

Regent College

Sixth form college

Inspection dates		19–22 March 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The proportion of students successfully completing their course is increasing steadily and is good for most vocational and A-level subjects.
- AS- and A-level students make good progress and most students make at least the progress expected of them, many having initially joined the college with relatively low achievements at GCSE.
- Most students develop good independent learning skills and produce work of a high standard.
- The mostly good standard of teaching helps students to build their knowledge and skills.
- Regular and accurately recorded assessment provides students with constructive and supportive feedback on their work and advises them well on how to improve their standard of work.
- Actions by managers have had a beneficial impact by increasing outcome rates for students and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The broad range of programmes provides students of all abilities with good opportunities to gain qualifications and progress to advanced level courses and higher education.
- Students benefit from the harmonious and inclusive character of the college.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The low attendance rate of a minority of students and their poor punctuality disrupts learning.
- A minority of courses have low success.
- Too few lessons are outstanding and a minority require improvement. Teachers do not always question students effectively or meet their specific individual needs.
- The college's virtual learning environment (VLE) system does not support learning effectively outside the classroom and information learning technology (ILT) is not used well by all teachers.
- Arrangements for self-assessment at subject level and for the performance management of staff are not yet sufficiently rigorous.
- The quality of curriculum management is not yet consistently good.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attendance rates and punctuality of students by raising their commitment to attend all lessons on time and ensure college procedures for monitoring and tracking of attendance and punctuality are implemented consistently by all staff.
- Increase the low success rates of some subjects by more widespread sharing of the good practice in curriculum management that already exists in the college.
- Improve the overall standard of teaching by ensuring all teachers: use probing questions to challenge students to think more deeply; use ILT more effectively; and use the results of initial assessment in English and mathematics to plan lessons that better meet the needs of all students.
- Improve the college's VLE system by developing and implementing a learning strategy that encourages students to use it more and thereby learn more effectively outside of lessons.
- Ensure greater coherence in the quality improvement arrangements by linking self-assessment at subject level more closely to curriculum reviews and quality improvement plans, and by broadening the evidence base upon which self-assessment rests.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for students	Good
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- The proportion of students successfully completing their course has increased steadily over the past three years, at a much higher rate than nationally. These overall success rates are now broadly comparable to the national average for similar colleges. Vocational courses comprise the majority of the college's provision and these success rates are above the national figures. Success rates are also high for most A-level subjects. Nearly all apprentices pass within the expected timescale of their course. However, there are still areas of underperformance. Success rates are low for the small number of adult students at foundation level and although the overall success rate is improving for AS-levels, the rates are low for a few AS subjects.
- Students joining the college have a lower previous attainment than in most other sixth form colleges. Those taking AS- and A-levels make good progress and achieve better than might be expected from their previous GCSE achievements; students on other courses do as well as expected. Progress is good in subjects such as science, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), arts and English. Progress is slow for students of history, business and law.
- Staff review the performance of different groups of students carefully. The slightly better performance of females compared to males reflects the national trend and the gap between them is narrowing. Students declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability perform better than other students in the college. A high proportion of the college's students are from minority ethnic heritages and the largest groups, Indians, Africans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, all perform better than the college average. Staff are reviewing the lower performance of white British students.
- The previous inspection highlighted the well-planned progression routes available from foundation to advanced level in most subject areas and these have been improved further. Students are prepared thoroughly when applying to higher education and a high proportion gain

entry, mainly to local universities. The overall standard of students' work is high, with examples of very high quality work, for example in photography.

- Although students enjoy coming to college, attendance rates are too low and poor punctuality disrupts learning. This problem was identified at the last inspection. Most AS-level students undertake an extended project through which they develop strong independent learning skills and benefit from the opportunity to research areas of special interest to them. All students on vocational courses take an employability programme that bolsters their job-seeking skills. A minority of students develop strong personal and social skills through organising fund-raising events for charity and participating in extra-curricular visits and events. However, the overall participation in sporting and other recreational activities is low.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. A good number of lessons observed by inspectors had outstanding features, although a minority required improvement. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are clear. Students understand what is expected of them. The pace of lessons is appropriate and teachers employ innovative learning strategies.
- Teachers are motivational and have high expectations of their students. Students and teachers have good relationships. Most students cultivate good independent learning skills. Students are encouraged to reach their full potential and teachers frequently remind them of what they need to do to achieve the highest grades.
- Teachers question and challenge students well, but sometimes they fail to elicit more detailed responses by asking probing follow-up questions. Teachers' use of ILT is limited, but most students use computers with confidence.
- Teachers produce a range of interesting and varied hand-outs and learning materials. Tasks are often challenging and seek to build on students' knowledge and skills. In less effective lessons, teachers too often rely on whole class teaching, talk too much and do not give students enough time to explore their own ideas and consolidate learning. This issue was highlighted at the previous inspection.
- Teachers are appropriately qualified and use and develop their skills effectively. In art, graphics, ICT and media studios, staff and students benefit from excellent teaching resources. 'MiPlace', the college's VLE, is underdeveloped. It is used very effectively in a few subject areas, but too many teachers use it mainly as an information repository. Students that undertake work experience value the experience, but opportunities are limited.
- Prior to a place being offered, students are routinely assessed to determine their abilities in English and mathematics, to ensure they are placed on the most appropriate course. However, teachers do not use the results of these tests sufficiently when planning learning activities. At the start of their course, students are set target grades, with specific milestones to help measure their progress. These targets are monitored regularly throughout the year and students find the process motivating, but some targets lack precision.
- The assessment of learning is good. Regular and accurately recorded assessments indicate clearly how each student is progressing. Most students receive constructive and supportive feedback for practical and written work. In many cases this enables them to improve, however the quality of feedback is not consistently high. Internal verification systems that assure the quality of assignments and marking are generally well developed and effective in vocational areas.
- The college's strong focus on developing the literacy skills of students is evident in all subject areas. Opportunities to improve the literacy of students are identified in most schemes of work. However, opportunities to extend vocabulary and written skills are not always exploited. When marking students' work, subject teachers routinely highlight any sections with grammatical and

spelling errors for the student to redo. The teaching of numeracy lags behind, but firm plans are in place to address this.

- Staff review the performance of different groups of students carefully and are tackling the lower performance of white British students. The slightly better performance of females compared to males reflects the national trend and the gap between them is narrowing. Students declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability perform better than other students in the college. A high proportion of the college's students are from minority ethnic heritages and the largest groups, Indians, Africans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, all perform better than the college average.
- Personal supervisors are liked by students and are having a positive impact supporting them with welfare issues and providing good access to external support agencies. However, they have not yet improved the punctuality of students sufficiently.
- Students requiring additional help with their learning receive good support both inside and outside the classroom. Subject tutors provide bespoke support outside formal lessons. However, the range of activities to extend personal and social education is limited.
- The very diverse student population works together harmoniously and purposefully. Teachers plan the introduction of equality and diversity topics in lessons, but they often miss obvious opportunities to promote them when they arise spontaneously. Students feel safe in the college and there is a friendly and inclusive atmosphere.

Mathematics and science

Learning programmes for 16–18 Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good which reflects the high proportion of students who achieve their qualifications and develop good science and mathematical skills. Most students make better progress than expected. This is especially noteworthy since many enter their courses with relatively low attainment from previous study.
- Teachers nurture, support and motivate students to achieve to their maximum. They use their subject knowledge well to encourage students to develop the confidence to study independently. Most teachers set collaborative learning exercises that promote peer learning. Students also benefit from good one-to-one coaching by teachers which gives students several chances of understanding the concepts involved in their work.
- Most teachers employ good teaching methods which encourage learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson on vectors the teacher introduced the subject matter by applying known concepts to unfamiliar concepts. Students went on to work on examination questions and careful management by the teacher promoted very good learning.
- Science teachers employ very good open and directed questions to check learning and promote deeper understanding. This is particularly evident at the start of lessons, when teachers recap on previous learning. For example, in a GCSE science lesson on carbon dioxide as a waste product, information on the properties of acids studied previously was used to introduce the idea of the importance of removing the gas from the body to lower acid concentration in the blood.
- A minority of teaching is less successful in energising students and questioning does not encourage peer learning or debate. Students struggling to understand do not always receive sufficient individual support and attention to meet their needs.
- The assessment of students' work is good. It is fair, accurate and reliable. Procedures to ensure work is appropriate and marked fairly are good. The feedback given to students to identify how

to improve their work varies in quality, but overall is good. Peer assessment by students during lessons is used effectively to improve their progress.

- Resources to support learning are generally good. Most teachers provide students with learning materials which help them prepare in advance of lessons to support their learning. Classrooms in most areas and science laboratories are comfortable, well-furnished and well-equipped. Most laboratories and classrooms display students' work to create an inspiring learning environment.
- The area of the VLE specific to science and mathematics is populated with appropriate materials that help students to develop strong independent learning skills. Staff and students make good use of ILT in the classroom. Students use laptops critically to analyse their own work against set criteria to enhance their progress.
- Students benefit from a high level of personal and academic support. Support for literacy is innovative and particularly effective and the specialist training teachers receive to deliver this type of support is effective. The monitoring of students' progress is excellent. Staff track the performance of students closely and provide good advice on how to improve and meet their target grades. Arrangements for meeting learners' individual support needs are particularly good. However, students' short term learning targets are often too imprecise to be helpful enough.
- Initial advice and guidance for students are good. Recent changes to the curriculum have given students more options and the good advice and guidance ensures students enrol on the right level of course.
- Students' awareness of equality and diversity is broadly satisfactory. The college has created an atmosphere in which students are encouraged to value each other's opinions and respect differences. Not all teachers take sufficient advantage of the opportunities that arise in lessons to promote equality and diversity.

Visual arts, media and communication

Learning programmes for 16–18 Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- The highly effective teaching learning and assessment enable students to develop good skills. Success rates have improved, especially in art and design where they are well above the high national rate. Students make very good progress taking into account their starting points. A high proportion of students of GCSE art and design subjects consistently achieve high grades. A large number of A-level students progress to university. Attendance is too low and there are many instances of poor punctuality.
- Teachers encourage and motivate students to do their best and aim high and students respond very well. Students at all levels demonstrate very good independent learning skills when exploring their creative ideas and use a wide variety of vocational skills. For instance, in an art lesson students worked on individual projects ranging from architecture to portraiture, using different media including paint, charcoal and photographic images and used computer software creatively.
- Students' work is of a high standard and specialist skills are well-developed. Photography students exhibit their work in local art galleries, enter and win competitions and have had their work purchased. Graphics students are confident in their use of computer programmes and media students working on a short trailer for a TV show use editing software confidently.
- Teachers use their skills and knowledge effectively to plan learning. Students understanding is consolidated and extended through the use of interesting and varied learning materials. Students in art and design use excellent portfolios that teachers have made to select, develop and annotate work in order to present examination work to the highest standards.

- In the best lessons, teachers identify overall objectives and agree challenging individual targets with students. Progress towards these targets is checked regularly by teachers. However, in a minority of lessons teachers do not always make learning objectives sufficiently clear and individual targets are not set, so that some students do not make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers do not always ask enough supplementary questions to encourage students to give more detailed responses.
- Various assessment methods are used regularly and their results recorded accurately on tracking documents to indicate clearly how each student is progressing. Feedback to students on the quality of their work is detailed and accurate. Students benefit from clear verbal feedback in lessons. Teachers' written comments and suggestions in students' sketchbooks and on written work is thorough and clearly identifies what needs to be done to improve. The majority of students are aware of their learning targets and current working grades and use the valuable feedback that they receive to improve their work.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for students to improve their literacy skills. Art and design students are given guidance and support in annotating their sketchbooks. Written work is marked for accuracy of spelling and grammar, and helpful guidance is provided on how to improve and meet assessment criteria more effectively. In a media lesson, students demonstrated a good understanding of technical language when discussing the difference between audience profiling and target audience. In a few instances teachers do not always effectively extend the vocabulary of students whose first language is not English.
- Students benefit from a wide range of courses at various levels which provide clear pathways for vocational and academic progression. Initial advice and guidance ensure that students are placed on a course appropriate to their needs.
- Exploration of issues around equality and diversity are an integral part of the arts curriculum. Students are encouraged to research the work of artists from a wide range of cultures, social backgrounds and historical periods. Students' art work reflects the full spectrum of cultural influences. For instance, a student completed a photojournalism project based on the Somali community in Leicester. Teachers do not always identify in their lesson planning how equality and diversity are to be promoted.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior managers have a very clear strategic vision for the college and the part it plays in post-16 provision across Leicester. The recently updated and well-researched development plan underlines the importance of providing a broad curriculum which supports progression for students with a wide range of abilities. The ambition of students, many of whom are from areas of high deprivation, is successfully raised and actions to improve success rates over the last three years have been very effective.
- Governance is good. Governors support the college well by shaping its strategy and monitoring its performance closely. A restructuring of the college last year has placed a sharper focus on curriculum management and certain cross-college roles. Plans are well in hand to address some remaining inconsistencies in the quality of curriculum management through an external professional development programme.
- Actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning are having a positive impact although there is further work to be done as few lessons are outstanding. Arrangements for observing lessons have been strengthened and there is now a much greater emphasis on assessing the quality of learning. Inspectors found that the college accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement within lessons. Although action plans to address areas for improvement are drawn up promptly, the plans are not always implemented in a timely fashion and are not monitored sufficiently well through performance management arrangements.

- A strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning underpins the good arrangements for the professional development of staff. Teachers are well qualified and accommodation is generally satisfactory. Resources for science have improved significantly since the last inspection. The VLE is well used in a few curriculum areas, but across the college as a whole this is an area for development.
- Actions to ensure better outcomes for students and to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have had a positive impact. Curriculum reviews and subsequent quality improvement plans are effective in driving improvements forward. The cross-college self-assessment is self-critical. However, the rigour of subject area self-assessment is in need of improvement and the quality of the reports is quite variable. Too many make insufficient use of students' views and too few judgements are based on an analysis of observations of teaching and learning.
- Good progress has been made in addressing the areas in need of further improvement identified at the last inspection, although actions to improve punctuality have not had sufficient impact. A significant improvement has been achieved in the quality of science and mathematics provision.
- Students appreciate the responsive and flexible curriculum which meets a broad range of individual needs. Opportunities for students with low levels of attainment to progress from foundation and intermediate to advanced level courses are good. The range of courses provides clear vocational and academic routes and new courses are introduced in response to identified needs.
- The college works well with local partners to extend opportunities for learning, for example through an agreement with a neighbouring sixth form college which provides students in both institutions with a greater choice of subjects. Liaison with another partner provides a course for young people not in education, employment or training.
- Good progress has been made in identifying the reasons for underperformance by particular groups and appropriate actions are addressing the few remaining achievement gaps. Outcomes for some minority ethnic groups have improved markedly over the last three years.
- The college is inclusive and harmonious and it successfully fulfils its mission which emphasises respect for all, valuing diversity and promoting equality. The college engages well with local communities, for example by hosting a donor session to help build the bone marrow register which has a shortage of young men and people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students' understanding of equality and diversity is promoted satisfactorily across the college, but these issues are not always planned for within schemes of work or discussed fully when they arise spontaneously in lessons.
- The college meets its statutory responsibilities for the safeguarding of students. Staff receive appropriate training. Good arrangements are in place to monitor vulnerable students with significant risks in relation to safeguarding. Strict enforcement of the requirement to show identity passes on entering the college helps students to feel safe. Health and safety practices are good.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Regent College									
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2		2	2					
Outcomes for learners	2		2	2					
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2		2	2					
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2		2	2					

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Science	2
Mathematics and statistics	2
Visual Arts	2
Media and communication	2

Number of learners aged 14-16	1
Number of community learners	0
Number of employability learners	N/A
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Studio 79.

Additional socio-economic information

Regent College is a medium-sized sixth form college located close to the centre of Leicester. The local area has high levels of social and economic deprivation, and a high rate of unemployment. The college works in partnership with nearby colleges, offering courses from entry level to advanced level in eight subject areas. The proportion of students studying vocational courses has increased steadily and currently constitutes over one half of the college's provision, with significant number of A-level courses also provided. At the college's last inspection in April 2011, overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, outcomes for students, quality of provision, leadership and management, equality and diversity and the sector subject area of business, administration and law were judged satisfactory. Safeguarding was judged to be good. Science and mathematics provision was judged inadequate.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Tony Noonan HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the director of quality and improvement, as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report, development plans and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on students' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews to gather the views of students. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. These views are reflected throughout the report. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the college. Subject inspectors looked in detail at a sample of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in science and mathematics, and in visual arts, media and communications.

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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