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Mr J Prest
Barton Peveril Sixth Form College
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Dear Mr Prest

Short inspection of Barton Peveril Sixth Form College

Following my visit to the college on 27–28 April 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 college was judged to be good in February 2010.

This college continues to be good.

Since the previous inspection, governors and leaders have maintained a high-quality education for students. Students thrive at Barton Peveril Sixth Form College. The college is a great place to learn because you ensure that students benefit from a much broader education alongside the primary focus of achieving their qualifications. By the time students progress to their next steps, they have developed the wider skills that they will need to be successful at university or in employment. Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency indicates that your students do particularly well when they progress to university. They are self-motivated and able to work independently, making informed decisions about their own progress and what they need to do to improve. The substantial building programme that you have undertaken, creating more high-quality spaces in which students learn, work on their own and socialise, further enhances the overall students' experience.

You have implemented the 16 to 19 study programmes very well. From their first contact with the college, students receive the advice and guidance that ensure they take the subjects that best meet their skills and ambitions. Students benefit from the opportunity to take mixed programmes of academic and vocational qualifications. Students are on appropriate courses if they have yet to achieve a high grade in either English or mathematics GCSE. Opportunities for students to participate in enrichment activities and additional academic qualifications are outstanding. The majority of students involve themselves enthusiastically in a

variety of stimulating activities that help them to understand the importance of having a good work–life balance.

Since the previous inspection, you have had a relentless focus on further improving students' experience. You have made considerable progress in addressing the areas for improvement that inspectors identified at that time. For example, students' achievements in business have improved and are now high. You have ensured that most teachers have access to a wealth of data relating to students' starting points and the skills that students need to develop. Self-assessment is thorough. As a result, you and the governors have a very clear picture of where there are still areas for further improvement. Managers use data very effectively, for example to identify whole-college staff development needs and to implement high-quality training that is valued by teachers and helps them to improve their teaching practice further. You recognise that there are areas where students are making insufficient progress and that there is still work to be done to ensure that all teachers plan learning that helps students to make good progress from their starting points.

Most teachers provide very good levels of support to students. They are skilled at knowing when to intervene with appropriate help and guidance and when to challenge students to think of ways in which they could overcome their own problems or difficulties. You recognise that a significant number of your students come from areas described as socio-economically deprived, and your staff identify these students and support them very well. In particular, teachers successfully raise the aspirations of these students so that they achieve just as well as their peers and have equally high levels of progression to university or into further training or employment.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and action is taken to ensure the safety of both students and staff. Leaders place the safety of students at the heart of every aspect of college life. As a result, students are keenly aware of how to stay safe when they are attending college, when they are online, and when they are out and about in their communities.

Governors and leaders have responded positively and rapidly to the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. They have used the expertise of external agencies such as the police very effectively to support this process. All staff have been well trained to recognise the signs that a young person may be being radicalised, and to respond appropriately if they have any concerns. They share a collective responsibility and raise students' awareness well. As a result, students are confident that they would know what to do if they were worried about either their own or another student's safety.

Staff place a very high priority on students' welfare. Managers have ensured that there is a culture of zero tolerance towards bullying or harassment in any form. Systems that managers have put in place to deal with the very small number of incidents that do occur ensure that all students feel confident to raise concerns in the knowledge that staff will deal with them rapidly and effectively.

Inspection findings

- Students continue to achieve at levels well above the rates of similar sixth-form colleges. They attend well and enjoy learning. The majority of students make at least expected progress from their starting points. In a few subjects, students make exceptional progress, for example AS sociology, AS English literature and the extended project qualification. The numbers of students on GCSE English and mathematics courses who achieve grade C or better are high. The progress that male students make at A level, although broadly at expected levels, remains significantly below that of female students, who make better than expected progress. Leaders have yet to secure improvements to the progress that students make in a small number of subjects, for example physics, and government and politics.
- Leaders and governors continue to prioritise further improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You have largely achieved your vision of creating a learning community in which all students can flourish, appreciating the value of learning and developing the skills they need to be successful at it. Your digital learning strategy ensures that students are highly skilled in using emerging technologies to enhance their learning.
- You are well aware of where pockets of underperformance remain. However, you have had varied success with the strategies that you have implemented to deal with these, and a few have stubbornly remained not good enough over a number of years. You have not ensured that managers identify the key features of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas. They have insufficient understanding of why a small number of students make less than expected progress despite judging the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to be good or even outstanding. Because teaching observation records focus insufficiently on the main points of the observers' evaluations, managers find it difficult to identify aspects of an individual teacher's practice that could be further improved so that students' progress is even better.
- Managers have made very good progress in ensuring that teachers understand the need to support students to develop their English, mathematics and work-related skills. Teachers identify frequent opportunities to do this in their day-to-day teaching and most do it effectively. For example, performing arts students demonstrated very good understanding of how the correct use of adverbs would help them in both their practical and written work. The large majority of students understand very well why these skills are going to be of benefit to them, and demonstrate a willingness and enthusiasm to develop and improve them. A few teachers are not yet adept at ensuring that the skills they are developing relate to the subject they are teaching and are at a sufficiently challenging level.

- The ambition of the majority of students is to progress to university and teachers support students in their applications very well. They ensure that students with lower aspirations consider more prestigious universities, in line with their target grades. The numbers who progress to Oxford, Cambridge and other Russell Group universities are high. A good proportion of students go on to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects, which aligns well with national priorities to recruit more young people into these areas. The much smaller number of students who want to progress into employment or onto an apprenticeship also receive very useful advice and guidance. However, managers have not ensured that these students receive the guidance in as timely a manner as their peers applying to university.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they implement strategies to improve both students' achievement and progress in the small number of subjects where it is not good enough, and the progress that male students make from their starting points
- managers determine more accurately the key features of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas so that they can target improvements more effectively
- teachers develop students' English, mathematics and work-related skills that are relevant to the subjects that they are doing.

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

Stewart Jackson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we were assisted by the assistant principal (quality and student progress) as nominee. We met with you, two of your governors, your senior team, curriculum directors, and a sample of teaching staff and students. We observed and talked to students in lessons, in the library and in other private study areas. We looked at their assessed work. We reviewed key policies and documents, including those relating to self-assessment, performance and safeguarding. We also considered the views of students.