

Inspection dates

1–3 December 2015

Overall effectiveness**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings**This is a provider that requires improvement**

- Too few learners on AS- and A-level programmes make the progress expected of them, and as a consequence do not achieve or exceed their minimum target grades.
- Teachers do not develop learners' skills in English quickly or competently enough, which affects the quality and standard of their work.
- Leaders and managers have not improved teaching, learning and assessment to a sufficiently high standard to enable all learners to make the progress expected of them.
- In too many lessons, teachers do not challenge learners, particularly the most able, in their learning.
- The high expectations of learners set by managers and leaders are not met consistently across all subject areas.
- Leaders' and managers' actions to improve teaching, learning and assessment have not yet led to consistently good provision for all learners.
- Leaders and managers do not sufficiently judge impact of actions when self-assessing the quality of provision, resulting in an over-optimistic self-assessment report.

The provider has the following strengths

- Almost all learners on vocational programmes successfully complete their qualifications and achieve high grades.
- The behaviour of learners is exemplary. They have very positive attitudes for learning.
- Learners develop good employability skills which prepare them well for higher education, apprenticeships and employment.

Full report

Information about the provider

- King George V College is located close to the centre of Southport in the borough of Sefton, Merseyside. Within the local area, there are two general further education colleges, one sixth form school and three schools with sixth forms. The proportion of school leavers achieving five GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics is above the national average. The area is relatively prosperous with a few pockets of deprivation. The very low proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds reflects the local population.
- The college was subject to four re-inspection monitoring visits, each completed by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors, following the inadequate judgement at the last inspection in September 2014.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase significantly the proportion of learners who achieve or exceed their target grades.
- Improve teaching and learning quickly to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good across all subjects by:
 - developing quickly and competently learners' English skills
 - teachers having sufficiently high expectations of their learners, particularly the most able, and challenging learners to achieve well so that they make good or better progress
 - undertaking rigorous quality assurance and quality improvement activities to ensure that actions to improve teaching, learning and assessment lead to consistently good experiences for learners in all subjects.
- Improve the rigour of self-assessment to ensure that judgements are accurate and focus on the impact of managers' and staff actions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- The effectiveness of leadership and management is not yet good. Since the previous inspection in September 2014, when the college was judged to be inadequate in all key judgements, leaders and managers have shown strong determination to improve the quality of provision for learners and their consequent achievement. Leaders have high aspirations and ambitions for the future of the college and share these with staff. Strengthened performance management has contributed to a number of teaching staff leaving the college.
- Leaders and managers have worked hard to remove the culture of low expectations that existed in many areas of the college at the previous inspection. Staff performance management is more rigorous and strongly focused on teachers setting and meeting high expectations. The development of 'KGV expects' sets high expectations for learners. However, too many learners still do not make the progress expected of them compared with their starting points.
- Leaders have introduced a range of initiatives to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that had declined at the previous inspection. These include teachers benefiting from a well-designed continuous professional development programme aimed at achieving academic excellence, and a revised observation of teaching and learning process, utilising a broader range of activities to judge the effectiveness of lessons.
- While the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving, inspectors still found too great a variability across the lessons observed, and inspectors' findings did not support the view of leaders and managers that teaching and learning are now predominantly good. As recognised by leaders, observation of teaching and learning records do not always provide compelling written evidence for the grade awarded by observers, and too little focus is placed on the impact of teaching on learners' progress. Although planned, actions to address this have not yet taken place.
- Self-assessment is a very inclusive process. The revised process has given course and subject leaders ownership and clear accountability for the quality of performance. However, the draft of the 2014/15 self-assessment report was overly optimistic in how far the improvements made have led to improved grades in key judgements, other than for personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- Following the previous inspection, college enrolments decreased. Leaders and governors are carefully monitoring and forecasting the financial implications this will have on the financial position of the college, and are currently assessing different options to manage the long-term financial sustainability of the college.
- First-year learners develop a good understanding of the core values required for effective life in modern Britain. Staff are supported well to explore issues around aspects of equality such as transgenderism. However, other cultural issues, such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage are not explored sufficiently.
- The curriculum is strongly focused on academic qualifications although it has been revised to include a small range of vocational qualifications. Around one third of learners have chosen a blended programme of vocational and academic qualifications.
- Following the previous inspection, leaders and managers recognised that learners' access to work experience opportunities was not good enough. The role of work-related learning manager was created to improve work experience opportunities for all learners in preparing them for their next steps. Significant improvements have resulted in all vocational learners now attending work placements to develop their technical, personal and employability skills. A minority of AS- and A-level learners have accessed work experience specific to their career aspirations to help them make informed decisions about their future studies.
- Links to the local enterprise partnership are maintained through membership of the Merseyside Colleges' Association for which the Principal acts as vice-chair.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Following the previous inspection, governors recognised the need for change in order to necessitate rapid improvements required within the college. Following a robust analysis of governors' skills, a significant proportion of governors rescinded their roles. Governors now have relevant skills and experience, including skills in education and finance which they are beginning to use competently to hold leaders and managers to account.

■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- Staff training in safeguarding is up to date. Staff and governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Leaders and managers have successfully raised the awareness of staff, governors and learners in the first year of their studies to the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. However, learners in the second year of their studies have a limited awareness of radicalisation and extremism. Specific training in awareness raising of the 'Prevent' agenda for second-year learners is scheduled for January 2016.
- Managers have been proactive in the implementation of the 'Prevent' duty. A comprehensive risk assessment and associated action plan are in place, which clearly identify risks in and outside the college. Staff and governors are aware of key risks and have actions in place to mitigate these risks.
- Background checks on the suitability of staff are thorough. Managers maintain an accurate and up-to-date single central record for Disclosure and Barring Service checks with re-checks conducted every three years.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection. However, success rates are low in a minority of subjects and too many learners on AS- and A-level courses make insufficient progress towards their qualifications. Teaching, learning and assessment methods, in the majority of AS- and A-level lessons, do not encourage learners to demonstrate their knowledge effectively. As a result, a significant minority of learners do not achieve their minimum expected grades.
- Results from diagnostic assessments are not always utilised to plan for the individual needs of learners. As a result, a significant minority of learners do not make the progress expected of them. Teachers do not provide enough opportunity for consolidation of new learning or the identification of misconceptions through rigorous assessment strategies. In many subject areas, including science, psychology and mathematics, teaching frequently does not challenge learners effectively to achieve or exceed their targets. Consequently, too few learners on AS- and A-level programmes achieve high grades.
- In a significant minority of lessons across 16 to 19 study programmes, for example in art and history, teaching is inspiring, which motivates and challenges learners in their learning. Teachers are skilful in encouraging learners to think and learn for themselves. Students are confident and very effectively develop critical thinking skills. Good assessment strategies to check and consolidate learning, and effective intervention, mean that progress in these subjects is good.
- Learners' development of English skills on 16 to 19 study programmes requires improvement. Leaders have set ambitious whole-college targets, and a strategy to embed English and mathematics in every lesson. The implementation and execution of these strategies are still developing. Not enough teachers consolidate key vocabulary, discuss the standards learners should be aiming for or coach their learners in the art of effective written communication.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers' use of questioning techniques and assessment of learners' learning requires improvement. Consequently, learners make slow progress. For example, teachers do not check the learning of individual learners regularly enough, or consolidate learning to test learners' knowledge and understanding.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers question learners' knowledge and understanding astutely. As a result, learners make good progress. For example, in information communication technology lessons, learners can articulate their learning effectively because of teachers' probing questions, which makes them think about their learning. Learners in economics and history benefit from personalised support and timely intervention that ensures that progress indicators are generally met.
- Teachers' feedback to learners in lessons following assessment of written work is not always sufficiently detailed and, as a result, learners do not always know what they need to do to improve. In a minority of subjects, such as sociology and drama, feedback is clear and detailed, and learners act on the advice given by teachers to meet their targets.
- Pre-enrolment advice and guidance for learners are good and learners are placed onto appropriate study programmes based upon their entry GCSE profile.
- Learners benefit from a harmonious and inclusive environment. Classroom space and resources, both in and outside the classroom, are of a high standard. Science laboratories and art rooms are well equipped with specialist equipment to support learners' learning. Practical lessons in these areas, especially chemistry, effectively develop skills that are directly applicable to future education and employment. Teachers make good use of information and learning technology (ILT) to support learning, and provide learners with additional resources via ILT to aid their progress and learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

- The behaviour of learners is exemplary. Learners demonstrate high levels of respect for themselves, their peers and their teachers. Leaders and managers have worked closely with learners to develop and implement 'KGV expects', a code of values and behaviours that are successfully developing learners' citizenship and work-related learning skills. As a result, attendance at lessons is very high and learners have a strong work ethic which they apply to their studies.
- Learners on vocational, or a mix of vocational and A-level programmes, benefit from a wide range of relevant work experience to develop their technical and employability skills. Learners on AS- and A-level courses benefit from a wide range of carefully planned activities to prepare them for work and further studies, such as personalised support to develop and improve interview techniques. A minority of learners on AS- and A-level courses secure work experience placements to support specific career aspirations, such as placements in primary schools for those learners aspiring to be teachers.
- Articulate learners develop self-confidence and self-discipline which prepares them well for university, employment or apprenticeships. However, in a minority of programmes, particularly in science, learners' expectations are not sufficiently raised to prepare them for higher levels of study or employment. Learners benefit from a good range of enrichment activities and additional qualifications, for example qualifications in healthy eating and personal finance, which skilfully develop personal, social and employability skills in order for learners to act safely and lead a healthy life.
- Following the previous inspection, leaders and managers recognised that information, advice and guidance for learners were not good enough. Swift and decisive action means that learners now receive good and impartial information, advice and guidance about their courses and future career options. As a result, learners are now able to make realistic and informed decisions about progression to university, apprenticeships or employment.
- Learners arrive for their lessons promptly, well equipped for their learning and have an eagerness and readiness to learn. Learners' attitudes to learning are very positive and most have high expectations. However, the high expectations of learners are not sufficiently reflected in the quality of lessons. As a result, too many learners on AS- and A-level courses are not yet meeting their targets. Almost all learners on vocational programmes meet or exceed their target grades.
- Learners have a good understanding of British values and apply them well in their learning. They know how to keep themselves safe, have a good understanding of bullying and harassment, and know how to keep themselves safe online and outside the college. First-year learners have a heightened awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and have received specialised training on the 'Prevent' agenda. However, second-year learners have a more limited awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Outcomes for learners require improvement

- Outcomes for learners, although improved since the last inspection, are not yet good. Although most learners successfully complete their qualifications, just over half of learners on AS- and A-level courses, which account for slightly less than two-thirds of the provision, make the progress expected of them compared with their starting points. College internal data indicate that the proportion of learners achieving high grades in 2014/15 increased. However, too few learners on AS- and A-level courses achieved or exceeded their target grades.
- The proportion of learners who did not progress to Year 2 of their programmes, or left their programmes early in 2014/15, was too high. Retention of learners compared with this point in 2014/15 has improved.
- At individual subject level, the progress learners make on AS- and A-level courses varies significantly. Learners' progress in a minority of subjects including geology, modern history and ancient history is excellent or very good. However, learners' progress in subjects including mathematics, economics, business studies and science is poor.
- The very large majority of learners on vocational programmes make excellent or very good progress from their starting points and, as a result, successfully achieve their qualifications. Almost all vocational learners achieve the high grades expected of them.
- Leaders and managers have identified achievement gaps for the very small number of high needs learners on AS- and A-level courses, and between males and females on vocational programmes. Actions in place to address and narrow achievement gaps have not yet made sufficient impact.

- The proportion of learners who successfully achieve GCSE English or mathematics at grades A* to C is good and significantly higher than in similar colleges. However, too few learners develop their English skills such as correct use of grammar, spelling and punctuation quickly or competently enough, which affects the quality and standards of their work.
- Leaders and managers successfully tracked the destinations of the large majority of learners who completed their qualifications in 2014/15, and have recently extended this to include the tracking of destinations of learners who leave their programmes early. Approximately 77% of learners progressed to university in 2014/15, of which just over one third of learners secured places at prestigious universities. A few learners were unsuccessful in gaining places at their first-choice university. A few learners returned to college for a third year of study in order to improve their grades, while 11% gained employment, self-employment or progressed to an apprenticeship. Leaders and managers were unable to track the destinations of almost 10% of learners who completed their qualifications in 2014/15.

Provider details

Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16–18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	973
Principal/CEO	Mrs Adele Wills
Website address	www.kgv.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)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	626	21	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16	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"> ■ None 							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael White	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tom Fay	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Bruce	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the vice-principal, as nominee, and carried out the inspection at short notice. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed lessons, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the college.

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