

Wigston College

Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2DS

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have brought about rapid improvement at the school, especially since September 2016. Pupils now receive a good quality of education.
- The quality of teaching has improved considerably and is now good. It is particularly strong in the sixth form.
- Previous gaps in pupils' knowledge are being tackled effectively, including for the school's final Year 11 cohort. Pupils are making faster progress than before.
- The pastoral and academic support provided to disadvantaged pupils is strong. These pupils are achieving higher standards than they have done in the past and are making faster progress, including in English and mathematics.
- Pupils report consistent improvement at the school, especially since the appointment of the current headteacher and executive headteacher.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good overall. Leaders ensure that pupils are safe at the school. This includes pupils who attend alternative provision.
- The quality of careers education and guidance is much improved. Virtually all pupils who left the school in 2016 secured places in further education, employment or apprenticeships.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. The attendance of the large majority of disadvantaged pupils has improved and is similar to that of their peers.
- Leaders are doing everything possible to improve the attendance of a small group of Year 11 pupils who do not attend school regularly enough.
- The sixth form is good. Much greater consistency in the quality of teaching is ensuring that students are making good progress.
- The school fully meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. It provides too few opportunities for sixth form students to take up extended work placements.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. Records from lesson observations do not always take account of pupils' work over time, however. This weakens the effectiveness of feedback to staff.
- Senior staff know that a very small proportion of teaching still requires improvement. They are taking decisive action to remedy this, including where teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough.
- Strong support from the academy trust has made a significant contribution to the improvements that have been secured.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Quickly eradicate the remaining pockets of weak teaching in Year 11 so that all pupils receive teaching that is consistently of good quality in the run-up to their GCSE examinations.
- Maintain a relentless focus on improving the attendance of the small proportion of pupils in Year 11 who do not attend school regularly enough.
- Ensure that checks of the quality of teaching routinely take sufficient account of the standard of work pupils have produced in their books over a period of time.
- Strengthen provision for work experience in the sixth form, particularly for students pursuing level 2 qualifications and those following vocational courses.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since September 2016, the executive headteacher and headteacher have built on the work of their predecessors to bring about rapid improvements to the school. They have raised expectations of the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour so that both have improved considerably.
- These two leaders have skills which complement each other's strengths very well. The executive headteacher combines his strong vision for the school with sharp and incisive thinking. The headteacher combines rigour and resilience with warmth and a strong presence around the school, which are valued by the pupils.
- Leaders have implemented far more rigorous arrangements for managing the performance of staff than before. As a result, the weakest teachers have left the school. Leaders and governors have been meticulous and rigorous in ensuring that teachers only receive pay increases when they are warranted by high-quality teaching and pupils' good achievement.
- Effective and improved arrangements have been implemented to train and develop staff. Leaders have ensured, for example, that staff have received subject-specific training to ensure that teachers' use of assessment is closely aligned to the revised examination specifications being implemented nationally.
- As a result of these actions, almost all teaching is now of good quality. Teaching in the sixth form is particularly strong.
- Action has been taken to ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are much more accurate than before. This has been achieved through a more robust approach to checking teachers' assessments. Pupils' practice examination papers are checked by staff from other schools to ensure that the teachers' marking is accurate. In some subjects, practice examination papers have been marked externally to ensure that the marking is impartial and accurate.
- The curriculum has improved considerably. Leaders have ensured that sixth-form students are guided onto courses which best match their differing needs, aspirations and abilities. As a result, retention rates in the sixth form, which were previously poor, are now high.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits to places of cultural and scientific interest, such as the Royal Ballet, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Leicester Space Centre. Leaders ensure that financial disadvantage is no barrier to pupils' participation in these visits.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils learn from talks provided by business leaders and employers and higher education providers. Such opportunities combine well with cultural activities in the school, for example the recent production of 'Annie'. Together, they make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils are aware of, and are committed to, fundamental British values. Pupils described what these values are, why they are important and how they have learned about them.

- The school has benefited from strong support from the trust. In particular, trustees have allocated some of the strongest staff from the trust to teach in subjects where teaching has previously been weak. They have ensured that the executive headteacher has the time and resources to support the school's senior leadership team.
- The trust has also provided additional leadership support, including for staff currently responsible for the achievement and welfare of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have ensured that the additional funding provided for these pupils is used appropriately. New senior leaders have recently been appointed from the trust to work with the school. This is strengthening leadership capacity in the school further.
- Leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching are accurate. They ensure that their evaluation of teaching overall includes an analysis of pupils' progress. Leaders carry out reviews of pupils' work to ensure that they are achieving well enough. The written records leaders make on the quality of teaching do not focus consistently enough on the standard of work in pupils' books, however.
- Leaders have ensured that almost all staff follow the school's marking and feedback policy. Not all staff provide sufficient time for pupils to take action in response to their teachers' marking, however, as is expected by senior staff.
- Leaders know that a very small minority of teaching is still not consistently good enough. They are taking decisive action to remedy this.

Governance of the school

- Governance has been strengthened considerably since the previous inspection. As a result, the local governing body is holding leaders to account much more effectively than before.
- Greater clarity has been secured between members of the local governing body and trustees in their contrasting roles and responsibilities. This ensures that all governors are absolutely clear about the aspects of provision they are accountable for.
- The local governing body now ensures that the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. The minutes of meetings of the standards committee show that they constantly question staff about the achievement of this group.
- Governors keep a very watchful eye over the school's safeguarding arrangements. They have ensured, for example, that pupils attending alternative provision are safe and attend regularly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have tackled very effectively the weaknesses in safeguarding provision reported at the last inspection. Daily and timely checks are made to ensure that pupils who receive some of their education elsewhere have arrived safely. Leaders follow up any absence promptly to ensure that the pupils are safe.
- Leaders provide highly effective support for pupils who are vulnerable to harm. They

maintain a very watchful eye over these pupils, daily if necessary, to ensure that they are safe and protected.

- Leaders engage very effectively with external agencies, including social care, where pupils are most at risk. Records show that they are tenacious in securing the support needed for pupils at risk of harm, repeatedly contacting social care, for example, where they think actions have not been taken quickly enough.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff have up-to-date safeguarding training. Records of teachers' referrals to senior staff when they are concerned about pupils show that this has been effective.
- All the necessary checks of staff, volunteers and governors are carried out and recorded accurately. This includes checks on contractors who work on the school site while pupils are in attendance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has become much more effective since the last inspection, and particularly in the current academic year. Almost all of the teaching that was less than good has been eradicated. Teaching in the sixth form is now of a consistently high standard.
- Strong leadership in English and mathematics means that the quality of teaching in these subjects is almost always good.
- During the inspection, and in previous monitoring inspections of the school, lower-attaining pupils were observed learning very effectively in English and mathematics. Teachers combined very high expectations with creative approaches to teaching that engaged and enthused pupils.
- The quality of teaching for the most able pupils has also been strengthened. The higher expectations leaders have established, together with good provision for training, mean that this group of pupils are challenged more consistently and effectively than before. This was seen in English, mathematics and science as well as in subjects such as psychology, sociology and modern foreign languages.
- Teachers use their good knowledge of assessment criteria to plan learning that helps pupils to understand precisely what they need to do to achieve their target grades.
- Pupils speak positively about the quality of teaching and particularly the improvements that have been secured.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now highlighted in all aspects of the school's provision, including teaching. For example, teachers direct their questioning to these pupils first and give priority to supporting them in lessons. The additional teaching provided to boost pupils' achievement also focuses on disadvantaged pupils.
- The leader responsible for ensuring that the curriculum boosts pupils' literacy skills has ensured that teachers are much more aware of their responsibilities to foster high standards of literacy. She makes regular checks on learning to make sure that they are following the school's policy.
- Leaders are ensuring that reading for different purposes, including reading for pleasure, is promoted increasingly effectively. Strategies to promote pupils' love of

reading are at an early stage of development.

- Leaders and pupils know that a very small proportion of teaching is still not effective enough. In these lessons, teachers do not impose the same high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour as in other lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are very well informed about potential risks to their well-being and talk knowledgeably about the teaching they have received to help keep them safe.
- Leaders have ensured that this aspect of the curriculum is tailored in response to emerging national risks, such as those associated with child exploitation and radicalisation, for example.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at the school and that they know how to access support if ever they are victim to bullying.
- Pupils are tolerant of differences, including those associated with sexual or gender orientation. They say that name-calling is rare. The school's records of racist incidents, for example, support these views.
- Good provision is in place to support vulnerable pupils. Pupils who suffer from anxiety have 'safe areas' to go to at lunchtime, for example. The school has adapted its arrangements for providing counselling in response to the changing age profile of the pupils on roll.
- Most pupils are motivated to do their best, including the pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Leaders took the decision to tell disadvantaged pupils about the pupil premium as part of their strategy to boost the achievement and welfare of this group of pupils. As a result, a good 'team spirit' has been established among disadvantaged pupils. They enjoy having their own area to meet their teachers and to socialise in at lunchtimes.
- Leaders have strengthened the monitoring of the welfare and achievement of pupils attending alternative provision where, previously, this aspect of the school's leadership had been inadequate. They ensure that these pupils are safe, attending regularly and making good progress in their academic and vocational courses.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour has improved markedly since the last inspection and most lessons are conducted in a purposeful and productive learning environment.
- Higher expectations of pupils' behaviour and greater consistency in teachers' use of the behaviour policy together resulted in a spike in the number of recorded behavioural incidents earlier in the year. Behaviour has since improved as pupils have grown accustomed to their teachers' higher expectations of behaviour and of punctuality to school and lessons.

- A very small minority of pupils in Year 11 continue to struggle to behave consistently well. Leaders provide good support and challenge to these pupils and records show how their behaviour had improved. Occasionally, teachers do not manage their behaviour well enough and these pupils then affect their own and others' learning.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved considerably and most of these pupils attend as well as their peers.
- Persistent absenteeism is reducing but remains too high for a very small minority of pupils. Leaders are taking every possible action to remedy this, including through using legal proceedings, and using them more than once when they have not worked first time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From their often very low starting points, pupils in Year 11 made similar progress to their peers nationally in 2016. Progress in English was particularly strong, leading to pupils attaining half a grade more than their peers nationally. High-attaining pupils also achieved very well in English.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics and science was in line with the progress made by other pupils nationally in 2016.
- The work in pupils' books and observations of their learning, particularly in mathematics, show that pupils currently in Year 11 are making more rapid progress than before, including the disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders know that the actions taken to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils came too slowly to make the difference needed to their overall results in their GCSE examinations last year.
- Much more effective use of the pupil premium funding, sharp monitoring of pupils' progress, greater lines of accountability and the improved quality of teaching are ensuring that the very large majority of these pupils are now being helped to catch up quickly. The inspectors' scrutiny of disadvantaged pupils' work showed a marked contrast in the quality of work they are producing compared with work produced last year.
- The most able pupils are making good progress across the curriculum. Far more of the most able scientists than before, for example, are on track to achieve the highest grades in the three separate sciences. In discussions with inspectors, some of the able pupils reported how they love science.
- Better teaching is quickly raising pupils' achievement in subjects where previously they have not done well enough, including in the humanities subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress, often exceeding the progress made by their peers. Interim leadership arrangements are ensuring that the quality of provision for these pupils is effective.
- Virtually all pupils who left the school last year secured places in the sixth form or at college, or they secured an apprenticeship. Pupils' rising achievement means that they are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Much more effective leadership and much greater consistency in the quality of teaching have led to rapid improvements to the quality of the sixth form.
- Weak teaching has been tackled effectively. Sixth-form students now receive a consistently strong diet of teaching.
- The students who spoke with inspectors were highly complimentary about the quality of teaching they receive. Inspectors found that they are right to be pleased. In all of the sixth form lessons observed, the students learned consistently well.
- The quality of work in students' books and folders reflects their good achievement and also shows how well teachers manage and monitor students' learning. Teachers ensure that students' work is well organised and of sufficient quality to be a good resource for revision in preparation for their public examinations.
- Students benefit from very regular opportunities to tackle past examination questions and improve their responses. In this they are well supported by their teachers' good knowledge and use of assessment.
- Teaching is particularly strong in subjects where in the past it has been weak, for example in psychology and sociology. In these subjects, the teachers are doing sterling work to remedy gaps in the knowledge of students in Year 13 resulting from the weaker teaching they received earlier in their courses.
- Much-improved careers information, guidance and support have dramatically improved retention rates. Previously they have been low. This is because in the past leaders who have now left the school had allowed students to take courses for which they were ill-equipped. This year, virtually all sixth-form students have remained on the courses they started in September.
- Standards in vocational subjects are also increasing. They are closely aligned to students' improved achievements in academic subjects.
- Good provision is in place for students following the 'progression route' in order to attain level 2 qualifications. These students, like other sixth-form students, benefit from one week's work experience. These students and those following vocational routes, however, do not have opportunities to develop their skills further through work experience over a longer period of time.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who join the sixth form without having achieved a grade A* to C in GCSE English or mathematics receive additional teaching to boost their achievement in these subjects. The large majority of students improve their grades and many go on to attain a grade C or above.
- Students' personal development is good. Attendance is high and students behave very well. All students undertake activities to enhance their personal development. These include helping younger pupils at the school or in other settings, running extra-curricular clubs or organising charitable events.

School details

Unique reference number	138894
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10017566

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	15 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	379
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	169
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Pauline Munro
Headteacher	Mike Wilson
Telephone number	0116 288 1611
Website	www.wigstoncollege.org
Email address	admin@wigstoncollege.org
Date of previous inspection	21–22 April 2015

Information about this school

- Wigston College is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. From September 2017, the school will offer sixth-form provision only. Hence, the current Year 11 pupils are the last cohort of pupils under the age of 16 that the school will provide for.
- The school is part of the Wigston Academies Trust. Some of the school's leaders and teachers work across both schools in the trust.
- A new headteacher and executive headteacher took up their posts in September 2016.

- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are currently no children looked after.
- The school uses alternative providers for a very small number of pupils. These are the South Leicestershire Behaviour Partnership, Melton Hub, Uneek and Gaz's autos.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 4.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 32 lessons. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with a senior leader from the school. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and looked separately at the quality of work produced by disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of staff, including the headteacher, executive headteacher, members of the local governing body and trustees. They also met with a wide range of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors spoke by telephone with representatives of two of the alternative providers used by the school. Other providers were contacted during previous monitoring visits.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of information, including the school's policies on its website, records regarding the safeguarding of pupils and information about pupils' current attainment and progress. They also reviewed evidence gathered from previous monitoring visits.
- There were too few responses from parents to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, for these to be considered. Inspectors reviewed the school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views.

Inspection team

Daniel Burton, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ian Colling

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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