

# Arthur Mellows Village College

Helpston Road, Glinton, Peterborough, PE6 7JX

**Inspection dates** 3–4 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher, together with a team of dedicated and expert senior leaders and governors, communicates high ambition, and supports and challenges staff to drive improvement and raise standards. All have high expectations of what students can achieve, as do the students themselves. Standards of teaching, and levels of achievement, have continued to rise steadily.
- Students' behaviour is excellent, both in lessons and around the academy. Students are keen to learn; their excellent relationships with their teachers mean the atmosphere within lessons is purposeful and positive. Students are safe and well cared-for.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and show students explicitly how to learn successfully. Students respond and are keen to do well. Activities are highly engaging; feedback helps many students exceed their challenging targets.
- The curriculum is broad and allows students to choose courses that fit their interests and abilities. The academy makes an outstanding contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students' achievement at GCSE is outstanding. They make rapid progress from their different starting points regardless of their abilities and high proportions exceed expected rates of progress in English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged students make similar rates of progress to their peers and achieve more highly than other students nationally. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress.
- The sixth form is good. Students' attainment has increased markedly because of the improvements leaders have made. Students are making good progress and this is accelerating.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed tutor periods and teaching in 43 lessons or parts of lessons. Several lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors analysed documentation, including that relating to: attendance, exclusions, safeguarding, behaviour, the academy’s systems for improving teaching and learning, and details of its use of additional funding to support disadvantaged students.
- Inspectors took account of 140 responses to the online, Parent View, survey, as well as evidence of parental views gathered by the academy.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other senior and subject leaders, teaching staff, members of the governing body and groups of students.

## Inspection team

Jason Howard, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Paul Tomkow

Her Majesty’s Inspector

David New

Additional Inspector

Catherine Bates

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Alison Garner

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Arthur Mellows Village College converted to become an academy on 1 September 2010. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- This is a larger than the average-sized secondary academy with a large sixth form.
- Approximately 12% of students are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after. This proportion is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, at around 21%, is above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise standards of teaching and assessment in all subjects in the sixth form further, so that students make excellent progress and achieve the highest possible grades.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is uncompromising in his determination to continually improve standards, and ensures that careful and constant monitoring of the impact of the academy's work quickly highlights any aspect that needs improvement. The academy's ethos is to ensure that constant improvement provides students with outstanding opportunities to learn, achieve and develop their interests and broader skills. Leaders at all levels provide teachers with effective support, and challenge, so that any necessary changes to teaching are made. Students sense and share the high level of ambition that leaders and teachers have for them.
- Leaders apply rigorous and robust appraisal arrangements to hold teachers accountable for the progress and attainment of the students they teach at each key stage. A recent focus upon ensuring Key Stage 3 prepares all students for GCSE effectively has helped to narrow the gender gap in attainment to below national levels in most subjects by the end of Year 9, by improving the quality of teaching and ensuring the literacy skills of all students are developed well.
- Effective provision for disadvantaged students has sharply reduced, and in some subjects eliminated, the gap between their rates of progress and attainment and those both of students nationally and of other students at the academy.
- Middle leaders are driving forward improvements. They monitor standards in their areas carefully, and have done much in recent years to improve further the quality of feedback that students receive. They ensure that more challenge is provided for the most able, and help develop students' literacy and numeracy skills to high levels. There is particularly effective leadership in English, mathematics and science. Support from senior leaders has helped to raise standards considerably in several subject areas, including history and geography.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers receive high-quality support and training, whether they are new to the profession or more experienced. Teachers are able to observe and learn from the techniques and ideas of others, which help them meet their challenging targets. As a result, teaching is at least consistently good, often outstanding, and constantly improving.
- The academy's curriculum is broad and balanced and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted exceptionally well. Students gain an insight into the major world religions during Key Stage 3 and all consider a variety of ethical issues through religious education at GCSE. Special events such as, *Prison, Me? No Way*, help students to understand the impact of anti-social behaviour.
- Students develop their social skills through various activities, including the large numbers who complete the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. The *Connecting Classrooms* project, which involves visits from students and teachers from other countries, helps build cultural understanding and tackle discrimination. Students debate what it means to be British, and gain an understanding of Britain's parliamentary democracy during citizenship lessons.
- Students receive high-quality, individualised information and guidance about careers so that they can choose the further education or training options that will match their interests and abilities, and help them access any intended future career paths. Almost all students who completed Year 11 in 2013 and 2014 are in employment, education or training.
- Leaders and teachers work with the local authority and other local schools to share ideas and successful strategies, ensure the accuracy of marking and assessment, and enable staff to observe teaching and learning in other settings. This partnership has helped to improve further the accuracy of assessment and the quality of teaching.
- The academy works well with parents, who are exceptionally positive about all aspects of its work. Responses to the Parent View online survey indicate that almost all would recommend the academy to another parent. The academy's own survey results indicate levels of parental satisfaction are high and

have risen over time as leaders have driven forward improvements in response to parental feedback.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are highly effective, particularly in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. They ask challenging questions based on the information they receive from the academy's leaders about the quality of teaching, which they supplement with their own visits. Appraisal arrangements ensure that teachers' pay progression is linked to the progress made by those they teach.
- Governors have a deep and detailed understanding of the school's performance data on students' attainment and progress; they use this information to hold leaders to account for the academy's performance and monitor progress towards the academy's improvement priorities. They supported changes to the curriculum to increase the time that students spend studying core subjects during Key Stage 3. They ensure Year 7 catch-up funding is used to support students whose literacy skills are poor when they join the academy.
- Governors manage the academy's financial resources well. Their financial competence enables leaders to support disadvantaged students effectively and increase the range of subjects students can study in the sixth form, promoting equality of opportunity.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Students almost invariably want to learn and are keen to improve their work and achieve highly. They are extremely attentive to their teachers, and both resilient and industrious, whether working on their own or with others. Students enjoy excellent relationships with teachers, other adults and each other.
- Disruption to learning is extremely rare; students are unreservedly proud of their school and recognise how their behaviour helps maintain an environment in which all can learn. Teachers and leaders reinforce high expectations effectively and have promoted a culture in which, as one student explained, 'Aiming high and trying your best is what this school is about.' Parents are confident that students behave well.
- Students behave exceptionally well outside of lessons, and understand how their positive attitudes help create the calm and purposeful environment around the academy.
- The academy site is treated with respect; littering or graffiti are almost unknown. Students and staff agree that unacceptable language of any kind is very seldom heard; none was evident during this inspection. Students told inspectors they find that tolerance and respect are promoted by leaders and teachers 'on a daily basis'.
- Students are punctual in arriving to school and to lessons, and overall attendance is ahead of the national average. Leaders have used effective strategies to increase the attendance rates of a small number of disadvantaged students; as a result, the attendance rates of this group are now ahead of the national average.
- Students participate enthusiastically in a very extensive programme of additional activities, including those of an artistic, musical, dramatic, social and sporting nature.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students have an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying. Several had to think hard when talking with inspectors before they could recall any; all agree that it is rare, and dealt with effectively via the academy's 'zero tolerance' policy when it does occur. Regular checks made after any incidents confirm this.
- Parents agree that students are well cared for and that the academy keeps them safe. Relationships among students, and between students and staff, are open and based upon trust. This helps to create a highly positive atmosphere for learning.

- Students behave safely when undertaking practical activities within lessons, and at all other times, including in areas of the school site where adult supervision is minimal. They respond immediately to any instructions from teachers or other adults about safety, but these are rarely necessary because students are aware of risk and how to avoid it.
- The academy's detailed records indicate the thoroughness of its procedures for providing support and care for students who might be at risk of harm. The relevant leaders liaise closely with external agencies in order to minimise risks. Arrangements for checking that potential employees, volunteers or visitors pose no known risk to children are exemplary. Members of staff understand and follow the correct procedures if they have concerns about the welfare or safety of any student because of the regular training they receive.

### **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Teaching is consistently at least good and often better. Teaching, over time, in most subjects is enabling students to make sustained progress. Students respond well to their teachers' high expectations, and the clear advice they receive about how to improve their work.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to interest students, whose enthusiasm for learning is evidently strong. Teachers often use examples of highly effective work to show students what to aim for. One student declared that, 'My mum got an A\* in English, and I will, too!' This determination to succeed is widespread.
- Teachers plan activities based on a detailed knowledge of what students already know and can do. They use their expert knowledge of the demands of assessments and examination tasks to help students take the next steps towards success in the set activities. For example, during a Year 9 French lesson, students understood where and why they had made mistakes with a written homework task because the teacher asked them precise questions based on her knowledge of their work. The questions helped them make the necessary changes and move ahead quickly.
- Relationships within the classroom are excellent. Students have regular opportunities to discuss ideas, and teachers use a variety of techniques to encourage them to think deeply, including expert questioning. In a Year 10 history lesson, questioning helped students to move on from simply describing events to explaining how these helped Hitler to tighten his grip on power in Nazi Germany.
- Teachers encourage students to try when they are unsure, and explore how and where they have gone wrong when they make mistakes. Students are not afraid to suggest ideas or answers if they are uncertain. This helps teachers understand when to give students more help, and when to change the task so they can move on quickly.
- Other adults support disabled students and those with special educational needs very effectively. They understand what students are working towards during individual lessons, and support and challenge those who need additional help, so that they make as much progress as others.
- The most able are challenged by extension tasks and additional support so that they take their learning further. Students working towards A\* grades at GCSE in technology could demonstrate how these helped them construct exceptionally well-designed and beautifully-crafted products. Recently introduced 'booster sessions' for the most able are helping to increase the proportion on course to achieve A\* grades.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly and give detailed and clear written and verbal advice on how to improve it. In many subjects, this practice has developed students' awareness to an exceptionally high level of precisely how to reach the next level or grade. This helps students to understand they can reach their targets, to persist with difficult tasks, and to make any necessary changes. In a Year 9 English lesson, students were able to analyse their literary criticism skills expertly, set precise targets for improvement and start to address these.

- Teachers are developing students' skills of extended writing to a very high level. Intensive additional teaching for those who struggle with literacy on entry to the academy promotes their rapid progress and improvement. By the end of Key Stage 3, most students write fluently, have an assured command of spelling, punctuation and grammar, and use sophisticated vocabulary. They can read challenging texts and gain information from them. Teachers help students to understand subject-specific words quickly; in a mathematics lesson they quickly developed an understanding of, and ability to express, concepts such as 'negative correlation' and 'best fit'. Students' numeracy skills are developed effectively, across a range of subjects.

### The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students enter the academy with attainment that is above average. Expectations are high, and students are supported to meet them. They make outstanding progress, and attain results at GCSE that are well above the national average in many subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Disadvantaged students' attainment at GCSE is typically close to that of other students nationally, as are their rates of progress. In 2014 almost two thirds gained at least five A\* to C grades at GCSE, including in English and mathematics. In English, the gap between their attainment and that of their peers was just over one grade in 2012; in 2014 the academy's data indicate that disadvantaged students made outstanding progress in English and achieved almost as highly as their peers. In 2012, disadvantaged students were, on average, one grade behind their peers in mathematics; this gap has since reduced by a half.
- Over time, the academy's highly effective pastoral care and academic support have enabled looked-after students to make outstanding progress and gain the necessary qualifications to access further education, training or employment.
- The data provided by the academy indicate that in 2014 the gap between the achievement of boys and girls at GCSE closed. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress from their individual starting points because of the very effective support that they receive.
- The most-able students achieve well; in 2014, 20% of students gained five or more GCSE A\* and A grades. Current students are making outstanding progress because teachers help them to understand precisely how to work towards the highest grades, and set work that is sufficiently challenging. Extra-curricular activities within each subject help to deepen these students' understanding.
- The academy has made use of early GCSE entry in the past, entering all students for GCSE mathematics in Year 10 before re-entering them in Year 11. The most able who gained an A\* grade at first entry went on to complete further mathematics qualifications, and AS level mathematics work, to help prepare them for A-level study. Others typically secured an A or A\* grade upon second entry. The academy now only uses first entry when this is in the interests of individual students.
- Students read widely and their written work in all subjects shows that they develop their writing skills well and are able to communicate their responses to complex questions effectively when writing at length. Those who join the academy with less strong literacy skills make rapid and significant improvements because of the expert and intensive additional support that they receive. Students are confident, and highly articulate, when speaking. Their engagement in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities helps them develop other skills and personal qualities that prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
- The work completed in students' books over time, and the academy's monitoring information, indicate that students work hard in lessons and make rapid progress across many subjects. In the lessons seen, learning was never less than secure and often outstanding.

**The sixth form provision****is good**

- Leaders have increased the range of courses that sixth form students can study, so that all are able to study – and almost all complete - subjects that are a good match for their interests and abilities. The quality of teaching, assessment and the monitoring of students' progress have all improved, and changes to the way students use their independent study periods enable them to make more productive use of this time. Leaders ensure that the personal development of sixth form students is promoted very well.
- The changes leaders introduced help students to make better progress and attain far higher grades at A level in 2014, than was the case in 2012 and 2013. Achievement in the majority of subjects is now good; the proportion of grades awarded at A\* to B was slightly higher than the national average. These results represented the academy's best-ever results by a considerable margin. However, given that these students joined the sixth form with above-average attainment, this does not mirror the outstanding progress seen at both Key Stages 3 and 4.
- The academy's monitoring data indicate that the progress of current students is accelerating, and that this is consistent with a further improvement in A level outcomes in 2015. This is consistent with evidence gathered during the inspection about the impact of teaching over time. Disadvantaged students and those who have special educational needs are continuing to make at least as good progress as their peers.
- Students who join the sixth form without at least a grade C in English or in mathematics are required to re-take these subjects. Success rates have consistently been very high in English. In mathematics, success rates have improved steadily since 2012 and are now high.
- Teaching in most subjects is effective in enabling students to make good progress over time. Teachers have high expectations and expert subject knowledge; students respond with enthusiasm to activities that engage and challenge them. Students are particularly appreciative of the support they receive from their teachers. In some subjects, the feedback students receive upon their work does not always give them clear and precise guidance about how they can improve it, which limits the progress they make.
- The behaviour of sixth form students is impeccable, both around the academy site, and within lessons. Attendance is good, as is students' punctuality. The proportion of students who complete their qualifications successfully is above the national average. Students feel safe and have a good understanding of issues relating to cyber-bullying and internet safety.
- Sixth form students are keen to engage with and contribute to the broader life of the school; many run charity events, support the learning of younger students, and contribute to the work of the school council. Every sixth form student is involved, regularly, in at least one extra-curricular activity. Students complete the extended project qualification (EPQ) which involves research, writing at length, and presenting findings to others. These activities help them develop the skills they need for further study or employment.
- Students speak highly of the support they receive when preparing applications for university. A high, and growing, proportion gain places at the top universities each year, including Oxford or Cambridge. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are almost as likely to make successful university applications as their peers because of the support and encouragement that they receive.

## 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>	136266
<b>Local authority</b>	Peterborough
<b>Inspection number</b>	449424

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<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>	1584
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	320
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gilmour McLaren
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mike Sandeman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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