

**Brighton, Hove and Sussex Sixth Form College
(BHASVIC)**

Sixth form college

Summary of key findings for learners

Inspection dates		9-12 October 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding-1
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding-1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding-1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1
This provider is outstanding because:		

- Learners make excellent progress at the college, and some exceptional progress, with most reaching a higher level of attainment than might be expected from their starting points. This added value is a consistently strong feature of the college's work.
- The college's overall success rate for AS and A-level learners, by far the largest cohort, is high, and consistently significantly better than the national average for similar colleges.
- The overall standard of learners' work is good, and outstanding on many courses. Learners attend very well and often make very rapid progress, even early in their courses, and produce work well above expected standards.
- Very good curriculum management ensures that teaching and learning are outstanding. A particularly wide and diverse range of teaching approaches is successfully employed to interest and enthuse learners, resulting in excellent outcomes.
- Assessment of learners' work and progress is outstanding; teachers provide learners with very helpful feedback on their progress. Wide-ranging assessment in lessons checks learners' progress well and helps to move learners forward.
- Support and guidance for learners are excellent, providing individualised and well-focused help for learners to achieve. Support positively develops learners' independence, rather than fostering reliance.
- Initial advice and guidance for learners are outstanding, ensuring a smooth transition from school to college, facilitated by productive partnerships with schools.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding. The Principal, senior managers and governors have ensured that the college is very successful, and that learners make excellent progress and achieve very well.
- Very good communication between staff and learners helps create an inclusive college, providing a safe and friendly environment. The college values the views of learners and parents very highly.
- Rigorous quality assurance underpins the outstanding provision and charts the way for further improvement.

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Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates for intermediate level courses and for the small number of poorer performing AS and A-level subjects.
- Ensure the embedding of aspects of equality and diversity within teaching and learning across all curriculum areas.
- Ensure that the outstanding practice within the college is shared more systematically to raise the quality of provision consistently in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
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- Learners make excellent progress, and in some cases exceptional progress. Most do much better than might be expected from their prior achievements when they join the college. This added value is a consistently strong feature of the college since the previous inspection, when it was highlighted as a key strength for A-level learners. It is particularly noteworthy given the relatively high attainment of learners when they start their courses. Most recently, in 2011/12, the overall added value for the college, on all key measures, has further increased.
- The college's overall high success rate is in line with that for sixth form colleges nationally, but for the vast majority of learners, largely constituted by AS and A-level learners, it is consistently significantly better than national rates. Success rates for the much smaller number of learners on intermediate courses are lower overall, especially for vocational courses, and are just below national comparators.
- The majority of AS and A-level subjects have success rates above the norm, with a significant number well above. For example, they are outstanding in the visual arts, mathematics and English. Learners' achievement of high grades is good. A small minority of subjects present the college with significant challenges to improve. For example, success rates in A-level physics dropped well below the national average in 2011/12.
- Facilitated by comprehensive initial diagnosis of learners' needs, learners develop their English and mathematical skills well. The college has chosen to integrate work to improve key skills within learners' subjects and through tutorials. The high-grade success rates for GCSE English and mathematics require improvement.
- Teachers and specialist staff support learners well in their progression to higher level courses. Around three-quarters of A-level learners in any year apply to higher education, with around two-thirds gaining immediate entry. Significant numbers of learners successfully apply the year after leaving the college.
- The college increasingly helps learners to widen their ambitions, including preparation for employment, as more decide not to progress to higher education. The college correctly identifies that it is not yet fully recording the wider destinations of learners.
- The overall standard of learners' work is good, and outstanding on a significant number of courses. Many learners make very rapid progress, even in the early stages of their courses, and produce work well above expected standards, as for example in the visual arts and in mathematics. They often develop good independent learning skills, but at the same time work well in teams.
- Learners' enjoyment of their studies and wider life at college is reflected in their excellent attendance and punctuality. Learners work well with each other and with their teachers. Opportunities to develop wider social and personal skills are good, across the curriculum and

through tutorials and enrichment activities. Work experience opportunities are relatively few in number, but growing.

- Activities within the community are extensive and many learners undertake voluntary activities that help to build their self-esteem.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching and learning are outstanding, as reflected in outstanding outcomes. A college strategy to improve teaching and learning is understood, and well implemented, by managers and teachers. The vast majority of lessons show evidence of good planning and are purposeful, productive and challenging. Learners are frequently encouraged to develop their independent learning skills and the individual needs of learners are well met.
- Teachers' questioning of learners is well developed, both to ensure the promotion of learning and to address learners' particular needs. Learners value the opportunity to engage in debate in lessons, skilfully managed by teachers. A small minority of lessons are too teacher dominated and learners remain largely passive.
- Strategies for monitoring learners' progress and attendance are very good. The effective management of attendance is helped by clearly understood and well-implemented procedures. Progress is monitored effectively, both within lessons and through twice-yearly subject reviews. Computer-based individual learning plans, still developing, provide a single, accessible repository for all information.
- Learners' support and guidance are excellent, both in and out of lessons. Learning support is outstanding, including support for vulnerable learners and in subject workshops. Support is individualised and relevant, and aimed at developing learners' independence rather than encouraging over reliance. A specialist student services building, a well-resourced learning centre and a variety of rooms for structured individual study support this work.
- Target-setting for learners' improvement is good in the majority of subjects. Through highly aspirational negotiated grades, targets often stretch learners beyond their minimum expectations, although not all learners fully understand the purpose of their target grades.
- Tutorial provision is very good and much improved since the previous inspection. It has been thoughtfully restructured to create a responsive, individualised and flexible system. Learners particularly value individual support sessions, especially in the second year when they are used for UCAS preparations. Support for transition to higher education is outstanding.
- Assessment of learners' work is outstanding and learners value feedback from teachers. A college strategy makes clear the high expectations of assessment and it is well implemented by subject areas, matched to learners' needs. Formative assessment in lessons is made interesting to learners using a wide range of methods, including mini whiteboards, red/amber/green cards and mobile technology.
- Initial advice and guidance for learners are outstanding with many activities, such as 'taster days', facilitated through productive partnerships with schools. Learners have numerous opportunities to disclose learning needs and teachers use this information well to ensure appropriate support and to plan effective learning programmes.
- Resources to support teaching and learning are very good. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well within lessons to promote learning, often with excellently conceived software packages. The good use of social networking sites fosters and promotes subject discussions. A well-developed college virtual learning environment (VLE) is used extensively and routinely to ensure that learning continues outside the classroom, for example through e-learning at home.
- Subject area leads analyse the achievement of different groups of learners and adjust teaching, learning and assessment to initiate improvement. Teachers are responsive to opportunities to promote equality and diversity where subjects naturally lend themselves to this, for example the creation of a women's football team and a media project on Black directors. However, themes of equality and diversity are insufficiently exploited in too many lessons.

- The enrichment of learners' main studies is very strong, with a range of opportunities across the college, for example a cross-college drama and musical performance is accessible to learners from all subject areas. Participation in enrichment activities is very good as learners are expected to add breadth to their programme.

Mathematics and statistics

Learning programmes for 16-18

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding, leading to outstanding outcomes on advanced level courses. Teachers consistently challenge learners and promote aspiration, which results in high grades, significantly above national averages on all but GCSE courses. Most learners make progress well above expected levels. Teachers have high expectations and, therefore, punctuality and attendance are exemplary.
- Teachers plan meticulously and adopt a variety of often innovative learning activities that ensure learners rapidly gain appropriate mathematical skills. For example, mobile phone 'apps' are used for testing understanding and competitions in the form of puzzles and quizzes, with rewards to further motivate learners. While lessons are inclusive, planning does not focus sufficiently on the promotion of issues surrounding equality and diversity.
- Independent and collaborative learning is embedded throughout the department. The layout of the rooms is conducive to learners working in groups and within these they frequently study together, discussing their learning and analysing each other's work. Learners confidently use whiteboards in their groups to test their understanding of calculus and algebra.
- Teachers use ICT very effectively to promote learning. They upload assignments to the VLE and learners find it valuable that they can use this resource to plan ahead. The learners find that appropriate software packages bring the subject to life, for example sketching polar graphs.
- Learners at all levels confidently use, in both written and oral form, appropriate mathematical language, formulae and notation that in many instances demonstrate that they are making better than expected progress. One group of learners was successfully challenged to use algebraic calculus notation more suited to undergraduate study.
- In a very small minority of lessons, learners are not suitably challenged and do not make the expected progress. Learners in these lessons are insufficiently encouraged by teachers to participate and sometimes lose focus and become distracted from their work. This is compounded by the fact that some learners find GCSE lessons are too long for them to maintain their concentration.
- Assessment of learners' understanding, which is outstanding, is embedded into almost every lesson. Teachers use questioning techniques very effectively to continuously test how well learners are progressing. Teachers prefer, when asked a question, to prompt the learner toward the answer, aid them in correcting their own errors and seek the involvement of other learners; thus ensuring that learners are challenged and, to quote one learner 'are not handed things on a plate'.
- Learners' progress is tracked continuously by an on-going series of regular short assignments and half-termly assessments. Teachers ensure that all learners keep an individual record card of progress made and areas for improvement. These are referred to regularly and learners find them extremely useful in helping them to make further progress.
- Learners value very highly the support they receive from teachers outside of lessons and the way that they are encouraged to help each other with work. Social networking sites are used very effectively to foster and promote discussions of problems and teachers post solutions to questions online for groups of learners who require assistance.

- Learners actively participate in a variety of enrichment activities which they enjoy and which give them a broader view of mathematics. These include attending lectures given by renowned mathematicians, a study trip to Barcelona and entry to the senior mathematics challenge. Teaching instils in learners a love of the subject and inspires many to progress onto further study, both in college and at university.

Science	
Learning programmes for 16-18	Good

- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Learners' success rates are mostly at or above national averages, although in environmental science and physics A level they are below. Based on their GCSE grades learners make at least their expected progress and grades at AS and A level. The attendance and punctuality of learners are excellent.
- Most lessons are well planned, including successive steps which allow learners to gain a thorough understanding of the underpinning theory before carrying out a practical experiment. For example, a physics homework task required learners to apply the theory they had learnt in lessons to construct a capacitor from household materials.
- Teachers use effective question-and-answer techniques to check learning, give pace to the lesson and to develop the understanding of learners. Sometimes questioning can continue for too long and cause a few learners to lose concentration.
- Assessment of learners is thorough and feedback is detailed, showing learners how they might improve. Learners keep their own records of assignment marks and talk with confidence about their performance to date. Teachers provide a strong focus in lessons on examination success and constantly provide tips on improving answers to gain more marks. Learners are encouraged to mark each other's work to gain an understanding of the examination mark scheme. This includes attention to spelling and scientific terminology.
- Good systems are in place to tackle any aspect of learner underperformance, but not all teachers apply these uniformly and a minority of learners are not clear of the rules. Target grades are set by teachers, but not all learners are sure of their value.
- Learners cite the high levels of support from teachers as a key strength of science provision. They appreciate the availability of staff through lunchtimes, when they are not teaching, and the help they receive through staff postings on social media sites outside of college hours. In preparation for examinations, teachers also provide helpful revision sessions using interactive on-line tutorials.
- Teachers work well to help ensure that learners pass but also that they perform to their best. A number of useful resources are well used to improve learners' study skills, especially those with lower GCSE grades who are underperforming. In chemistry lessons, teachers issue index cards and learners use them effectively to record key definitions and facts for revision. In physics, learners not taking mathematics are provided with useful support material to help them gain the necessary mathematical skills needed for the course.
- Learners benefit from numerous activities, some in partnership with local and national universities, to motivate further study of science at degree level. However, insufficient reference is made in lessons to how the subject might be applied in real life and the careers opportunities available.
- Teaching teams have an accurate view of their strengths and the areas in which they could improve. However, although a number of ideas to improve have been implemented on science courses, teachers collaborate insufficiently for learners to benefit fully from best practice. Teachers take learners' views into account. For example, in response to feedback, the biology

staff have modified laboratory coats, safety goggles and the balance of practical and theory within lessons.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory overall, although insufficient discussion on these issues takes place during lessons. Learners benefit from staff inviting appropriate role models to speak with them about relevant contemporary topics.

Visual and performing arts

Learning programmes for 16-18

Outstanding

- Success rates are consistently high and above national averages. The proportion of high grades is consistently above subject averages, and the majority of learners achieve above their original predicted grades. Attendance and behaviour are excellent. Punctuality is exemplary. Learners successfully progress into higher education with many gaining places at prestigious universities.
- The standard of learners' practical work is excellent. In textiles, the standard of work is exceptional and learners acquire a comprehensive set of skills and understanding that includes cultural awareness, fashion illustration, garment construction and surface pattern, resulting in innovative and exciting practical work.
- In the visual arts, learners use sketchbooks purposefully and successfully investigate ideas and themes in written and visual forms. Learners' written skills are very good and show advanced analytical and critical skills. The teaching of drawing is excellent and learners produce work that is expansive and bold alongside disciplined and formal work.
- In the visual arts, learners use photography with confidence, resulting in impressive extended investigations into a range of graphical and social themes. Teachers ensure a refreshing integration of art, graphic and photographic media across the visual arts area and learners benefit from the flexible access to resources. Excellent use is made of artists in residence to provide teaching expertise in additional disciplines, such as animation and print, and this helps learners improve the breadth and quality of their practical work.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Well-planned teaching in all areas enables learners to rapidly develop new skills and understanding. In dance, for example, learners conceive and perform complex group choreography within a single lesson.
- In the dance and drama lessons, teachers motivate and engage learners through skilful combinations of short skills- and knowledge-based blocks of learning, interspersed with short performance work.
- In drama lessons, teachers are adept at using learners' own experiences to choose socially-relevant plays and to enhance their understanding of chosen texts. Teachers skilfully use questioning techniques to help learners express their own views and knowledge, and to promote productive discussions. In music, learners speak positively about the frequent opportunities to perform both inside and outside of the college.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not always require learners to record information and this sometimes slows down parts of lessons. Teachers' lesson plans do not consistently take account of how learners with particular requirements will be integrated within specific lessons. As a result, the minority of learners occasionally become disengaged.
- Assessment practice is excellent. Learners' work is regularly and critically reviewed. Homework is set on a weekly basis and in visual arts additional technical workshops and courses are provided to extend and underpin learners' skills and knowledge. Teachers are constantly available to learners who speak positively about the additional informal guidance they have.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is excellent and teachers use ambitious projects and take positive actions to develop learners' understanding. Projects include collaboration with

young South African photographers to explore social and cultural similarities and differences, and a performance devised by learners to raise awareness of teenage mental health issues. Learners feel very safe. Staff and learners understand safeguarding procedures.

Sport, leisure and recreation

Learning programmes for 16-18

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and reflected well in the high proportion of learners achieving their qualifications, with high grades on most courses. However, while success rates for A-level physical education have improved to around national averages, they are not yet good.
- Learners benefit from the support, care and enthusiasm of staff. Staff set high expectations resulting in very good professional standards and behaviour. Learners use teachers as role models, and this raises their ambition. They enjoy their programmes of study and benefit from an excellent sense of teamwork across the department.
- In lessons and learning, teachers' management of the integration of theory and practice is highly effective. Learners benefit from the development of knowledge and understanding combined with the application and mastery of skills. Learners also gain good coaching, teamwork and problem-solving skills. Research, analysis and critical thinking skills are developed effectively.
- Teachers use effective questioning techniques to check learning and challenge learners to extend their understanding and work independently. However, in a minority of lessons teachers do too much; in some cases, a narrower range of assessment strategies limits learners' further development and progress.
- Information learning technologies (ILT) are used well to promote learning, both in and away from the classroom. Learners of sport and exercise science are confident in the use of technology and work purposefully to complete independent research work. On-line feedback for assignments provides the opportunity to develop analytical and evaluative skills, supporting the achievement of high grades.
- Good progress has been made in setting more work-related assignments on vocational courses. In sport and exercise science, orienteering and environment and sports coaching courses, the innovative assessment methods provide a meaningful context for learners to develop their skills. However, too many vocational assignments are still too reliant on written evidence and workbooks.
- The monitoring of learners' progress towards their learning goals is good, and improving. A highly effective tracking system monitors learners' progress, allowing early intervention for learners at risk of underperforming. Learners receive timely support to achieve their aspirational grades. Most learners are confident and develop good skills as independent learners.
- In almost all lessons, feedback to learners by teachers is highly effective and contributes to the significant improvement in success rates and high grades. However, short and medium term targets focus insufficiently on how learners can improve their standards of work.
- Improvement of learners' English and mathematics skills takes place in their sport, leisure and recreation lessons, but is not explicitly planned. In sport, teachers effectively improve learners' spelling and ensure the application of technical terminology. They annotate learners' work to correct poor spelling and grammar.
- Good advice and guidance ensure that learners choose the right course to meet their needs. Progression to higher education is high from both A-level and vocational courses, and learners receive outstanding support from their teachers and tutors. Learners value the opportunity to

study for a practical vocational course which provides a good progression route to relevant employment.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners work well together and show respect for others. Stereotypes are challenged and a range of sporting role models are used. Assignment briefs refer to, and challenge, discrimination. The college has successfully introduced a women's football and basketball team to its high-quality sports enrichment programme.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The Principal, senior managers and governors have a clear strategic vision for the college that they have translated successfully into practice. The overall progress made by learners is excellent, and consistently high success rates are attained. Lines of communication between all staff are strong and managers adopt an open and consultative style. An ethos of high expectations is prevalent among staff and learners.
- The governing body is experienced and highly skilled. Governors monitor the performance of learners' outcomes very well, receiving detailed information on results, particularly the progress learners make from their starting points. They offer highly effective support and critical challenge to senior managers. The college's financial health is good with outstanding financial management and control arrangements.
- The quality of accommodation, a key area for improvement at previous inspections, is still an issue. The popularity of the college, leading to increased learner recruitment, means accommodation continues to be cramped. However, staff use space efficiently and topical wall displays create a vibrant learning environment. Although large areas of the college are not accessible to individuals with restricted mobility, staff make changes to timetables to ensure the needs of these individuals are not compromised.
- Curriculum management is very good. Managers work well with their teams, focusing diligently on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Accurate management information is widely accessible and used well, for example to track the progress of learners.
- Performance management of staff is humane but robust. The small number of staff identified as underperforming are set clear targets which almost always lead to improvement. Much sharing of good practice takes place within course teams, but the effectiveness of collaboration between departments is inconsistent.
- The positive impact of rigorous quality assurance procedures is evident in the consistently high performance of the college. Subject area self-assessment reports are self-critical and evaluative, with detailed and systematically monitored improvement plans. The views of learners and parents help shape the report, although they do not always feature strongly in the text. Staff value highly the views of learners and parents, often instigating changes in response to their suggestions.
- Highly effective procedures for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning lead to improvements. Staff carrying out lesson observations are well trained and accurate in their judgements. Managers collate the main themes characterising teaching and learning into very helpful departmental summaries which are used to shape high-quality staff training programmes. However, individual action plans arising from lesson observations are not comprehensive.
- The college's curriculum meets the needs of learners very well, primarily through the extensive range of A-level subjects offered. Senior managers play a leading role in coordinating post-16 provision across the local area, collaborating closely with staff from nearby colleges, schools and the local authority to ensure a balanced curriculum offer is available in the Brighton and Hove locality.
- The comprehensive single equality scheme and action plan is monitored regularly for progress. Assessment of the impact of college policies on vulnerable groups of learners helps to ensure

equality of opportunity. Teachers promptly recognise and address any poorer performance by groups of learners. They analyse learners' outcomes, recruitment and the disciplinary record of groups of learners assiduously and no specific group underperforms consistently.

- The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Staff and learners generate an inclusive atmosphere where mutual respect leads to a welcoming and friendly environment. The safety of learners is of paramount concern and learners feel safe in the college. Learners now understand how to use the internet safely, an issue identified as a key area for improvement at the previous inspection. Staff and governors are well trained and have a high awareness of correct safeguarding procedures. Child protection matters are dealt with very well, often through highly effective liaison with the appropriate local agencies.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)**Brighton, Hove and Sussex Sixth Form College**

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	1	1	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1	1	1

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Mathematics and statistics	1
Science	2
Performing arts	1
Visual arts	1
Sport, leisure and recreation	2

Provider details

Brighton, Hove and Sussex Sixth Form College	
Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1907
	Part-time: 32
Principal	Mr Chris Thomson
Date of previous inspection	December 2007
Website address	www.bhasvic.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	22	23	27	0	2000	0	0	0
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							

Additional socio-economic information

BHASVIC occupies a single site in Hove, very close to Brighton city centre. The college works closely with the two other colleges in Brighton and Hove to offer a rational post-16 curriculum across the city. While Brighton and Hove, and the surrounding counties of East and West Sussex, exhibit many features of prosperous communities, residents in many parts of the city are socially and economically disadvantaged. BHASVIC recruits its growing number of learners from the city and its environs. It primarily offers advanced level courses to full-time learners aged 16 to 18. Most of these courses lead to AS and A-level examinations, but the college offers a growing range of vocational courses at advanced and intermediate levels. BHASVIC's mission is to 'transform lives through learning'.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

David Martin HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the Vice Principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and on-line questionnaires to gather the views of learners and parents; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

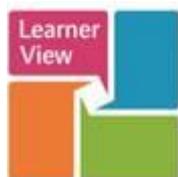
What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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