

The Sixth Form College, Solihull

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130482

Name of lead inspector: Lindsay Hebditch HMI

Last day of inspection: 7 October 2011

Type of provider: Sixth form college

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Information about the provider

1. The Sixth Form College, Solihull is a large sixth form college. It provides sixth form education for the borough of Solihull but also recruits approximately a third of its 2,674 students from south Birmingham. The vast majority of its students are aged 16 to 18 years and follow full-time, advanced level courses. The college 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.
2. The college serves areas of affluence within Solihull but the majority of its students who live in south Birmingham are from areas of high social, economic and educational deprivation. The proportion of young people achieving five or more GCSEs at A* to C in Solihull is well above the national average but the proportion is below the national average in Birmingham. More than a quarter of students are of minority ethnic heritage, which is well above the figure for the local area. The largest group of minority ethnic students is of Pakistani heritage.
3. All provision funded by the Young People's Learning Agency was covered by the inspection and four subject areas, science and mathematics, visual and performing arts, social sciences and English and modern foreign languages were inspected in depth.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Provision for young learners: 14 to16 Further education (16 to 18)	1 full-time learner 2,649 full-time learners 13 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	11 full-time learners

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Grade 3
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3

Subject Areas	Grade
Science and mathematics	3
Visual and performing arts	3
Social sciences	3
English and modern foreign languages	2

Overall effectiveness

- The college is recovering from a period of major staff changes during which students' outcomes remained static and few significant improvements were made to the quality of provision. The Principal and new senior management team, ably supported by governors, have generated a greater sense of urgency in the college so that performance is now measured more accurately and robust action is taken to address underperformance. There are encouraging signs that recent initiatives are being successful, for example in the improved management of teaching and learning and some aspects of students' outcomes. However, the variability in standards between subjects has yet to be eradicated, and the quality of students' experiences at college is dictated by the subject choice they make. Students are exceptionally happy at the college and their mutually supportive and harmonious relationships are the mainstay of college life.
- Success rates are broadly average overall and students make satisfactory progress, although the proportion of students who achieve A and B grades is

below average. Students of Pakistani heritage are less successful than other groups, but a higher proportion of them than other students' progress to higher education (HE). The majority of lessons are good but the quality of lesson planning is often unsatisfactory so that teachers have no secure basis for meeting the individual learning needs of students, and in particular identifying the opportunities to develop students' language and mathematical skills. Students' needs and interests are addressed well through the curriculum and they receive clear, impartial advice on subject and career choices.

6. Recent changes to the arrangements for support, including the appointment of academic coaches, have been well-considered but it is too early to assess their impact, particularly on retention rates which are still low in many subjects. Students' views are listened to, but do not figure as prominently as they might in the college's self-assessment procedures.

Main findings

- The college provides a welcoming environment in which students are happy and enjoy harmonious relationships with their peers. Students feel very safe and are treated fairly; procedures to ensure their safety and well-being are good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and behaviour is good.
- Success rates are average in A- level subjects but are below average in AS-level subjects and on national certificate and diploma courses. Students make satisfactory progress overall but the standards they achieve varies widely between subjects. The proportion of students that achieve high grades is below the national figure.
- Most students, grouped according to their ethnic heritage, achieve similar success rates. However, students of Pakistani heritage achieve success rates which are below those of other groups. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve success rates and make progress which is similar to that of their peers.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the most effective lessons students are engaged fully, work hard and make good progress. In a minority of lessons teachers do not vary the range of learning activities sufficiently to capture and maintain the interest of students.
- The quality of lesson planning varies considerably. In a significant minority of lessons, teachers take insufficient account of how the learning needs of individual students are to be met or how their language and mathematical skills will be developed in order to help them achieve their learning goals. Assessment is satisfactory.
- The curriculum is good. The college provides a broad range of AS- and A- level courses, together with an appropriate choice of vocational options. Students' learning is developed and extended through enrichment activities and workshops but participation in cross-college enrichment events is low.

- Partnership working is good. The college enjoys productive relationships with local universities which help students make an effective transition to their careers in HE. The affiliation with Careers Academy UK helps the college improve students' aspirations and employability skills through paid internships, mentoring and links with a wide range of employers.
- Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Careers education and guidance are effective. The majority of learners who complete an A-level course progress to HE. Tutorial support is strong and the newly appointed academic coaches work well with teachers to motivate students. However, the new arrangements have yet to have sufficient impact on improving retention.
- College managers set a clear direction, with strategic aims focused closely on improving provision and outcomes for students. Some underperforming curriculum areas have begun to improve, although overall improvements in outcomes are not yet apparent.
- Students' views are gathered widely. These are listened to carefully, and used to bring about improvements in many areas. However, student views do not yet figure sufficiently prominently in the college's self-assessment procedures and they receive insufficient feedback on the outcomes of their suggestions.
- Quality assurance systems have identified accurately areas for improvements, but the impact of actions to bring about improvement is inconsistent. This is reflected in, for example, inconsistent success rates and teaching and learning grades.

What does The Sixth Form College, Solihull need to do to improve further?

- Develop the ability of staff to identify and cultivate students' language and mathematical skills so that students make quicker progress and are better supported in achieving high grades.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons by improving the quality of lesson planning and ensuring that teaching addresses the learning needs of students more accurately.
- Ensure that the implementation of recommended actions from teaching and learning observations is monitored well to bring about improvements to classroom practice.
- Ensure rigorous monitoring of action plans and data to identify areas for improvement, so that planned actions have a more consistent impact on the provision and outcomes for students.
- Refine the process whereby feedback can be given promptly to students when they make suggestions for improvements so that they know that the college is listening to them and so that the profile of students' views is raised.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the friendly, safe and harmonious atmosphere
- the high quality resources to support learning
- the well-informed and enthusiastic teachers
- the range of enrichment activities
- the way in which they are respected as adults.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the cost and quality of food in the refectory
- the range of techniques used in lessons to make them interesting
- the long gaps between lessons
- the amount of social space.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

7. Since the previous inspection the college has restructured its management team to give greater accountability and responsibility to curriculum leaders. These leaders are well trained, and work well together to drive the new college strategy to improve provision and success rates. The Principal brings commitment and considerable energy to his leadership role and has succeeded in maintaining good levels of morale in the college. Although outcomes have not improved during the previous three years, the strategic plan sets out clear aims with a timetable for completion that is focused well on students and their learning. It is too early to judge whether all actions have had a positive impact, although those designed to bring about improvements in underperforming subjects are already benefiting students in some curriculum areas. Governors are well informed and provide appropriate challenge to managers. Students' views are gathered, and lead to developments and improvements across both curriculum and social aspects of the college. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate in its commentary, although inspectors did not agree with some of the grades. The use of data to support judgements and to identify areas for improvement is inconsistent, and in some curriculum areas it is underdeveloped.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

8. In 2009/10 the proportion of students who completed successfully an A-level course was close to the national average, although the proportion of students who achieved the highest grades was below average. The success rates on AS-level courses were below average, as was the proportion of students achieving high grades. Success rates on advanced level vocational courses were low. The overall AS- and A-level success rates have remained stable since the last inspection but this conceals significant variations in the success rates of different subjects. Success rates in A-level health and social care, A-level Spanish and AS-level geography are high but they are very low in AS-level mathematics, history and physics. These differences reflect strongly the effectiveness of teaching and learning in each subject. In the majority of subjects students make similar progress to that predicted for them, based on their GCSE results. The success rates of the majority of different groups of students are broadly consistent, although students of Pakistani heritage, as at the time of the previous inspection, achieve lower success rates than other students. The success rates of male and female students at AS level are similar but at A level female students achieve higher success rates than male students. Students who find learning difficult receive highly effective support so that they achieve as well as other students.

9. Students enjoy their time at college, work hard in most subjects and use the college's study facilities well to extend their learning. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The development of economic and social-well being is satisfactory. Most students progress to HE, including many from backgrounds where there is little history of higher education. Students feel extremely safe at college. They understand and practise mutual respect so that incidents of bullying and discrimination are very 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 healthy diets they do not always reflect this in their choice of meals in the refectory. Participation in sports activities by students other than those following courses in sport is low. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the community; however, students said that they would like more opportunities to become involved in environmental and conservation work.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

10. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of lessons observed by inspectors was mostly good, but with a significant minority of satisfactory lessons and very few that were outstanding. The most effective lessons make imaginative use of learning resources and provide a wide range of activities to capture and maintain students' interest. In these lessons teachers use questioning skilfully to ensure that students understand, rather than merely remember what they are studying, and develop learning at a challenging pace. Students enjoy such lessons and are attentive and productive. In the less successful lessons the teacher concentrates on the whole group and does not provide students with sufficient opportunities to develop their own solutions to problems or share ideas with their peers. In these lessons the more able students in particular receive insufficient challenge and their progress is slower than it should be. Lesson planning varies in quality and at its best provides a clear identification of learning objectives and information on how different groups of students are intended to achieve them. However, a significant minority of lesson plans are cursory and do not identify clear learning objectives or take sufficient account of individual students' starting points.
11. Support for students' literacy and numeracy needs is underdeveloped. The college has no literacy and numeracy strategy or implementation policy and screening of students' literacy and numeracy needs is insufficient. Staff have not had training in developing students' language and mathematical skills.
12. Assessment is satisfactory. The college promotes assessment for learning as part of its teaching strategy but it has yet to be adopted in all curriculum areas. Formative assessment is used well to support students' progress in some, but not all, subjects. Homework is set regularly and in the majority of cases marked accurately and promptly, providing students with helpful suggestions on how to improve their work.

13. Provision to meet users' needs is good. The college offers a very good range of AS- and A- level subjects and a small, but well-chosen range of vocational courses. Students have many opportunities to broaden their studies through the extensive programme of enrichment activities. Events which are directly related to students' main subjects are very popular, but participation in cross-college activities such as sports and community work is much lower. Nearly all subjects provide workshops, but these are more successful at helping students to improve their work in some subjects than others.
14. Partnership working is good. The college has developed highly effective links with schools to support transition arrangements and underpin curriculum planning. Productive relationships with the local general FE college and regional universities are used well to familiarise students with the next stage in their learning. The college is an affiliate of Career Academies UK, and this excellent link increases significantly students' aspirations and employability skills through paid internships, mentoring and links with a wide range of employers.
15. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The college provides a broad range of information before and at enrolment and has revised its entry requirements so that all students have a realistic chance of being successful on their chosen course. However, retention rates vary between subjects and although improving remain satisfactory overall. The proportion of students who progress from AS level to A level is generally satisfactory but low in science and mathematics. Students receive good advice about progression into HE and have good opportunities to visit different universities before making their choices. The majority of students who complete an A- level course progress to HE. Tutorial provision is good. The recent appointment of specialist academic coaches has improved the consistency and quality of tutorials. Students say, and inspectors agree, that procedures to monitor their progress are much improved. Students with specific needs are supported well; they have access to a good range of resources and assistive technology to support their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

16. Since the previous inspection the college has developed a clear strategic plan that is well understood by staff and monitored frequently by senior managers and governors. Curriculum managers are clear about what is expected of them, and are beginning to work well together to implement improvements, particularly to the quality of teaching and learning. The observation of teaching and learning is much improved and generally accurate, but systems for improving satisfactory teaching are not monitored sufficiently nor linked formally to staff appraisal. Resources are good and well maintained and the improved electronic individual learning plan ensures good information sharing about students with staff and parents.

17. Governors are involved fully in setting the strategic vision of the college, ensuring that it is realistic and that managers are held accountable for its completion. Governors have an appropriate range of expertise to offer sound advice about the college's work. They are kept fully informed by senior managers and have correctly identified that improving success rates, closing the gaps between the performance of different groups of students and subjects, and maintaining the college's financial health are the college's key priorities.
18. Safeguarding arrangements are good. The college has excellent links with local authority safeguarding teams and takes prompt and extremely effective action on referrals. All staff are trained and receive regular updating, with extra training for the nominated staff and governor. The single central register is comprehensive and up to date. Site access security is stringent, and risk assessment is carried out rigorously. Governors fulfil all legislative requirements and promote safeguarding well.
19. Equality and diversity are satisfactory. The college has closed the gap in success rates between most groups of students, but that between students of Pakistani heritage and other students has increased. The gap is most evident in AS- level subjects in the science and mathematics curriculum area, and is largely the result of poor retention. However, some three quarters of Pakistani students who complete their courses enter HE, which is a higher proportion than for other groups of students. Strategies designed to reduce the gap include improved attendance monitoring and support for students at risk, new entry criteria to AS- and A- levels, increased attention to initial guidance and a wider curriculum offer. Attendance rates have improved, with that of Pakistani students increasing at a higher rate than those of other groups. Equality and diversity are well promoted across the college and in lessons students work harmoniously together.
20. Students make their views known through a wide variety of routes, including a student council, student governors, class representatives, surveys, subject focus groups and their academic coaches. They are involved routinely in appointments of new staff and they have influenced access rights to the electronic learning plan, the use and furnishing of social areas and curriculum design. However, the college is aware that it needs to ensure better communication with students about what has happened as a result of their suggestions, and to ensure that curriculum teams incorporate the views of students in their subject reviews.
21. Quality assurance is thorough and self-assessment is satisfactory. College managers are skilled at identifying areas for improvement, and set appropriately challenging targets. Improvements are evident in curriculum areas that were underperforming, but success rates, particularly at AS level, show little evidence yet of the impact of improvement measures. The college makes good use of partners with whom it moderates self-assessment reports and shares good practice.

22. Value for money is satisfactory. Success rates are close to national averages; however a significant minority of students do not make as much progress as expected from their starting points. The college manages its finances well. It has introduced effective energy saving and recycling practices which have a positive influence on expenditure and the environment.

Subject areas

Science and mathematics

Grade 3

Context

23. The college offers GCE AS and A levels in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, further mathematics and statistics to 1,793 students. Geology is also offered but was not part of the scope of this inspection. A further 26 students take GCSE in mathematics and 47 follow the first certificate programme in applied science. Approximately one third of the students are of Asian heritage.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Success rates are broadly in line with the national averages for sixth form colleges at A- level but are below average at AS- level.
- The proportion of students achieving high grades is above average in A- level chemistry but below average in other subjects. Value-added information shows that students mostly make the progress expected of them, but this is not the case in AS- level mathematics, where students make insufficient progress. The standard of students' work is satisfactory but recent work in chemistry is good. Students are attentive, behave well and work safely in practical lessons.
- Progression from AS to A level in science and mathematics is low. Fewer than half the students who complete AS level progress to A levels in science subjects; in mathematics the progression rate has declined sharply and is very low. The majority of A- level students' progress to HE.
- Teaching and learning are good. Students participate in a variety of interesting activities which help them learn quickly; most teachers use questioning effectively but in mathematics teachers sometimes move on before all students have fully consolidated their learning.
- Teachers make effective use of ILT to make their lessons more interesting and produce high-quality support materials that benefit students. Most subjects make good use of the college's virtual learning environment but the quality of the materials placed on it varies considerably between subjects.
- Lesson planning is satisfactory. Teachers identify students' learning objectives but not how to develop their mathematical and language skills in order to help students achieve them. The majority of lesson plans do not identify sufficiently how equality and diversity are to be promoted during the lesson.
- Assessment is satisfactory. Although homework is set regularly, marking does not always provide students with sufficient information on how to improve the quality of their work. Targets for students' progress are recorded and monitored using a helpful electronic system, but although they were not particularly challenging, a significant minority of students failed to achieve their performance targets in 2009/10.

- Support for students is good. Students value the support they receive from their teachers and coaches and the quality and accuracy of attendance and progress monitoring are improving. Students in receipt of additional learning support achieve at least as well as others.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has increased the qualifications required to study AS levels this year and there is recent evidence of improving standards in science, for example in the good teaching and learning observed at this inspection. However, students' experiences of science and mathematics vary too much according to the subject combination they choose. Good practice exists in chemistry but it is not shared sufficiently with other subjects.
- Self-assessment is satisfactory. Teachers and managers in some science subjects produce accurate self-assessment which makes good use of college management information. This is not the case in other subjects where the lack of specific judgements makes it difficult for staff to produce improvement plans which have sufficient focus or rigour.

What does The Sixth Form College, Solihull need to do to improve further?

- Share good practice between subjects more effectively so that improvements in teaching are maintained and students receive a similar good experience in all science and mathematics subjects.
- Use data more effectively in self-assessment so that areas for improvement can be targeted more accurately and demanding actions for improvement can be identified.
- Improve outcomes by ensuring that teachers take sufficient account of students' current standards of mathematics and literacy and state explicitly in their lesson plans how these standards are to be improved.

Visual and performing arts

Grade 3

Context

24. The college offers GCE AS- and A- levels in art, graphics, textiles, dance, music, music technology and theatre studies to 576 students. A further 86 follow extended diplomas in fine art and performing arts.

Key findings

- Students' outcomes are satisfactory, but vary between courses and in some cases have declined since the last inspection. Success rates are similar to the very high national averages on most A- level courses but they are low in AS-level music technology and on national diploma courses owing to low retention.
- In the majority of subjects students make at least as much progress as expected, based on their GCSE grades, but dance students make good progress. Progression between AS- and A- level courses is satisfactory, and a satisfactory number of students progress to HE. Attendance is satisfactory.
- Students enjoy their studies, work safely and well together and develop good practical skills. They produce work which demonstrates good levels of imagination and creative development. Students are encouraged to take risks in their selection of visual subjects and performance themes, adding to their enjoyment of lessons and their sense of achievement when their work is successful.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers often feature the use of ILT to capture and develop students' interest. Most teachers have a clear idea of what topics are to be covered in lessons but the quality of lesson plans is often unsatisfactory and does not provide sufficient information on how learning is to be developed. As a result, learning is often slower than it should be.
- Assessment is satisfactory. The majority of teachers check students' understanding in lessons and mark their work fairly, although the quality of written feedback varies. Assignments are constructed carefully to match course aims and students are provided with clear guidance on the standard they are expected to reach if they are to achieve a high grade.
- The college provides a good range of AS- level, A- level and diploma courses, and additional specialist workshops to help students develop their work. Students benefit from a good range of enrichment which provides them with inspiration for examinations and coursework themes. Activities include visits to galleries and exhibitions in cities throughout the United Kingdom and in continental Europe.
- Guidance and support for students are good. Students who require it receive very effective additional support. Individual tutorials and informal guidance sessions are frequent and provide good opportunities to check students'

progress. Attendance has improved and is satisfactory. The majority of students progress from AS- to A- level and then to HE.

- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have taken actions, including the more effective setting and monitoring of targets, to improve areas where success rates are low or have declined but it is too early to measure the impact of these initiatives. Self-assessment is satisfactory but does not incorporate students' views sufficiently in assessing the quality of provision. Accommodation and resources are good.

What does The Sixth Form College, Solihull need to do to improve further?

- Improve retention rates on the national diploma in performing arts by changing the structure from a two-year to one-year course and by providing accreditation at certificate and diploma levels.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that lesson plans state clearly what learning is expected in lessons, and how it is to be achieved.
- Monitor rigorously recent initiatives to improve outcomes and communicate success more widely so that teachers may benefit from sharing the good practice of others.

Social sciences

Grade 3

Context

25. The college offers GCE AS- and A- levels in geography, psychology, economics, politics and sociology to 1,509 students. General studies is also offered but was not part of the scope of this inspection.

Key findings

- Outcomes are satisfactory but vary significantly between subjects. Success rates at A- level are close to the high national averages but are below average in the majority of AS- level subjects. Value-added information demonstrates that most students make the progress expected of them. The exception is geography, where AS- level and A- level success rates are high and students make good progress.
- Students demonstrate good subject knowledge and can explain with confidence relevant concepts and theories. Attendance is good and students are very well behaved with a positive attitude to their studies. An atmosphere of mutual respect is prevalent in lessons, which helps learning.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers use a variety of activities which encourage students to participate. In an A- level sociology lesson, students successfully revised key theories on the role of religion in society by playing a card game in groups and in AS- level economics students demonstrated their understanding of key concepts such as equilibrium through effective discussion.
- In less successful lessons teachers dominate and leave insufficient opportunities for students to work together and demonstrate their understanding through extended tasks in class. Lesson planning does not identify how students' individual needs are to be met and the pace of learning is slow. Teachers have access to, but do not always use, learner profiles to inform their planning. Literacy and numeracy needs are not routinely identified or supported.
- Assessment is satisfactory. Many teachers mark assessed work constructively, and identify clearly targets for improvement. However, teachers' assessment practice is inconsistent both within and between subjects and some marked work lacks detailed feedback on how students could improve it.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of students well. The college offers an appropriate range of advanced level courses. Students benefit from a range of subject specific curriculum enrichment which includes exhibitions, visits and field trips.
- Support for students is satisfactory. There is a wide choice of workshops and additional learning support in lessons for those students who would benefit from it. Careers guidance is satisfactory; students receive plenty of advice

about progression and the majority of those who complete an A-level course progress to HE.

- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new curriculum management team has identified that the inconsistency in standards between subjects is a priority for action and, although it is too early to assess the impact of recent changes, there are encouraging signs that monitoring and assessing the progress of students are improving.
- Self-assessment is satisfactory but does not use management data sufficiently in supporting judgements. This prevents the precise identification of areas for improvement and reduces the effectiveness of actions proposed to remedy them. The views of students are not given sufficient priority in self-assessment.

What does The Sixth Form College, Solihull need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of lesson planning and make better use of a wider range of learning activities so that the learning needs of all students may be met.
- Ensure that quality improvement strategies are implemented consistently across the curriculum area and listen to the views of students when assessing how successful they have been.
- Use management information more effectively to identify areas that are underperforming and provide specific targets to help them improve.

English and modern foreign languages

Grade 2

Context

26. The college offers GCE AS- and A- levels in English language, literature, language and literature, Spanish, French, German, Italian and Russian to 920 students. A further 26 students take GCSE in English. Approximately two thirds of the students are female.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Success rates and the proportion of students who achieve grades A and B are high on the majority of courses at both AS and A level. The success rate is low in AS- level English literature and has declined since the last inspection.
- Students generally make satisfactory progress in AS- level subjects and good progress at A level but the proportion of students who progress from AS level to A level has decreased. The vast majority of A- level students' progress to HE.
- Students produce good work. In English students demonstrate a good understanding and use of literary and linguistic technology and strong analytical skills. They work collaboratively with their peers and most contribute perceptively to discussion. In modern foreign languages students develop good comprehension skills and most students are confident in their use of the spoken language. Written work is of a high standard.
- Teaching and learning are good. Students benefit from the emphasis on active learning, a variety of stimulating activities and helpful resources. Teachers structure their lessons well and make skilful use of group work to motivate students and to spread good practice in learning, although in a minority of lessons their planning does not take sufficient account of the different starting points and learning needs of students.
- Teachers make very good use of digital technology, especially the college's virtual learning environment, to stimulate learners and enhance their learning. Students enjoy and value the use of digital whiteboards in classrooms and the digital technology available in the English and modern foreign language workshops.
- Assessment is good. Teachers set work regularly and their marking is accurate, fair and detailed. Students are given a clear idea of the standard of their work and receive constructive, specific suggestions on how it might be improved.
- A good variety of subjects in English and modern foreign languages meets the needs and interests of students well. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment, which include theatre links in English, foreign exchanges and work experience abroad, motivate students and support their learning.

- Students receive good support. Teachers offer good opportunities for individual help in lessons. Workshops provide valuable additional support but are not always well attended by students. Opportunities for independent study are enhanced by the availability of digitalised learning resources and materials, including virtual forums and on-line marking and feedback by teachers.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers and teachers work collaboratively to support students and focus strongly on improving standards and promoting equality and diversity in their planning. Departmental meetings provide teachers with good opportunities to review student performance and share good practice. Self-assessment is strong and uses data appropriately to identify areas for improvement.

What does The Sixth Form College, Solihull need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rate in AS- level English literature by ensuring that workshop activities are planned carefully and that students attend the workshops regularly.
- Make strategies for meeting the learning needs of all students explicit in lesson plans so that the individual needs of students are recognised and met.

Information about the inspection

27. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six 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, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report and data on students and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
28. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and emails to gain the views of students. They also looked at questionnaires students had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
The Sixth Form College, Solihull
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 using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners				
Full-time learners	2,661	1	2,649	11
Part-time learners	13	0	13	0
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3			
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3	3
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?	1			
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3			
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	3			
Quality of provision	3	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3			
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2			
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			
Leadership and management	3			
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3			
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3			
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2			
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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