

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



30 March 2016

Ms A Foss  
Principal  
Queen Mary's College  
Cliddesden Road  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire  
RG21 3HF

Dear Ms Foss

### **Short inspection of Queen Mary's College**

Following the short inspection on 25 and 26 January 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in May 2010.

### **This provider continues to be good.**

Your students continue to receive good-quality education and training. You work effectively with governors, managers and students to promote a learning culture strongly focused on continuous improvement of provision in all areas. With other senior leaders, you monitor students' performance closely and take decisive and effective actions to reduce the impact of the few courses or staff that perform below your expectations. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement and monitor the impact of their actions to improve it closely.

Together with governors, you have communicated the college's vision well. Managers and staff have a good understanding of the drive towards being an outstanding college within which students can flourish. The college provides a pleasant and harmonious environment for study, in which students and staff treat one another with respect. The majority of your students achieve beyond the expectations of them at the start of their courses. Students progress well onto higher levels of study while at college and the vast majority progress successfully into higher education or employment upon leaving Queen Mary's College.

Your students continue to benefit from good teaching, learning and assessment. The recent changes you have made in curriculum management have ensured a greater and a more-effective emphasis on raising standards across all of the

college's work. Teachers respond well to carefully targeted management support to improve aspects of their performance. Identification and sharing of best practice have improved since the previous inspection. However, managers do not always have a sufficiently clear approach towards developing good teachers to be outstanding.

You have implemented 16–19 study programmes well. Students have access to a wide range of academic and vocational courses so that their programme of study can be closely aligned to their needs and aspirations. Careers advice and guidance ensure that students maximise their future options and consider next-step choices carefully. Students studying GCSE English and/or mathematics qualifications achieve particularly well. Your students develop a broad range of useful skills either through their studies or through the diverse extra-curricular activities. Most students develop employment skills through work-related activities or work experience. However, you and your managers recognise that this aspect of the study programmes needs further improvement.

You have maintained students' overall achievements at a level similar to that seen in other sixth form colleges nationally. This year you have continued to secure improvements in students' attendance and reduce the number that leave before they complete their studies.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your staff have maintained the very high standards of safeguarding. Your college has a strong and well-established culture of safeguarding. Students who may be at risk receive good support, and staff monitor their progress closely. All governors and staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, including ways to recognise and report students at risk of radicalisation. Referrals to the police and local authority staff leading on the 'Prevent' initiative have been made in a timely manner and have helped to minimise the risk of extremist influences. Recently, you realised that a minority of your students did not have sufficient understanding of the potential dangers of radicalisation or extremism. You are taking effective action to improve their awareness of the 'Prevent' agenda.

### **Inspection findings**

- The leadership and management of the college are good. You evaluate the quality of provision accurately and take swift action to improve less effective aspects. You and your curriculum managers work particularly well with a broad range of partners to enhance students' experience and help shape the curriculum to meet local needs and priorities. The capacity of the leadership to make sustained improvements is good.
- Students achieve well on most courses and the majority exceed the progress expected of them at the start of their programme. This is particularly the case for AS-level and vocational students. The proportion of

students gaining A\* to C grades in GCSE mathematics and/or English is well above that of similar colleges. However, a significant number of A-level students do not maintain the high level of progress they made at AS level.

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment for students on 16–19 study programmes continues to be good. Students enjoy their lessons, participate well in discussions, and teachers manage question-and-answer sessions skilfully. In lessons, students make at least the progress expected of them and develop a broad range of skills to support their successful transition into higher education or work. Feedback from teachers does not always provide students with sufficient detail to tell them where or how they can improve. You have recognised that a minority of A-level students are not sufficiently well prepared to interpret examination questions and are unable to give the fullest of answers to improve grades.
- Study programmes for students aged 16 to 19 are well established and students are able to choose from a wide range of courses to meet their personal or career aspirations. Careers advice is good and most students progress successfully to higher education or work. Work-related skills are generally well developed, though a small minority of students, particularly those on level 2 programmes, do not benefit from work experience that is aligned sufficiently to their future career choice.
- You and your senior leadership team have established a strong culture of continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment. High levels of trust between managers and teachers increasingly give staff the confidence to reflect openly on their own performance and seek support where necessary. Managers assess the quality of teaching and learning accurately, but do not always set out ways for good teachers to improve their skills even further.
- Tutors monitor students' progress towards achieving their qualifications well. The majority of students develop the skills to work well on their own. Tutors encourage students to set their own challenging achievement targets and reflect effectively on their progress. However, a minority of tutors are less effective in this role and require further support.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all students benefit from well-planned work activities and high-quality work experience that is closely linked to their career aspirations
- managers help teachers to develop their teaching skills further
- all students, and particularly A-level students, have the necessary skills to interpret the requirements of examination papers fully, to increase their chances of gaining higher grades
- all students have a clear understanding of the 'Prevent' agenda.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Beaumont  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors were assisted by the deputy principal as nominee. We met with you and your senior managers, and spoke to teachers and a group of students. Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment, including tutorials, and reviewed students' written work. We also spoke to students across the campus. We reviewed key college documents, including those relating to self-assessment, performance and safeguarding.