

New College Leicester

Greencoat Road, Leicester, LE3 6RN

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- A strong team spirit, high expectations and driving ambition have led to a rapid rise in students' attainment and progress. The progress students make is checked closely. Help is given swiftly when students struggle with their learning.
- The students are proud of their school. They feel valued and say that their views are taken seriously.
- Behaviour is good; students are polite, friendly and show respect to staff and one another. Students feel extremely well cared for and safe in school. They respond well to the enthusiastic support and encouragement of staff.
- Teaching is good and improving because senior and subject leaders work successfully with staff to identify how lessons can be even better.
- Leadership and management, including that of the governing body, are good. Leaders share an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Staff feel trusted, valued and looked after. They know the learning and personal needs of students and provide courses that suit them. The sixth form is good because the range of vocational courses on offer support students' next steps into employment, training or further education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not consistently strong across all subjects for it to be judged outstanding.
- In the small proportion of lessons that are not yet good teachers do not match tasks and activities to students' abilities.
- There are too few opportunities for students' to develop their independent learning skills.
- Students are not confident in using literacy across all subjects so they can tackle more challenging work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 part lessons, of which 15 were joint observations with the principal and other senior staff. Inspectors observed senior leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of learning and students' achievements in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, heads of subject, a group of teachers and five groups of students. The lead inspector held telephone discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the analysis of students' progress; records of classroom observation; students' work; and records related to the behaviour and safety of students.
- The inspectors looked at the results of the school's own surveys of parents' views. There were no responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Nada Trikid, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Raye Allison-Smith	Additional Inspector
Neil Stanley	Additional Inspector
Alan Brewerton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the number of students on roll has increased but the college is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The sixth form is small.
- There are more girls than boys overall but this varies across year groups.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and students known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs identified by the college is above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs, or supported at school action plus is high.
- Most students are White British. A range of minority ethnic groups make up 15% of the college population.
- The number of students who join or leave the college other than at the usual times is much higher than schools nationally.
- Provision for all students, including those in the sixth form, is provided on the school site.
- In June 2010 the college became a Foundation School with Charitable Trust status. The governance of the school is undertaken by a Trust Board and Governing Body.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Since the previous inspection the school has achieved Career Mark and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that, over time, it enables students to reach and exceed national standards by making sure that:
 - teachers plan activities that help students to develop as independent learners
 - levels of challenge are increased for all students, especially for high achievers
 - teachers develop further their use of questioning and discussion to challenge all groups of students to develop their thinking and communication skills
 - opportunities are given for students to develop and apply their reading, writing and communications skills across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When students join the school in Year 7, they are working well below the national standards in English and mathematics. Excellent assessment of learning needs means that students get the help they need to make progress. Students are making rapid progress to close the gap with national standards in English and mathematics.
- There has been an impressive increase in the proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades in GCSE including English and mathematics since the last inspection. Targets are challenging and shared with students to inspire them to do well. They respond enthusiastically to the help they receive from staff to boost their confidence and grades.
- The school makes effective use of early entry in English and mathematics to raise achievement. Students see this as a stepping stone to get a higher grade. Students confirm that they work with teachers to look at weaker areas where they need to improve.
- The school has made excellent use of pupil premium funding to raise achievement. Smaller class sizes, study support, breakfast and lunchtime clubs are making a difference. The students eligible for free school meals are doing much better than similar students nationally in the proportion to achieve five A* to C grades in GCSE, including English and mathematics. The gap between the attainment of these students and that of others in the school is closing.
- The school has been successful in closing the gap between boys and girls in the proportion to achieve a GCSE grade C or above over the last three years. Close attention to the learning needs of students from minority ethnic backgrounds makes sure that they achieve as well as their peers.
- The school uses detailed records and assessments of disabled students and those identified with special educational needs, to track their progress. Students' differing needs are served well by a range of small group programmes and paired reading. They make good progress from their starting points.
- Rates of progress made by students are increasing in English and mathematics in Key Stage 3. In Years 7 and 8, students who have difficulties with reading and writing have additional lessons that concentrate on literacy, in addition to English lessons. There is clear evidence that this is having a positive effect on progress in other subjects.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress. Performance in photography is particularly good. Students say they receive excellent support, guidance and information to help them make choices for the future.
- The school has been successful in helping students' to improve their literacy skills. However, further improvement is required so that students can tackle independent work with greater confidence.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Staff create a positive atmosphere for learning in lessons that encourages students to work well together and to ask questions when they are not sure about the work. As a

result, attitudes to learning are good; students are keen to do well and take part in lessons. Behaviour is typically good and relationships friendly and respectful.

- Teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is usually good. Teachers share their expectations with students and assess their progress regularly, especially when they use probing questions that check understanding.
- Teachers are making use of whole-school training to develop students' reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills in lessons. In the good and outstanding lessons these skills contribute to successful learning and confidence.
- Lessons are carefully planned. This is particularly strong when teachers devise activities that allow students to build their skills one step at a time. In a mathematics lesson observed, this approach allowed students to use and apply their knowledge and understanding of ratio to complete a challenging matching exercise.
- Teachers make good use of group, paired and individual work to inspire, challenge and motivate students. Many lessons benefit from excellent use of interactive whiteboards to stimulate interest in topics and involve students in sharing their learning.
- Teachers make good use of information about disabled students and those with special educational needs. Skilled teaching assistants provide good support for learning in class and through small group work. This helps students to concentrate and to ask questions to sustain their learning.
- Teachers create and use opportunities to promote students' social, moral, cultural and spiritual developments. This was particularly effective in a geography lesson as students learned about cultural differences while exploring issues around 'blood diamonds' in Sierra Leone.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching because there are insufficient opportunities for students to work independently. Discussion is not always of high enough quality to develop students' communication skills. High achievers would benefit from greater challenge across lessons.
- In lessons that are not yet good teachers do not check students' learning often enough so that changes can be made to help them to make better progress. There are too few opportunities for students to improve their literacy skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically behaviour is good. Students behave well and learning is rarely disrupted through poor behaviour. Students, staff and parents agree that there has been a marked improvement in behaviour over time.
- Staff have established a consistent approach for managing behaviour. Regular checks make sure that any early signs of poor behaviour are picked up, supported by good communication with parents. Students confirm that they understand the school's expectations for behaviour.
- In the past exclusions were high. The governing body asked for a review of the school's procedures. This has led to school-based provision. Rates of exclusion have fallen and students who are isolated continue to make progress with their learning.

- Students are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber and homophobic bullying. They understand the damage that can be caused. Assemblies are used well to reinforce the school's expectations. Views on bullying are gathered regularly from students and parents. Action is taken if required, for example, to provide additional guidance on e-safety.
- Attendance has improved and is broadly average. The school has worked well with external support services to reduce the incidence of persistent absence. Good use is made of the new reward and prize system to encourage high levels of attendance.
- Students told inspectors that they feel safe in school. The school's feedback from parents indicates that almost all agree. Students have good opportunities to consider their own safety, in school and in the community.
- Students are increasingly involved in initiatives to improve the school. They are particularly proud of their new uniforms, designed by members of the school council. They appreciate the emphasis on rewards and prizes to encourage them to do their best.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal, associate principal, senior leaders, staff and the governing body share a passion and drive to improve the achievement of every student. Senior leaders have high expectations, reflected in the challenging targets set for continuous improvement in all aspects of the school's work.
- Equality of opportunity is central. This is shown in good tracking and support systems so that all groups of students make good progress over time. The gaps with national standards are closing each year. Discrimination is not tolerated and this is evident in the respectful relationships between staff and students from different backgrounds.
- The performance of staff is managed well. This is because the system links the quality of teaching and achievement of students to identify areas for development. This approach makes sure that there is a fair approach to pay progression for staff and appropriate support and training to help staff to develop their teaching and leadership skills.
- School leaders have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are supported well by subject leaders, who take responsibility for students' achievement and improving the quality of teaching across their teams.
- Regular training sessions have been successful in developing and sharing approaches to teaching and learning. Policies to improve literacy are making a difference but not used well enough across all lessons to prepare students for the challenges of independent learning.
- The needs of disabled students, those with special educational needs and new arrivals at the school are carefully identified. Strong leadership has resulted in good progress for these students towards challenging targets for improvement.
- The curriculum is good because school leaders have taken account of students' learning and personal needs. For, example, the strong emphasis on literacy includes drama lessons to develop speaking and listening skills. A wide range of clubs and activities extend students' experiences; boxing is particularly popular.
- The school provides good opportunities to develop students' social, moral, spiritual and

cultural development. Students learn about different faith communities and debate issues such as prejudice, discrimination and equality. Assemblies make a strong contribution to students' development. Students regularly take part in assemblies which contributes to a strong community spirit.

- Leaders have made excellent use of local authority advisers and external consultant to build the school's capacity to sustain improvement. This has helped teachers to improve the quality of teaching to good and outstanding. An input on lesson planning to increase rates of progress has led to stronger practice in physical education. This is now shared with other subjects.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body are experienced and well trained and provide excellent support and challenge to the school. This is shown in the close checks they make on progress, exclusions and attendance data. Governors demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement based on regular visits and monitoring reports. Link governors work with senior leaders on aspects of the school. For example, one governor looks at the school's evidence on the quality of teaching so the improvements can be tracked against targets over time. Careful consideration has been given to the allocation of pupil premium funding to reduce class sizes, improve literacy support and to provide additional study sessions. Governors are aware of the success of these actions. Governors ensure that procedures for safeguarding meet requirements, particularly regarding the safety of students and the appointment of staff.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131945
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	402522

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	819
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Billington
Headteacher	Jane Brown
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2009
Telephone number	0116 2318500
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