behaviour. The students' are very confident users of ICT, which enables them to use a variety of computer software to support their work; for example, using a presentational program to describe a database of customers using a DVD rental shop. In some of the most effective lessons, such as ICT, students'

self and peer evaluation are helping to increase their understanding of what they need to do to improve further. On the few occasions when teaching is less successful, the ineffective management of challenging behaviour adversely affects students' progress in their learning.

The quality of the curriculum is good. The school has effectively developed its curricular provision to reflect its context and specialist status, with the use of ICT helping to motivate students and create alternative ways of learning. The provision is well planned and well delivered, and meets the varying needs of the students. The increasing opportunities for the students to become involved in their own curriculum development, through the 'student voice' initiative, has helped raise the profile of teaching and learning and has added to students' aspirations and levels of achievement. The curriculum is also being successfully extended to meet future needs; for example, through the ICT initiative to promote partnership with families, and the introduction of diploma courses at Key Stage 4. A varied programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities makes a valuable contribution to students' achievement, their personal development, and their attitudes to learning.

The quality of the care, guidance and support provided by the school is good, with some outstanding features. The school has taken all reasonable actions to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place, and that a prompt response is made to any incident of anti-social behaviour. The overwhelming majority of students are very positive about the quality of care they receive, believing the strong relationships that exist within the school, together with the efforts made to seek their views, gives them a confidence that there is always an adult with whom they can talk, if needed. Current procedures for child protection, including the school's single central register, comply with statutory requirements. The system for monitoring the progress of students is good. Detailed performance data are collected and analysed, including those students with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those with English as an additional language, and looked after children. The frequency of recording and reviewing the students' progress is helping to ensure that the vast majority make good progress in their learning, relative to their capabilities. The use of student self-evaluation is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and provides clear and frequent guidance from teachers about how well they are doing, and what they should do to improve further. However, this approach is not yet used consistently in all subject areas. The overall quality of support has some outstanding features; for example, the support provided at lunch times, particularly from the nominated Key Stage 4 students who help monitor and organise a range of different activities. This out-of-lesson support is greatly appreciated by the younger students, who feel that it helps to break down barriers between them and the older students. This is a major influence in creating Southmoor's cohesive school community.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher and senior leaders give a very clear direction to the work of the school, and together have created a common sense of purpose among staff. A strong, enthusiastic and confident middle management team shares this vision. Senior managers know the school well and have clear priorities for improvement. Since the previous inspection, decisive and successful action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching and create a learning environment that values the 'student voice'. The school also listens carefully to the views of parents, and is keen to maintain strong and effective links that encourage a range of local activities; in this way, the school is an active member of its local community. Broader national and international links have been made, but senior managers recognize that these are areas for further development. The school values its diverse range of ethnic groups, and takes great care to ensure that it monitors their progress to pinpoint quickly, any underperformance that arises. The ethos of the school also reflects its positive

approach to equality. The increasing access to school facilities before, during and after school ensures that the students feel valued and trusted. The experienced and effective governing body has a thorough understanding of the school's work and provides appropriate challenge and support; they share in the vision of the school and are developing their role by linking effectively to specific curriculum areas to improve their knowledge of the quality of provision across the school. The school is well placed to continue its improvement and has good capacity to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to raise standards at both key stages, especially in the core subjects.
- Ensure that student self-assessment is used more consistently across all subjects in the school.



**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 December 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Southmoor Community School, Mathematics and Computing College, Sunderland, SR2 7TF

You will know that I recently visited Southmoor with a colleague to find out how well you are doing in school. I hope you will be pleased to hear that we feel Southmoor has progressed well since its previous inspection in 2005, and now provides you with a good overall standard of education. Some aspects of the school's work are outstanding; for example, its work on developing the 'student voice' and the range of organised out-of-lesson activities, particularly at lunch time.

The vast majority of you are making good progress in your learning, and although standards are improving, they remain broadly average. We are, therefore, asking the school to raise standards even further, particularly in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The vast majority of you say you feel safe in school, and that you enjoy your lessons because the teachers have listened very carefully to what you have said about making teaching more interesting and learning more enjoyable. Your behaviour in school is generally good, although we know a few parents would like the behaviour of a small number of students to improve further.

The staff care for you well and are keen to ensure that all of you achieve the best of which you are capable. Teaching is generally good, and best when you are encouraged to self-evaluate your work so that you know what to do to make even better progress. However, not all subjects provide you with these self-evaluation opportunities, so we are asking the school to ensure that this happens in all subject areas. You have an important part to play in helping the school to improve further. You need to attend school regularly, behave well, and have a positive attitude in all your lessons.

We wish you well for the future.

Brian Blake

Lead inspector