

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



7 April 2016

Andy Wilson
Principal
Westminster Kingsway College
King's Cross Centre
211 Grays Inn Road
London
WC1X 8RA

Dear Mr Wilson

Short inspection of Westminster Kingsway College

Following the short inspection on 8 March and 9 March 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 April 2011.

This provider continues to be good.

Senior leaders and managers have continued to work effectively to ensure that students and apprentices receive good teaching and training to enable them to achieve their qualifications and progress to further training, higher education or employment. Senior leaders have identified accurately where improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are required and they remain focused on removing the variability in quality that exists in a small minority of subjects.

The proportion of students who achieve their vocational and A-level qualifications remains high and the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications has continued to rise since the previous inspection. Managers have well-developed plans to improve the proportion of students who achieve functional skills and GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics.

Since the previous inspection, managers and teachers have maintained their outstanding relationships with local and regional employers, and they continue to use these effectively to ensure that students and apprentices receive teaching and training that are relevant to the industry they wish to enter. Managers have used the excellent partnerships to facilitate a wide range of relevant work experience placements for 16- to 19-year-old students on study programmes.

Safeguarding is effective.

Managers responsible for safeguarding are clear about their responsibilities and they have established thorough and effective practices for safeguarding students. Staff are confident in referring potential safeguarding concerns to safeguarding staff, who investigate and record each case thoroughly. Managers have established good relationships with a range of external agencies to ensure that they have suitable points of referral for those students who need further help. Managers also use a wide range of college support services, such as bursary payments or counselling, to help those students in need to try and ensure that students experiencing hardship or challenges in their daily lives do not escalate into formal safeguarding referrals.

Managers ensure that recruitment processes for new staff are managed well. They ensure that all new members of staff are eligible to work in the United Kingdom and have appropriate background checks where their roles warrant this. Human resources staff maintain an up-to-date record of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and references for staff. Where DBS checks are not completed before a member of staff is required to start, managers ensure that a risk assessment is completed and checked by a senior leader.

Students and apprentices receive good training in how to work safely and how to keep themselves safe in their daily lives. Managers have established an effective tutorial programme which covers topics such as e-safety, sexual health and mental health awareness.

Managers have made a good start to ensuring their responsibilities for the new Prevent duty are complied with. They have a well-considered Prevent duty action plan which specifies how the different strands of the duty are to be discharged and who is responsible for this. Students are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, although managers recognise that there is still work to do to develop students' understanding further.

Inspection findings

- Senior managers identify poor or declining performance well. They have sound strategies for tackling issues and effective plans for improving the mostly good learning experiences of students across the curriculum further. Managers evaluate performance carefully and as a result, the self-assessment report is a particularly useful baseline for improvement planning. Senior managers have implemented effective measures for making a positive impact on team ethos, productivity and quality. For example, this has helped improve teaching and learning on access to higher education courses, which managers had identified as an area of concern. A few areas for improvement, while timely in their identification, have yet to benefit students fully.
- Teachers are good at meeting the individual development needs of students and apprentices in lessons and in the workplace. In college-based lessons and on workplace training for apprentices, teachers and assessors have a good awareness of the progress that students and apprentices are making.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning and work are good and lessons are enjoyable and productive as a result. Students and apprentices are respectful of each other, of their teachers and of their environment. Senior managers identified adeptly that to improve teaching, learning and assessment further there was a need to challenge students' and apprentices' understanding and development of skills by providing different levels of tasks and better systems for monitoring learning. Managers have implemented effective actions and a healthy culture is starting to exist among staff of developing strong individual monitoring and feedback for students and apprentices on all courses.

However, the language teachers use when setting targets is not always sufficiently understandable for parents and for students, and not enough targets are challenging or useful enough for improving skills.

- Senior leaders have communicated well their desire and strategy to achieve high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. Students and apprentices benefit from this approach, which helps them make good progress in the development of the practical skills and knowledge essential for their chosen career. Most teachers use their experience of working in industry well to motivate and inspire students and apprentices. Students and apprentices are respectful of their teachers, of each other and of their environment. Students' attendance on vocational courses is good, but attendance is less good for students on A-level courses.
- Students do not yet develop their English and mathematical skills sufficiently well to achieve qualifications in these subjects. Teachers on vocational subjects train their students and apprentices well to use the relevant vocabulary and mathematical skills for their subject. For example, hospitality and catering students calculate costs for menus accurately. However, students' attendance at lessons for English and mathematics qualifications is too low and below the overall college rate, and not enough students are yet making good progress towards achieving English and mathematics qualifications. Managers have recognised this issue and their plans for improvement are starting to result in students improving their rate of progress. For example, the marks that teachers are awarding students for their controlled assessments in GCSE English have improved when compared with the marks gained by students in the previous academic year.
- A high proportion of students on vocational courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 successfully complete their qualifications, as do a high proportion of apprentices. The majority of students make the progress expected of them relative to their starting points, although few make better than expected progress.
- Managers have been successful in implementing the requirement for students aged 16 to 19 to complete meaningful work-experience placements as part of their study programme. They have used their wide range of industry partnerships well to enable students to access worthwhile placements, and students value the skills and experience they gain from these placements highly.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve the progress students make from their starting points, especially at level 3, by training teachers to set students clear and specific targets for improvement that relate to the learning and skills that they need to develop to achieve their full potential
- the proportion of students who achieve qualifications in English and mathematics increases, by ensuring that teachers enable students to master the specific skills that have prevented them from being successful in these qualifications previously
- students' attendance at lessons, especially at those for English, mathematics and A levels, improves through rigorous monitoring of attendance rates and swift intervention when students' attendance declines or falls below the expected rate
- teachers improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, especially in subjects where students are less successful and where managers identify that teachers are not meeting their high expectations for teaching and learning.

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 Pemble
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors. We were assisted by the director of strategy and performance as nominee. We visited four college sites to observe teaching, learning and assessments and to look at students' and apprentices' work. We met with students, apprentices, governors, senior leaders, managers and teachers and visited apprentices and employers in the workplace. We reviewed key documents, including the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, data related to the performance of students and apprentices currently on programmes, and those related to safeguarding. We considered the views of learners and employers.