

The City of Leicester College

Downing Drive, Evington, Leicester, LE5 6LN

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all students make good progress and achieve well in all subjects.
- Standards fell in 2014. Rates of progress, although now improving rapidly, have been too slow, particularly in mathematics.
- The tasks set by teachers are not always well matched to the different abilities within each class. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what the most-able students are able to achieve, so tasks set are not sufficiently challenging. The least-able students are not always given enough support so they find the work too difficult.
- The quality of marking and assessment is inconsistent, so students do not always know how well they are doing. Not all teachers check that students are acting on the advice they give on how to improve further.
- Middle leaders are not yet robustly holding teachers to account for the progress made by their students, or ensuring that teachers follow the college's marking and feedback policy.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, well supported by her senior team and by the governing body, has taken robust action to address previous underperformance. Together, they are working very effectively to improve teaching and achievement.
- Students behave well. They are enthusiastic about their learning and keen to do well. They value the support that teachers provide. Attendance is consistently above average.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress, particularly at A2. They value the wide range of courses that they are offered. Students contribute well to the life of the school.
- Students say that the college keeps them safe and helps them to understand how to keep themselves safe. They greatly appreciate the care the college provides.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding. Students have a good understanding of modern British values, and show a high level of respect and tolerance of the beliefs of others. The college is a harmonious community.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in lessons across all year groups and subjects. Seven of the lessons were seen with one of the college's senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with students, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and staff.
- The inspectors observed the college's work and looked at policies, the college's own assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and plans for development. They also looked at information about students' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents and samples of students' work.
- The views of the 24 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, together with the college's own survey of parents' views. Inspectors also took individual communications from parents into account, as well as the 71 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Hutton	Additional Inspector
Andrew Hemmings	Additional Inspector
Sally Pemberton	Additional Inspector
John Burridge	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The college is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The college, which previously operated on a split site, moved into newly built accommodation in 2013.
- Most students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Indian heritage. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- Full- and part-time off-site alternative courses are currently provided for a small number of students in Years 7 to 11 at Carisbrooke Pupil Referral Unit.
- A significant number of students enter the college at different times during the school year, including those on managed moves from other schools.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- There has been a re-structuring of middle leadership since the move to the new building. Middle leaders are now each responsible for one of five subject 'hubs', each of which has its own leadership team. Senior leaders co-ordinate the work of the 'hubs system' itself.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, so that all students make rapid progress in all subjects, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers plan tasks that are appropriately challenging for students of all abilities, fully stretching those of the highest ability, while ensuring that those of lower ability are sufficiently well supported
 - teachers' marking consistently informs students how well they are doing and what they need to do next, and that teachers check that students act on this advice to improve their work.
- Ensure that middle leaders hold teachers rigorously to account for the progress made by their students, and for following the college's policy on assessment and feedback so that students know how to develop their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and her senior team have been rigorous in identifying and addressing the many issues that hindered students' progress in 2014 and which lay behind the drop in attainment. Their effective actions have included establishing strong leadership at all levels, eradicating inadequate teaching, and ensuring that the curriculum better meets the needs of the students. Students value the programmes of support that have been provided to raise rates of progress and reduce the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and their peers. The college shows a strong capacity to improve further.
- Leaders have introduced new and robust procedures to check on the quality of teaching. These include regular observations of teaching and scrutinies of students' work and a more stringent interpretation of data on students' progress to ensure that teaching is effective. Leaders have been quick to identify underperformance and provide intensive support for teachers experiencing difficulties. Leaders have high expectations and poor teaching is not tolerated. Leaders ensure that only those teachers who meet their targets and achieve the expected standards are rewarded with pay rises.
- Training is closely matched to teachers' individual needs and good practice is shared. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving rapidly and leaders are working to ensure a consistency of approach.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Students value the individual support and mentoring they receive, and leaders check closely on the quality of teaching.
- Leaders ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed and that there is no discrimination. They have established an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance within the diverse college population.
- Leaders monitor the achievement of each individual student carefully and identify appropriate support strategies in progress meetings. This includes mentoring for individual students and the college provides additional classes to ensure that all students receive the help they need to succeed. This has led to significant improvements in the achievement of the current Year 11.
- Leaders have taken action to improve students' motivation in Key Stage 3 by enabling students to start their GCSE courses in Year 9. No students are entered for the mathematics examination before Year 11, although students sit the English literature examination in Year 10. This allows more curriculum time for students to develop their skills in English language in Year 11 and achieve well. The curriculum is good. Students appreciate the wide range of subject choices they are offered that meet their needs and interests well.
- Strategies to improve literacy have been very effective. The college has used the Year 7 'catch-up' funding effectively to support the many students who start at the college with low basic skills in literacy and numeracy. This support includes a summer school to ease the transition from Year 6 to 7. The college has strengthened links with parents by encouraging them to support their child's reading through the college's 'book bank'. This has also enabled parents and children to learn together. One student told inspectors how proud she was that she had helped her mother to read.
- Alternative provision is used effectively for a small number of students facing challenging circumstances. Leaders maintain careful checks on their well-being, including their attendance. As a result of good support, students at risk of exclusion are enabled to continue their learning and to succeed.
- The college offers students a wide range of enrichment activities to supplement the standard curriculum. It provides good opportunities for students to develop leadership and teamwork skills. It promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Links with an orphanage in Nepal have led to opportunities for students to visit the country, and students have used fund-raising activities to provide mattresses for those stricken by the recent earthquake. The college's strong links with the Royal Shakespeare Company have enabled it to further enrich students' learning. Assemblies, personal, social and enterprise (PSE) lessons and tutor time enable them to understand their responsibilities as citizens of

modern Britain and ensure their understanding of British values, for example, by taking part in mock elections.

- Students told inspectors how much they value the quality of careers advice they receive and the support that enables them to make appropriate option choices.
- Leaders have ensured that the behaviour and safety of students is a strength of the college. They have worked to improve attendance and punctuality. The recently introduced 'red card' scheme' is proving effective in improving students' punctuality to school and to lessons.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- The college's leaders value the continuing support provided through the local authority, whose regular visits have supported leaders at all levels to address the issues that were preventing students from achieving their full potential. Good support has also been provided to enable governors to improve their practice.
- The additional funding provided through the pupil premium is being used effectively to support disadvantaged students. This is now having a dramatic impact on closing the gap between this group and their peers across year groups. Funding has enabled disadvantaged students to go on a variety of trips, including a group of Year 9 students going to London to see 'Romeo and Juliet', which generated much enthusiasm. All students eligible for additional funding have mentors who students say support them well.
- Senior leaders have strengthened middle leadership by re-organising the structure into five hubs. Hub leaders and their teams are now beginning to strongly drive improvement in their areas of responsibility. However there remains some inconsistency in the rigour with which teachers are held to account for students' progress and, in particular in ensuring that all staff implement college policy regarding assessment and feedback.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly ambitious for the college and its role in the community. They are very knowledgeable about the college's work. They have sought and undertaken effective training, which has improved their ability to both challenge and support the college's leaders. Their ability to compare the college's performance to schools nationally has, in the past, been hindered as a result of focusing insufficiently well on rates of progress. They were therefore slow to identify that progress in English and mathematics over time has been too slow. They are now fully supporting leaders in their drive to address this.
 - Governors use their variety of expertise to good effect, checking on all aspects of the college's work and in particular, forming strong links with the leaders of the hubs to develop first-hand experience of the quality of teaching. Governors are actively involved in ensuring that good teaching is rewarded and any underperformance is tackled robustly.
 - Governors are fully aware of the issues related to disadvantaged students and check closely that the additional funding is now having a positive impact on closing the gap. The governing body ensures that staff and students are kept safe and that both staff and students are fully aware of the dangers that may face them, for example, from any extremism.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are keen to learn and show an eagerness to contribute their ideas. They listen carefully when the teacher or other students are speaking and cooperate well in group work. Students say that their lessons are rarely disrupted and that teachers manage behaviour well.
- Students' movement around the light and airy college is calm and orderly and is well supervised by staff. Relationships with adults are strong and students are polite and courteous. Students are proud of their inspiring new building and there is no graffiti or litter. They wear their uniform with pride and present themselves well.

- Attendance levels are high, including for students facing challenging circumstances. Few students live close enough to walk to school, most having to travel some distance by bus, so this level of attendance underlines how much students value their learning and enjoy coming to school.
- The college manages students with behavioural difficulties well and these show marked improvement in their behaviour over time. They speak highly of the behaviour support team who are approachable and will listen to their problems. The use of 'managed moves' and, for a small number of students, the use of alternative provision, helps to ensure that exclusions are kept low and that those at risk of exclusion are able to continue their schooling.
- The college is a harmonious society where students from different backgrounds get on well with each other. They say that any derogatory language including homophobia, is not tolerated and students say that they feel free to be themselves.
- Sixth form students attend well and provide support for younger ones. Year 10 students told inspectors how much they were looking forward to joining the sixth form as a result of the good relationships they have with sixth form students, who act as good role models.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say that they feel safe and well cared for. They value the PSE lessons that enable them to understand how to keep themselves safe and learn about their role as British citizens. As one student said, 'These lessons prepare us well for life.'
- Students say that bullying is rare and, should it occur, they agree that both students and staff provide good support for any student affected. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet and social media.
- Students and their families facing challenging circumstances are well supported, including through the use of external agencies. The behaviour and safety of those attending alternative provision are carefully checked and regular visits made.
- Parents and staff agree that students are safe and most agree that they behave well.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although the majority of teaching is now good, too much still requires improvement.
- In a minority of lessons observed by inspectors, the work set for some was too easy and, for others, it was too difficult. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what the most-able students are able to achieve and so do not provide tasks that sufficiently stretch and challenge them. Likewise, some teachers do not provide sufficient support to enable the least able students to begin a task, so that they lose interest.
- Leaders have established their high expectations for the marking of students' work. Where it is exemplary, teachers make clear to students whether they have reached their target level, and what they need to do further. All staff do not consistently follow this practice however. Consequently, although most students know their targets, they are unclear what they need to do to reach them. Although students are expected to act on the advice they are given, not all teachers check that this has been done. In some cases marking is infrequent, resulting in mistakes not being picked up or corrected.
- Where students make the fastest progress, teachers have high expectations of their students, providing tasks that enable them to build their knowledge and understanding step by step, and by setting tasks that are interesting and exciting. For example, teachers have used the recent link with the Royal Shakespeare Company to encourage students to explore the play's main themes by acting out scenes in groups. They are then challenged to explain the relationships between the characters, for example, or where the scene is set. Inspectors witnessed one Year 7 class making rapid progress as a result of this activity, and

growing in confidence when using Shakespeare's language.

- Teachers promote students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development extremely well, providing opportunities for students to discuss and work together and to share their ideas. Teachers promote literacy and numeracy well in all subjects, focusing on the correct technical language for the subject and checking that it is understood. This is particularly the case for students who speak English as an additional language; teachers take care that they are able to access the task and are fully included, for example in drama activities, reading Shakespearean dialogue.
- Relationships between adults and students are warm and classrooms calm.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. Students say how well the assessment practices support them and enable them to develop further.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the college with basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are typically below average. The proportion of higher attaining students is also typically below average, although the current Year 10 and 11 joined with skills that were closer to average. The proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, at the end of Year 11 in 2014 fell to below average. This was partly as a result of a significant proportion of this year group facing challenging circumstances that affected their behaviour and attitudes to learning but also due to national changes in the examination system.
- Rates of progress in English have been above average but in 2014 fell to just below average. Progress in mathematics rose up to 2013 but fell in 2014 to below average. Leaders have addressed this robustly and have increased the amount of extra individual support provided after school and on Saturday mornings. Students have appreciated this and say that it is helping them to improve and to build their confidence. As a result, the college's regular assessments throughout the year show a dramatic increase in progress rates for the current Year 11 which, by the end of the year, are indicated to be well above average in both English and mathematics.
- There is no significant difference in achievement between students of different ethnic backgrounds or between those who speak English as an additional language and other students. Students following alternative courses are achieving well.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is improving. They receive strong support from the special educational needs coordinator and her team, who liaise closely with the hub leaders to identify the support that students need. Where they are taught in small groups, they achieve well as the result of encouraging and patient teaching that enables them to build their understanding at an appropriate pace. In some larger classes, teaching does not always provide the support that they need.
- There were no students in the 2014 that joined the school having gained level 6 in their national tests. The most-able Year 11 students in this year group did not all make expected progress and the proportion of those gaining high GCSE grade was below average in many subjects. As a result of leaders' actions, current assessments for Year 11 indicate that an increased proportion of students will make and exceed expected progress rates, particularly in mathematics. The college's assessments also indicate that the proportion of students gaining highest grades across subjects will rise by the end of 2015.
- Leaders acknowledge that, in 2014, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and other students in the school and those nationally was too wide. In English, disadvantaged students in Year 11 were over three quarters of a GCSE grade behind others in the school but over a grade behind students nationally. In mathematics, they were a grade behind others in the school and nearly one and a half grades behind students nationally. There were also differences in rates of expected progress in both English and mathematics. Leaders have focused strongly on this group and the in-school gap has almost closed in English for the current Year 11 and halved in mathematics, while rates of progress for both

disadvantaged students and their classmates are now the same. There is also now no difference between the progress of disadvantaged students and other college students in Key Stage 3.

- Sixth form students make good progress and reach standards that are just below national levels. Performance at AS level is lower than at A2. The college welcomes all abilities of students into the sixth form and a few lower ability students have found their courses too challenging. The college is addressing this by providing greater support at an earlier stage.
- Students following alternative courses have been able to gain success, not only in basic skill but also in courses such as food technology, for which they show enthusiasm and aptitude.
- The literacy programme in Years 7 and beyond is having a good impact on improving students' reading proficiency. The 'Book Bank' project encourages students to read with their parents enabling them to build their confidence.

The sixth form provision is good

- The size of the sixth form is gradually increasing, with the college taking students from the main school and from other providers. The college has an inclusive approach to sixth form admissions and leaders express a strong desire that all students should be given a chance to extend their learning in the sixth form and to embark on challenging courses. As a result, some students start their sixth form courses with prior attainment that is lower than seen nationally and hence a lower proportion than nationally attain the highest grades by the end of their courses. However, progress overall remains above average.
- The leaders check carefully, both on the quality of teaching and on students' progress, and provide support for students who are underachieving. Students say that they greatly value the individual support and mentoring that is provided. Leaders have strengthened this during the current academic year to ensure that students at AS level are fully supported.
- Students following work-based courses generally make progress that matches that of students on academic courses.
- There is no significant difference between the progress of the small proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs or the progress of disadvantaged students and that of their peers. All students re-sit their GCSE English and mathematics examinations until they achieve at least a grade C. This is resulting in most students achieving success.
- Students show good attitudes to their studies. Strong working relationships with teachers and other students contribute very positively to their learning and prepare students well for the next stage of their education.
- Study programmes offer a wide choice that meets students' needs and aspirations and ensure that they are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment. All students have the opportunity to undertake work experience, and students appreciate the individual help they receive to find placements that will support their study, for example in engineering.
- The leader of the sixth form ensures that all students receive high-quality advice and guidance to support their university applications. All students go on to education, employment or training.
- Sixth form students behave well. They contribute much to the life of the college, supporting younger students and leading activities including the Nepal project. The college provides them with many opportunities to reflect on the issues that face them, particularly through a structured tutorial programme where issues such as extremism are addressed. Students have a good understanding of modern British values.
- Sixth form leaders recognise that in the past, some students embarking on AS courses have found them

too challenging and are working to identify, through 'mock' examinations, those students who are struggling at an earlier stage. Not all teachers are providing the support that these students need early on in their courses to ensure that they reach successful outcomes.

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	120297
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	461644

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1505
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kam Mistry
Headteacher	Anne Gregory
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2015
Telephone number	0116 2413984
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