

Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College

Sixth form college

Inspection dates

8–11 March 2016

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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Students make insufficient progress from their starting points in a number of subjects.
- Too many students do not progress to the second year of their A-level programme.
- Teachers do not plan sufficiently for the inclusion of equality and diversity topics in their lessons.
- Teachers often fail to check whether students have fully understood topics and as a result do not adjust their teaching to meet their needs.
- Too many teachers' expectations of students are too low; they set unambitious tasks that are too easy, particularly for the most-able students.
- Too few students participate in work experience or significant work-related activities.
- The lesson observation process places insufficient emphasis on how well students learn and make progress. Owing to a late start, too few teachers have so far been observed in the current academic year.
- Although leaders have reorganised curriculum management and have introduced new systems to improve teaching, learning and assessment, the full impact and benefit of these actions have yet to be realised.

The provider has the following strengths

- The very large majority of students who complete their programmes progress to higher education, with many gaining places on competitive courses at prestigious universities.
- Managers and teachers ensure that students who might otherwise struggle with their subjects are given good additional support both within and outside lessons.
- Students have excellent attitudes to study; they take pride in their work and demonstrate positive learning behaviour. They display high levels of concentration and focus throughout lessons.
- Students participate in a wide range of additional activities and qualifications and develop a strong set of personal and social skills that prepare them well for the next stage of their careers.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College is a large sixth-form college in the centre of Leicester. It attracts an ethnically diverse group of students from the city and surrounding area, and offers a programme that consists almost exclusively of A levels. There are two other sixth forms and a general further education college in the city and three schools offering A-level courses.
- Attainment in Leicester schools has declined over the last two years and the proportion of young people who leave with five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is significantly lower than the national rate and the rate in the county of Leicestershire. Unemployment in Leicester is higher than the national rate. Those in employment are less likely than individuals in other parts of the country to be in managerial or technical roles and are likely to earn less than the national average salary.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in those subjects where students do not progress well enough so that staff:
 - make good use of value-added data and information on students' prior attainment to plan lessons that challenge all students sufficiently
 - plan and teach interesting and engaging lessons
 - provide additional activities that help address any topics in which students are struggling
 - assess frequently the progress of students and provide feedback that promotes their understanding and development.
- Further develop systems to identify students who are at risk of not reaching the end of their first year or who may not progress to their second year and use these to help them to remain at the college until the successful conclusion of their A levels.
- Improve students' understanding of equality and diversity themes through the use of integrated and appropriate activities in lessons.
- Establish clear guidance for teachers for checking learning, and train staff in how to use the information this provides to adjust their teaching. Evaluate the effectiveness of this training through lesson observation and robust monitoring of students' progress.
- Increase the number of students who benefit from work-related experiences to aid their understanding of the world of work and the demands of their possible careers.
- Monitor the effectiveness and the consistency of the implementation of the new systems designed to improve teaching, learning and assessment throughout the college. Transfer the good practice that exists between, and within, curriculum areas.
- Ensure, as a matter of urgency, that the internal lesson observation process focuses on the progress learners make across the whole range of academic, personal and employability skills and that all teachers are observed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment declined significantly following the last inspection of the college in 2007. The current senior management team was established relatively recently and has worked hard to arrest and reverse this decline. The principal led a curriculum reorganisation to increase the accountability of senior and middle managers for the quality of the learning experience and the improvement of students' outcomes. Senior managers introduced new lesson observation, performance management and professional development systems to address areas of concern and were successful in several areas.
- The full impact of these new systems, however, is yet to be realised. Lesson observations focus too much on teachers and teaching and insufficiently on students' learning and progress. Owing to a late start, less than a third of staff have been formally observed so far in 2015/16. Observers do not focus sufficiently on students' progress, the promotion of equality and diversity, and the development of students' mathematics, English and employability skills.
- Curriculum leaders have not yet ensured that all teachers are proficient in maximising their students' potential. This is despite teachers having access to systems to ascertain students' skills on entry to the college. Managers are very well aware of the outcomes of different groups of students and they place considerable emphasis on removing any gaps in achievement between them. Managers have implemented a number of actions to address the underperformance of particular groups, with varying degrees of success.
- Managers have done too little to ensure that all teachers set and mark homework on a consistent basis. As a result, many teachers miss a key opportunity to check how much progress their students are making, and to help them further their understanding. Often, teachers simply ask students to finish the work they were doing in class. Many teachers rely too much on peer marking and do not check often enough the quality of answers in homework. Consequently, they do not have a clear understanding of how well their students are progressing.
- Managers give a high priority to the importance of improving students' English and mathematical skills. In particular, managers have a much increased focus on improving students' literacy skills, especially for male students. Teachers, however, give insufficient priority in lessons and in marking assessments to enable and encourage students to increase their skills.
- Governors and the college leadership team are committed to providing the best learning experience and outcomes for students. They communicate these high ambitions very effectively to their staff, who have embraced the need to improve provision and outcomes. The realisation of these aspirations is yet to be fully achieved in terms of increasing the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and in improved outcomes for students.
- Managers work very closely with schools and other colleges in the area to promote the college's provision and to ensure that its curriculum is complementary with theirs. Good transition practices exist with feeder schools so that applicants receive the support they need when they arrive. Despite this, however, too many students leave during or at the end of their first year and consequently do not complete full A levels.
- Leaders promote equality and diversity very effectively in all areas of the college, assisted by a very active diversity forum. The 'contemplation space' is used by students of all faiths and none. The college is an inclusive and welcoming learning environment in which student societies representing different faiths, cultures and sexual orientations co-exist harmoniously. Incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination are extremely rare and are not tolerated. The promotion of equality and diversity and of British values in lessons is less effective.
- The 2014/15 self-assessment report is self-critical and honest and evaluates key judgements that are mostly accurate and correlate with evidence. Although many curriculum areas act very effectively on students' views to improve provision, these views do not inform all self-assessments. Curriculum area self-assessments are broadly accurate in their judgements, but the ensuing action plans are often too vague.
- Students receive good careers advice and guidance about progression to higher education, apprenticeships and other further education. This helps students to take the most appropriate subjects based on their prior attainment and their future career plans. Recruitment staff are impartial and advise students of alternative provision elsewhere if it is in students' best interests.

- Leaders monitor very effectively the destinations of students who complete their courses. They analyse confirmed destinations in great detail. Managers at all levels are well aware of the destinations of the very large majority of students.
- Leaders and governors take very effective action to maintain the provision for all students. They manage finances, accommodation and human resources very astutely and ensure robust contingency plans are in place. They have good capacity to sustain and improve their provision.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Governors know the college extremely well. They spend considerable time in curriculum areas, meeting staff and students and attending lessons. They know which areas are strong and which require improvement.
 - Governors set up ‘task and finish’ groups with senior managers to address key areas of concern and development. They delve deeply into a problem, meet with staff and students and agree the best ways to resolve issues effectively.
 - Governors support and challenge managers very strongly and are not prepared to accept proposals unless they understand them completely and fully agree with them. They accept that the full implementation of the many improvement initiatives may take time to be consistently effective across the college.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Leaders and governors ensure that the college meets its statutory responsibilities, including those for disability, safeguarding, health and safety, and the Prevent duty. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place and managers review them annually.
 - Managers carry out comprehensive background checks on staff and keep clear and full records of these.
 - Key staff have very productive relationships with external agencies related to safeguarding matters and the transition of vulnerable young people from school to college.
 - Students feel very safe in college and are well aware of safeguarding issues. Teachers and progress coaches help them understand the potential dangers of radicalisation and extremism through the induction and tutorial programme. Students are knowledgeable about e-safety and cyber-bullying.
 - Leaders have ensured that staff and governors receive good training in safeguarding and the Prevent duty. Designated safeguarding lead staff and a designated lead governor have completed training to the appropriate levels and update their knowledge at the appointed times.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Too many teachers’ expectations of their students are too low and consequently they set unambitious tasks for them. The most-able students are rarely challenged to work to their full potential. When asking questions, teachers often accept brief answers and do not ask students to develop their ideas.
- Too many lessons, particularly in science, mathematics and information technology, fail to engage the interest of students. They often remain passive and are reluctant to contribute to discussions or respond to questions. In a few cases, they lose interest and become disengaged. As a result, students in these lessons are unable to develop their ideas fully or share their thoughts and understanding with their peers and this slows the learning of all.
- Too often, teachers provide insufficient feedback for students to understand what they need to do to improve their grade. This is one reason why students do not always make as much progress as they are able to.
- Teachers often fail to check that students have fully grasped topics and as a result, they do not know whether students have developed sufficient understanding or how much progress students are making overall. In most lessons, teachers leave too little time at the end to recap the main points of the lesson or to test students’ understanding.
- Managers have recently introduced electronic systems to monitor the progress of students. In many cases, these systems are used well to share information between staff and, as a result, teachers and progress coaches provide good support that helps students achieve. However, teachers in a few subject areas have not yet fully embraced these systems and this limits their effectiveness.
- Teachers do not plan sufficiently for the inclusion of equality and diversity topics within their lessons. However, progress coaches help students to understand these topics, the risks of radicalisation and extremism and the concepts of British values through a well-considered tutorial programme.

- Teachers successfully help students to improve their English and mathematical skills in lessons where these form an integral part of the syllabus, such as where mathematical skills are used in physics lessons. However, in subjects where these links are less obvious, teachers do not always pay sufficient attention to English and mathematics. College managers have acquired computerised systems to assess students' starting points in these subjects, but too few teachers use the results to plan learning to meet the needs of individual students.
- Academic support for students is effective in helping them pass their qualifications. Teachers offer help outside lessons, and the majority of subjects have additional timetabled drop-in sessions. Students who need additional help to pass their subjects have access to a good selection of additional provision. For example, students whose prior GCSE attainment in science or mathematics suggests they may find A levels more challenging attend 'psychology plus' and 'physics plus' classes that provide a compulsory additional hour of tuition each week.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge that they use well to provide lucid explanations of topics. In visual and performing arts, where many of the teachers are still practising artists, the enthusiasm and expertise for the subject are infectious and result in high levels of active participation in lessons.
- Teachers develop well-designed, attractive and purposeful learning materials; students benefit from comprehensive notes and activity booklets in the majority of subjects. For example, in classical civilisation, each unit of study is supplemented with an excellent study pack, which guides students through the course effectively.
- Students know their target grades and make strenuous efforts to achieve them. They invest a large amount of time in independent study and this mitigates somewhat the impact of the less inspiring teaching. Learning centres provide an excellent environment in which students work extremely well on collaborative projects; the quiet study area, although extremely busy throughout the day, remains exceptionally calm and almost silent as students strive to consolidate their learning.
- In the more effective lessons, students handle challenging theories and concepts well, and this successfully helps them to develop their thinking skills. For example, in a very successful drama lesson, an excellent debate about the vocality, movement and physicality of the main character in Potter's play, 'Blue Remembered Hills' captured the imagination of students and developed their creative thinking skills well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

- Students develop excellent attitudes to study. They take pride in their work and demonstrate positive learning behaviour in the significant majority of lessons, displaying high levels of concentration and focus throughout, despite uninspiring teaching in a number of subjects.
- In lessons where all students participate fully, they express well-developed debating and discussion skills. For example, in a successful philosophy and ethics lesson, students explained with insight the difference between Kantian and utilitarian approaches when debating an ethical dilemma.
- All students benefit from the wide range of enrichment activities and additional qualifications on offer to them; participation in these activities is very high. As a result, they develop a strong set of personal and social skills that prepare them well for the next stage of their careers. For example, second-year students take additional qualifications such as the extended project or the certificate in financial studies.
- Staff place much emphasis on the development of the study skills students need for higher education. For example, in a number of lessons, students prepare for and deliver presentations to the rest of the group. Similarly, teachers encourage students to read more widely around their subjects and many of them do so.
- In tutorial sessions, students cover a broad selection of topics to enhance their personal development. These include, for example, sexual health, online safety and revision skills. Students engage fully in these sessions and speak highly of the support they receive from their progress coaches.
- Students benefit from high-quality careers advice and support for university applications; this is supported by a range of activities such as mock interviews, careers workshops and visits from industry specialists. Too few students, however, participate in work experience or significant work-related learning, even where the potential benefits of these activities are obvious. In health and social care, for example, the limited opportunities the students have to experience health and care settings inhibit the development of their employability skills.

- Attendance and punctuality are high in the significant majority of lessons. However, too many students arrive late for the first period and this fails to prepare them for working life.

Outcomes for learners

require improvement

- A-level students make too little progress in a range of subjects including, physics, psychology, applied ICT, media studies, classical civilisation and business studies. Overall, they make slightly less progress from their starting points than might be expected.
- The progress AS-level students make varies considerably between individual subjects, and in too many subjects they do not advance from their starting points as far as they are able to. These subjects include physics, mathematics, modern foreign languages and English literature. However, in a few subjects, including economics, accounting, and art and design, they make good progress and, because of the higher than average number of AS-level qualifications they take, their overall outcomes are somewhat better than those of their peers in other colleges.
- Managers and teachers have reviewed in detail the reasons why students following certain subjects have made slower progress. They have implemented a range of strategies focused on improving teaching, learning and assessment and this has led to a considerable reduction in the number of underperforming subjects. However, there remain a number in which further work needs to be done.
- Too many students do not progress to the second year of their A-level programme, despite strong pre-course information, advice and guidance. In 2014/15, just under a fifth of students did not complete a full A-level programme. Of these, around a third dropped out during their first year, a third failed to achieve the required grades for progression and a third chose to go elsewhere at the end of their first year.
- Male students do less well than their female counterparts and although this gap has narrowed slightly in the last year, it remains too wide. Management actions to close this gap have had some impact, but further work remains to be done.
- The proportion of students who successfully complete their qualifications is around the rate for sixth-form colleges nationally. This has been maintained despite a slow but steady decline in the prior attainment of students. A significant minority of students work to a high standard and achieve top grades.
- A very high proportion of students who complete their A-level programme progress to higher education, with many going on to gain places on competitive courses at prestigious universities. Almost all of those who do not go to university progress to further education or training or find employment.
- Around a half of students who re-sit GCSE English and mathematics qualifications successfully gain an A* to C grade. This is a substantially higher proportion than at other colleges in England.
- Teachers and managers have successfully implemented a range of approaches to support students with learning difficulties or disability that have eliminated differences in pass rates between this group of students and their peers.

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	2,276
Principal	Sandra Hamilton-Fox
Website address	www.wqeic.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)	0	0	0	0	2,261	1	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14–16	0							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regent College 							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Russell Henry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Shaun Dillon	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Berry	Ofsted Inspector
Tony Day	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the vice-principal, curriculum and guidance, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider'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 students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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