

# King Edward VI College

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 130840

**Name of lead inspector:** Lindsay Hebditch HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 8 October 2010

**Type of provider:** Sixth form college

**Address:** King Edward Road  
Nuneaton  
Warwickshire  
CV11 4BE

**Telephone number:** 02476 328231

## Information about the provider

1. King Edward VI College is a medium sized sixth form college in Nuneaton, Warwickshire. The vast majority of its students are aged 16 to 18 years and follow full-time, advanced level courses. The college is a main local provider of GCE AS and A levels and provides courses in all subject areas except construction, retail and education and training. Most enrolments are in science and mathematics, and in languages, literature and culture. Some 10% of students are of minority ethnic heritage, double the proportion in the local population. Although local unemployment is low; a high proportion of students live in areas of economic disadvantage. The number of Year 11 pupils in Nuneaton who achieve five A\*-C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is below both the national and Warwickshire averages.
  
2. All provision funded by the Young People’s Learning Agency was covered by the inspection, and two subject areas, science and mathematics and visual and performing arts and media, were inspected in depth.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
<p><b>Provision for young learners:</b></p> <p>Further education (16 to18)</p>	<p>1,093 full-time learners 37 part-time learners</p>
<p><b>Provision for adult learners:</b></p> <p>Further education (19+)</p>	<p>13 full-time learners 2 part-time learners</p>

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Science and mathematics	3
Visual and performing arts and media	3

## Overall effectiveness

3. The college is recovering from a period of uncertainty during which few significant improvements were made to the quality of provision and outcomes remained static. The new Principal, well supported by her senior management team and governors, has changed the culture of the college to become more self-critical and is tackling areas of underperformance vigorously. The recent management restructure has been successful in making accountability clearer and improving communication. Staff morale is high. It is too early to assess the impact of many of the changes that have been made, but there are encouraging signs that teaching and learning, and some aspects of students' outcomes, although remaining satisfactory, are improving.
4. Success rates in some subjects have improved significantly, but the college knows that variations between subjects are too great. However, there are no significant differences between the outcomes of learners from different minority ethnic backgrounds, or those who find learning difficult. Students very much appreciate the college and reflect this through their good attendance, punctuality and attitudes to work. The quality of lessons has improved since the last inspection and teachers are adopting imaginative approaches to capture and maintain the interest of students. However, lessons are not always planned to provide sufficient challenge to all students. Assessment, although generally

accurate and used well to monitor progress, is not used sufficiently to plan learning. The college provides a good range of GCE AS and A-level subjects but few vocational options. Partnerships are good and productive work with universities helps the college to maintain good rates of progression into higher education (HE). Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, but with particularly effective support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who match the progress of other students. Individual tutorials work well, but group tutorials are often weak. Leadership and management are improving at all levels within the college. Quality assurance is supported by improved and accurate management data, although the college recognises that the implementation of new systems has been more effective in some subjects than others. The college makes an accurate assessment of its main strengths and areas for improvement.

## Main findings

- The college provides a safe and welcoming environment for students. Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are good.
- Success rates are satisfactory but are much higher in some subject areas than others. Students make satisfactory progress overall and recent progress in GCE AS-level subjects has been good. The proportion of students that achieve high grades is improving, but remains below the national figure.
- The college is successful in ensuring that there are no major differences between the success rates of different groups of students. There are no significant differences in performance between students grouped according to their gender or ethnic heritage. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress which is similar to that of their peers.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of lessons has improved since the last inspection and very few are now less than satisfactory.
- In the best lessons teachers identify students' starting points and thus provide a secure base for learning. In less successful lessons, there is sometimes a lack of a clear focus on the development of learning, teachers dominate lessons and the opportunities for students to develop their own ideas are reduced.
- Lesson planning is variable. The best examples identify how the learning needs of individual students are to be addressed but in too many instances this information is lacking and the resulting lessons fail to provide all students with sufficient challenge.
- Teachers make effective use of information learning technology (ILT) in lessons. The college's virtual learning environment is being used to increasingly good effect and in drama and science is providing learning materials in an exciting range of media to support learning.
- The assessment of students' work is satisfactory. The majority of teachers provide helpful feedback to students but do not give sufficient attention to developing the accuracy of students' grammar and spelling. Students' targets are mostly clear and precise but do not always provide students with sufficient information about what their next steps in learning should be.
- The college makes a satisfactory response to the needs and interests of its users. It offers a good range of GCE AS and A-level subjects with good progression to HE. Subject enrichment is good but participation in cross-college enrichment activities is low.
- Partnerships are good, particularly with local schools and universities. Employer engagement across the college is less well developed.
- Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Students receive very good guidance to prepare them for university but guidance is less effective for those seeking employment. Additional learning support is good. Tutorial provision is inconsistent and group tutorials are often weak.
- The Principal provides strong leadership and ensures that the college's clear strategic vision is communicated effectively to staff. Managers receive accurate

and relevant management information and are using it to monitor provision more effectively.

- Quality assurance arrangements have improved. The college is able to identify its strengths and areas for improvement accurately and is taking action to share good practice and manage performance, although it is too early to measure fully? the impact of these changes.

### **What does King Edward VI College need to do to improve further?**

- Identify the best features of GCE AS and A-level provision and develop them in all subjects, in order to help students make better progress and achieve higher grades.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons by matching activities to the skills and needs of students and using assessment to plan learning as well as monitor progress.
- Improve the planning and delivery of tutorials so that they are of consistently good quality across the college.
- Measure the impact of the new quality assurance arrangements on provision and outcomes for students, in particular the impact of staff training on the quality of teaching and learning, so that the college has a more secure base for planning subsequent improvements.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the relaxed, friendly atmosphere
- being treated as an adult
- having to work hard
- the guidance on progression to higher education (HE)
- the good range of enrichment
- the friendly and helpful tutors.
- plenty of places to study during free periods.

#### **What learners would like to see improved:**

- more social space and a larger cafeteria
- poor quality accommodation for some science subjects
- more healthy meal options in the canteen
- more opportunities to undertake charitable work in the community.

### **Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

- there were insufficient responses from employers to represent their views.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 3**

5. The new Principal brings considerable energy to improving areas where provision is unsatisfactory, some of them long standing, and together with her senior management team is overseeing improvements to college procedures and the quality of teaching and learning. However, many of the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report remain. Although inspectors found that actions to bring about necessary improvements are in place, they are still too recent to have achieved their full impact. The Principal, senior managers and governors have a clear strategic vision and a clear sense of the role of the college in the community it serves. They communicate this vision effectively and have supported each other constructively through a significant restructure of management roles. The new management structure is beginning to improve communication and is enabling staff to share good practice more easily, as well as giving middle managers greater ownership of their areas of work. Although this has resulted in much improved morale, the measures have not yet had sufficient impact on students and their learning. Management information is accurate and managers at all levels have easy access to the reports they need. Self-assessment now takes a prominent role in the college's quality improvement activities. Inspectors agreed with the vast majority of the college's judgements.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 3**

6. Students enter the college with grades at GCSE that are below those typical for sixth form colleges. They make satisfactory progress so that they achieve the grades expected of them at GCE AS and A level based on their starting points; although progress in GCE AS levels has recently improved and is now good. The proportion of students who achieve the highest grades is improving, but remains below the most recent national rates. The overall GCE AS and A-level success rates have remained stable since the last inspection at close to the most recent national average but this conceals significant variations in the success rates of different subjects. These variations reflect strongly the effectiveness of teaching and learning in each subject. The college is successful in ensuring that the success rates of different groups of students are consistent. The success rates of students from different ethnic heritages are similar. The outcomes of male and female students at GCE A level are the same and although female students perform better than male students at GCE AS level, the gap is closing. Students who find learning difficult receive highly effective support so that they achieve as well as other students.
7. Students enjoy their time at college and their attendance and punctuality are good. They have to work hard in most subjects and use the college's study facilities well to consolidate their learning. The development of economic and social-well being is satisfactory. Most students who choose to progress to HE.

8. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop good skills to prepare them for future independent living. Students say they feel safe in the college; they understand and practise mutual respect so that incidents of bullying and discrimination are extremely rare. Students who follow science courses work safely in their practical lessons. The college provides a wide range of information on health and well-being but although most students understand the importance of a healthy diet they do not always reflect this in their choice of meals in the cafeteria. Participation in sports activities is good. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the community, particularly through fundraising for national charities. Inspectors found that the college makes good arrangements for students to participate in activities which benefit the local community; however, students said that they would like still more opportunities to become involved in this valuable work.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 3**

9. Inspectors judged the quality of teaching and learning to be satisfactory, which is the same as the college's judgement in its self-assessment report. The quality of lessons has improved since the last inspection. The college has identified correctly that very few lessons are less than satisfactory and is working hard both to increase the proportion that is good and outstanding and to improve the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning within and between subjects. Teachers are mostly well qualified and experienced. In the best lessons they bring their subjects to life through a variety of interesting activities which capture and maintain the interest of students. In these very successful and often highly imaginative lessons, teachers use assessment well to identify students' starting points accurately and so provide a secure base for learning. Less successful lessons sometimes lack a clear focus on learning, teachers dominate lessons and the opportunities for students to develop their own ideas are reduced. Lesson planning is variable. The best examples identify how the learning needs of individual students are to be addressed but in too many instances this important information is lacking and the resulting lessons fail to provide all students with sufficient challenge. In nearly all lessons teachers provide a good range of learning activities but they sometimes fail to identify clearly enough what students are expected to gain from them. Teachers make effective use of ILT in lessons. The college's virtual learning environment is being used increasingly to good effect and in drama and science is providing learning materials in an exciting range of media to support learning.
10. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory. Most work is marked accurately, although in some subjects teachers have yet to become fully familiar with examination board requirements for the highest grades. The majority of teachers provide helpful feedback to students on their marked work but do not give sufficient attention to developing the accuracy of students' grammar and spelling.
11. Provision to meet users' needs is satisfactory. The college offers a very good range of GCE AS and A-level subjects but little vocational provision. The broad



range of cross-college enrichment activities is appreciated by students, particularly the fair trade tuck shop, although participation in some events is low. Where teachers organise subject specific enrichment activities, participation is much higher. Workshops are provided in all subjects and are most effective when activities are targeted carefully towards students' specific learning needs.

12. Partnership working is good. The college has developed highly effective links with schools, including special schools, and the local general FE college to underpin curriculum planning and ensure that the needs of young people are met. The number of young people not in education, employment or training locally has decreased. Links with HE providers are good and support good progression into HE, particularly for students who come from backgrounds where there is no history of participation in HE, or for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Employer links are effective in business and health and social care but less well developed in other subjects.
13. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The college provides a broad range of information through taster days, the internet, subject interviews and induction to ensure that students follow the most appropriate course. Student satisfaction with this aspect of provision is high and fewer students are changing course during the first term than in previous years. Students receive good advice about progression into HE but support for the minority of students who wish to progress to employment is insufficient.
14. Tutorial provision is inconsistent and some group tutorials are weak. Students value the good support and advice they receive from tutors in individual sessions where their progress is monitored carefully and individual targets are set and reviewed. The purpose of group tutorials is less clear; sometimes tutors engage in individual interviews while the rest of the group continue with other work, to the detriment of both activities.
15. The college has strengthened its procedures for identifying students who require additional learning support and is identifying more students who require help with literacy and numeracy. The proportion of students who choose to take up the offer of additional support is increasing. Students with specific needs are supported well; they have access to a good range of resources, adaptations and assistive technology which help them overcome their barriers to learning. Students with dyslexia receive very good support from well qualified staff.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 3**

16. The Principal's strong leadership ensures that the college's strategic vision maintains its focus on improving provision and outcomes for students, and being inclusive. She receives highly effective support from her senior management team and together they have galvanised the college into tackling areas for improvement. The college's new management structure makes

accountability clearer, improves communication between all staff, and gives greater responsibility to curriculum managers to improve performance in the areas for which they are responsible. Increasingly, staff are given demanding improvement targets, although this is not yet consistent across all areas. Data are accurate and management information reports are used well to monitor outcomes and identify areas for improvement.

17. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have an appropriate range of skills to offer sound advice about all aspects of the college's work. They work productively with the Principal and now monitor the performance of the college more closely. They are particularly insistent that the college spends money wisely. Governors ask challenging questions of managers, and welcome the insights of the student governors.
18. The promotion of safeguarding is satisfactory. The college complies fully with all legislation, and takes appropriate and prompt action if any incidents are reported. In addition, all those involved in safeguarding benefit from regular review meetings. This brings a greater depth of understanding of the many factors involved in keeping students safe. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Discrimination and bullying are not tolerated and the college provides a good range of events to promote racial equality. The college identifies groups whose success rates are not as high as the overall college rate and acts promptly to raise the rates for these groups. Students receiving additional learning support now succeed at the same rate as other students; this was an area for improvement at the previous inspection. The college complies with all current equalities legislation and guidance and staff have received relevant training. However, some impact measurements are not sufficiently explicit and records of observations do not provide a detailed evaluation of the promotion of equality and diversity in lessons. The composition of the staff and governors reflects the student population. Access for students with reduced mobility is satisfactory and students are able to play a full part in college life. A multi-faith chaplaincy actively promotes students' understanding of other cultures and beliefs.
19. Arrangements for students to contribute their views and promote improvement are satisfactory. The college has developed and extended procedures so that students can have more opportunities to contribute to college planning. The student forum has more extensive representation this year but has not yet had sufficient time to demonstrate how effective it will be in articulating students' views. Students' views are not used sufficiently in providing evidence to support the college's judgements on the quality of provision.
20. Since the previous inspection quality improvement strategies have been strengthened to include regular 'health checks' of provision. Self-assessment is inclusive, and now forms part of an annual cycle of monitoring and review. Lesson observation procedures are much improved; the grades and comments of college observers match those of inspectors very closely. Staff development is plentiful and focused on improving teaching and learning. However, the college does not measure the impact of this training on the planning and

conduct of lessons. The college provides satisfactory value for money. Students' progress and attainment of learning goals is satisfactory. Class sizes are high, resources are deployed efficiently and financial management is good. Accommodation is mostly satisfactory; although some buildings are old, they are well equipped.

## Subject areas

### Science and mathematics

### Grade 3

#### Context

21. The college offers GCE AS and A levels in applied science, biology, chemistry, mathematics, further mathematics and physics to 981 students who are mostly aged 16 to 18 and following full-time programmes. Psychology, earth science, environmental science and electronics are also offered but were not part of the scope of this inspection. A further 88 students are taking GCSEs in science and mathematics.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory and improving. Success rates are high in GCE AS-level applied science and further mathematics with a good proportion of students achieving the highest grades. However, success rates in other subjects are at, or below national figures and the proportion of high grades is generally lower.
- The proportion of students achieving A\*-C in GCSE mathematics is above the national figure but the number of students achieving high grades has fallen since coursework was removed from the examination.
- Students enjoy their studies and adopt safe working practices in the laboratories. Science students develop good analytical skills through their experimental work whilst mathematics students demonstrate considerable enthusiasm and flair in manipulating and presenting data.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the proportion of lessons that are good or better is improving. Teachers have good subject knowledge and mostly plan their lessons well, often featuring the use of ILT to capture and maintain students' interest. In the minority of lessons where planning is less effective, teachers do not provide tasks to meet the needs of all students and the progress they make is much slower.
- The assessment of students' work is satisfactory. Most teachers check students' understanding in lessons and mark their written work accurately. However, the quality of feedback on written work is more variable; sometimes teachers do not give students clear directions on how to improve their written work.
- The college provides a good range of GCE AS and A-level subjects and effective additional support through carefully targeted workshops to enable students to improve their progress. Progression between GCE AS and A level and into HE is good.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent changes to the management structure have been well received by staff and have led to a more purposeful drive to raise standards. Although these changes have been recent, many aspects of work already show signs of improvement, including the quality of teaching and learning and student progress monitoring.

- Good practice is shared effectively within and between subjects and continuous professional development is focused correctly on improving learning still further. Self-assessment is now rigorous and data are used widely to inform judgements. Resources are good, although some laboratories are in need of refurbishment.

**What does King Edward VI College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve success rates and the proportion of high grades by providing lessons that consistently inspire and challenge students.
- Ensure that students are provided with sufficient information through assessment to enable them to take control of their own learning and meet their potential fully.
- Implement the new quality improvement procedures consistently so that the variability in subject performance is reduced and students make equally good progress in all subjects.

## Visual and performing arts and media

## Grade 3

### Context

22. The college offers GCE AS and A levels in art and design, film studies, media studies, music, performing arts, and drama. The vast majority of the current 441 enrolments are of students aged 16 to 18 following full-time programmes. Some 65% of students are female.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory and improving. Success rates have risen to above national figures in GCE A-level media studies, film studies, music, art and design, and in GCE AS-level performing arts but are low in GCE AS-level drama.
- Students mostly achieve grades that are similar to those predicted, based on their prior attainment. Work is of a satisfactory standard but a low proportion of students achieve high grades.
- Students enjoy their studies, work well together and develop good practical and social skills. Attendance and punctuality are excellent. Students are encouraged to demonstrate the wide range of techniques necessary to develop imaginative and competent artistic work and increasing numbers are producing highly imaginative drawings, manipulating images or interpreting text effectively.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are highly enthusiastic and in the best lessons plans imaginative and challenging work enables students to make good progress. In the minority of less successful lessons activities lack variety and the learning that teachers plan for is too slow to challenge the most able students.
- The assessment of students' work varies between subjects but is satisfactory overall. Some teachers express a lack of confidence in their own ability to interpret grade boundaries; work in art and design was graded too highly in 2009/10. The majority of student work, including recent induction assignments has been marked accurately, but not all students are aware of how to improve their performance and achieve their targets.
- The college provides a good range of advanced level subjects and a wide range of subject-based enrichment. Teachers give freely of their time outside of their timetabled hours to provide additional classes, which students welcome and enjoy.
- Leadership and management are good. Communication between managers and teachers is good, morale has improved and the teaching team is beginning to share good practice more effectively. Continuous professional development is satisfactory. Teachers have received good training in safeguarding, equal opportunities and active learning strategies, but insufficient subject specific training.

- Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and improving. The college has managed its teaching accommodation well, including the provision of a well-equipped media suite this year. Performing arts lessons take place in the local community theatre which gives students an excellent introduction to a professional environment.

**What does King Edward VI College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve success rates by making lessons exciting and challenging for all students.
- Improve the consistency of assessment. Provide students with a clearer understanding of the progress they have made and how to improve.
- Provide teachers with more opportunities to improve their specialist knowledge, particularly in relation to helping them increase the proportion of high grades that students achieve.

## Information about the inspection

23. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's vice-principal as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
24. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions and tutorials. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.



**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**King Edward VI College**  
**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>		
Full-time learners	1106	1093
Part-time learners	39	37
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3	
How well do learners progress?	3	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?	3	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?	3	
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3	
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>	
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3	
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?	3	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3	

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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