

Regent College

Sixth-form college

Inspection dates

19–22 September 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders, managers and college staff have developed an inclusive, supportive and caring environment. Students and apprentices work well together and respect the views of others.
- Students and apprentices enjoy learning and want to succeed. They work enthusiastically, behave sensibly and the great majority achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers have successfully improved the quality of almost all teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- Most students make good progress during their time at college. They take pride in their work and develop the knowledge and skills they need to progress.
- The effective teaching of GCSE English and mathematics results in a large proportion of students making progress and achieving good grades.
- Good careers advice and guidance prepare students very effectively for their next steps.
- Teachers and personal supervisors provide high levels of support and care for students.
- Students' progression to higher levels of learning and higher education is very good.
- Despite improvements since the last inspection, the proportion of students on vocational courses who have external work experience is still too low.
- Leaders have not managed the apprenticeship provision sufficiently well to make sure that enough apprentices achieve their qualifications by the planned end date.
- Too few students and apprentices have a fully developed understanding of how the 'Prevent' duty legislation applies to their everyday lives.
- Too few students studying vocational subjects at level 2 pass their examinations.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Regent College is a sixth-form college in the centre of Leicester. Unlike most sixth-form colleges, it offers a broad mix of academic and vocational programmes from level 1 to level 3, as well as apprenticeship courses. It attracts ethnically diverse students from the city and the surrounding areas. There are two other sixth-form colleges and a general further education college in the city, and three schools offering A-level courses.
- The proportion of young people in Leicester gaining five GCSEs grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is considerably lower than the rate in the county of Leicestershire and lower than the national rate. Unemployment in Leicester is higher than the national rate and the amount of people with qualifications at level 2 or above is considerably lower than the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all vocational students, and particularly those who are not progressing to university, benefit from meaningful external work experience at a suitable time in their studies to enable them to make informed decisions about their next steps and to prepare them for future employment.
- Leaders and managers should evaluate immediately the reasons why apprentices do not complete their apprenticeship by the planned end date and take urgent corrective action to ensure that they do so.
- Managers and teachers should strengthen and widen the range of activities they use to improve students' and apprentices' understanding of the risks presented by radicalisation and extremism.
- Improve teachers' skills further to ensure that they prepare students very thoroughly for their examinations in vocational subjects at level 2.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have high expectations of staff and students, and a clear and ambitious vision for the college. They lead by example, creating a highly respectful atmosphere where everyone is valued. Students and apprentices from widely varying backgrounds and cultures work harmoniously, behave sensibly and enjoy their learning.
- Leaders and managers have made good progress in most of the areas identified at the previous inspection as requiring improvement. Of particular note are improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in most subject areas, rising attendance and improvements in the number of students who achieve high grades in GCSE mathematics.
- Leaders have overseen the development of a broad range of courses which effectively meet students' needs. They have made sure that students can combine academic and vocational subjects that interest them and allow them to progress successfully to the next level of study. Productive partnerships with a nearby college and subcontractors widen the range of courses further.
- Leaders prioritise the development of English and mathematical knowledge and skills. They invest appropriately in support for students who enter the college without good GCSE grades in English and/or mathematics. Students enjoy enthusiastic and supportive teaching and they achieve.
- Quality improvement processes are detailed and thorough. They indicate most weaknesses. However, the targets leaders and managers set within action plans are not always precise enough to lead to improvements. As a result, senior managers are not always able to identify the impact of their actions.
- Managers have improved teaching and learning successfully by using the results of appraisals to provide effective staff development and by creating a clear link between staff performance and pay progression. This makes staff more accountable for their own performance. In a minority of cases where staff have not improved, they leave the college. However, the targets in a small minority of appraisals are not specific enough and, because of this, not all staff are aware of exactly how to improve.
- Most staff who observe lessons make reliable and accurate judgements of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, observers do not focus sufficiently on the progress that students are making both in lessons and over time. Feedback to teachers from observations is limited to specific priorities. Because of this, a small minority of teachers do not understand fully how to improve all aspects of their teaching.
- The management of apprenticeships requires improvement. Despite the substantial increases in overall achievement rates from the very low rate in 2015/16, leaders have not made sure that enough apprentices complete their courses. Managers do not identify clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship programme. Consequently, they have not succeeded in improving the quality of the courses sufficiently.

The governance of the provider

- Governors are committed to ensuring the success of the college. They use their wide range of educational experience and expertise very effectively to support senior leaders. They engage fully in discussions about the future direction of the college and are highly committed to securing a sustained future.
- Governors know almost all the main weaknesses of the college and check progress on improvement actions effectively. However, they do not receive enough information about apprentices' achievements and evaluations of the apprenticeship programme. Because of this, their knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship programme are poor.
- Governors have a strong range of educational experience and expertise. However, a lack of detailed knowledge of business, and financial and legal matters results in less effective questioning of leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers take all aspects of their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Effective links with external agencies, such as the regional 'Prevent' duty coordinator, make sure that they are up to date. All staff have introductory and annual refresher training on safeguarding and staff and governors receive effective and up-to-date training on their responsibilities around the 'Prevent' duty.
- Websites that students should not use are effectively blocked. Students' behaviour is monitored closely and any suspicious behaviour is reported to managers. Possible risks are identified and students are told about the dangers they might be exposing themselves to.
- Managers maintain an accurate and up-to-date single central register of the security checks made during recruitment of staff. Omissions in the processes for completing overseas criminal records checks for staff who have lived or worked overseas have now been corrected.
- Students and apprentices receive training about British values and the 'Prevent' duty at induction and through the supervision and tutorial system, but this is not fully effective. Students and apprentices do not know enough about the risks of radicalisation and extremism within their local region because they have too few opportunities to explore the topics in sufficient depth.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and assessors have high expectations of their students. This has a beneficial impact on students' and apprentices' enthusiasm. They are attentive in lessons and they try hard to complete their work as accurately as they can. Students and apprentices understand the importance of succeeding in their studies because they know how their future career prospects will be improved.
- Most teachers plan lessons appropriately to challenge students of all abilities. They understand the individual needs of students and design lesson activities very carefully to

use students' existing knowledge and skills to develop them further.

- Teachers use peer-learning strategies very effectively. Students learn how to work with each other cooperatively. They make good progress in most lessons. For example, in an advanced-level religious studies lesson, students explored 'just-war theory' in impressive detail with each other.
- Teachers encourage students to contribute in classes and share their ideas. As a result, students respond creatively to questions and develop good independent thinking skills. For example, in a GCSE English lesson, students were encouraged to think imaginatively about a series of photographs, which helped them to understand inference.
- Teachers help students to understand how to develop the skills that they need to succeed in their studies. Most students develop effective research and analytical skills as a result of the carefully considered independent learning tasks they are set.
- Teachers identify accurately any gaps in students' knowledge, skills and understanding at the beginning of their course. They use this information very successfully to design effective lessons that help all students to make good progress. Staff identify students who need extra help and provide effective personalised support quickly.
- Apprentices benefit from helpful individual coaching, questioning and oral feedback in their workplaces. They are encouraged to think answers through for themselves. This helps them to develop their vocational knowledge and to understand how their learning relates to their work roles.
- Most teachers and assessors assess students' and apprentices' work accurately. They provide detailed written and oral feedback which explains how to improve. Students and apprentices understand the steps they need to take to progress and to produce work of a higher quality.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not check the learning of individual students effectively enough. As a result, they are unable to help these students to progress.
- Students make good progress in developing their written English with their teachers' support. Teachers identify and explain clearly errors in students' spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students value this feedback and learn from their mistakes. Lively, interesting and well-managed debates also help students to develop their oral communication skills.
- All staff make sure that students and apprentices appreciate and celebrate the cultural diversity in the college. Students from a range of faiths, ethnicities and backgrounds work harmoniously together. They show high levels of respect and care for each other, which creates a safe and comfortable place in which to learn.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- The vast majority of students and apprentices are eager to learn and want to succeed. They arrive at lessons on time, work enthusiastically and develop good practical and work-related skills. For example, students studying advanced-level graphics produce high-quality computerised artwork based on the photographs they have taken. Apprentices show good customer service skills, such as empathy and politeness, when working as reception staff which help them to be more effective in their roles.
- Students and apprentices behave professionally and take pride in their work. They are

very respectful of other people's views and feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and opinions. They grow in confidence during their time at college.

- Students receive good careers information and guidance throughout their time at college which help them to make carefully considered choices about future careers. Most students progress successfully to the university course of their choice.
- As a result of a range of measures that leaders and managers have put in place since the last inspection, attendance has greatly improved from a low base. When compared to a similar time last year, attendance has risen at almost all levels and is above managers' high targets.
- Students develop new skills by taking part in a wide range of additional activities. These support their academic and vocational learning and keep them healthy. For example, students attend the science club, and film and video game reviewing courses to support their main course. They take part in karate, five-a-side football and gym sessions enthusiastically to develop a healthy lifestyle.
- Personal supervisors provide effective pastoral support for students and communicate effectively with parents. Students value this support which helps them attend better, stay at college and achieve at least the grades of which they are capable. Students who are most in need receive financial support that helps keep them at college.
- Students and apprentices are safe, feel safe and know how to alert staff if they have concerns about safety. Almost all know about the risks associated with the internet and how to keep themselves safe online, but not enough fully understand about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Although the proportion of students who complete external work experience has increased since the last inspection, it is still too low. This is particularly the case for students studying vocational subjects where a reliance on work-related tasks in college does not prepare them sufficiently for future employment or for entry on to vocationally based degree courses.
- The small number of students studying at Studio 79 and The Leicester College of Performing Arts do not have the same opportunities as those attending the main college site to learn more about topics affecting their everyday lives, such as social and ethical matters, and living in modern Britain. Because of this, their understanding of these topics is underdeveloped.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Achievement rates for students on study programmes have improved since the previous inspection and are now broadly in line with other colleges. Most students following courses at level 3 successfully complete them and progress to higher education.
- Leaders, managers and teachers are passionate about raising the aspirations of students to achieve their qualifications. Since the previous inspection, they have put in place measures which have resulted in the large majority of students at level 3 making improved progress from their starting points. Students make particularly good progress in advanced-level government and politics, photography, and sociology.
- Although more academic students at level 3 now pass their examinations than at the time of the last inspection, pass rates in most vocational subjects at level 2 are low and require

improvement.

- In 2015/16 only a very small proportion of apprentices successfully completed their apprenticeship. Overall achievement improved substantially in 2016/17 and is now high and above the achievement rates for similar colleges. The proportion of apprentices who completed their apprenticeship by the planned end date also improved in 2016/17, but it is still too low.
- Most students without a grade C or above in English or mathematics produce work of a high standard in lessons. They achieve at more than double the low national rate for mathematics and well above the national rate for English.
- Almost all students who study English, mathematics, and information and communication technology functional skills at entry level gain a pass. However, the proportion of students who successfully achieve English and mathematics functional skills at level 1 is still too low.
- Leaders and managers have successfully reduced the gap in achievement between male and female students and both now achieve at broadly the same rate. Students who were previously looked after are successful and make better than expected progress, particularly at level 3. The achievement of White British students has improved since the last inspection but managers acknowledge that they still need to do more to help them to achieve as highly as their peers in other colleges.
- Teachers prepare students and apprentices successfully for their next steps in education, training and employment. Most apprentices progress into permanent employment, with a minority progressing to higher levels of study. Almost all students completing courses at entry level and level 1 progress to the next level and the large majority of students taking courses at level 2 progress to level 3. Most leavers progress to the university course of their choice.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Around 1,040 students follow study programmes, studying a broad range of vocational and academic subjects from entry level 1 to level 3. Just under two thirds study at level 3, with more than half of these following vocational courses. The highest number of enrolments are on business, English, health and social care, information and communication technology, mathematics and science.
- Managers, teachers and personal supervisors have high expectations of their students. They raise their aspirations and self-belief so that a focus on success in life beyond college is central to the ethos of study programmes.
- Students develop good practical skills, particularly in art and design, performing arts, science and sport. In these subjects, teachers use their industrial expertise to help students produce work of a high standard.
- Students enjoy a range of additional activities, such as arts, languages, leisure and sports. These help them to develop skills such as working with others, debating, research, presentation, and independent study. Students appreciate these activities and by taking part they develop their personal and social skills.

- Most students now make good progress from their starting points. However, too many students studying vocational subjects at level 2 do not gain their qualifications.
- Students make good progress in developing their English and mathematical knowledge and skills. Teachers identify what students need to learn and use this information skilfully to plan effective lessons. As a result, students make good progress towards achieving higher grades in these subjects.
- The highly supportive ethos established by leaders, managers and teachers helps students to develop personally and socially throughout their time at college. They grow in confidence and develop independence.
- Students benefit from purposeful and well-planned lessons. Teachers structure lessons carefully to make sure they are highly productive. This helps students to learn quickly and to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding appropriately. They take their studies seriously and concentrate fully. However, a small minority of teachers do not assess learning and progress in lessons thoroughly enough. This results in students not being given feedback in lessons quickly enough to enable them to make better progress.
- Students, including the most vulnerable, receive good support during their time at the college. Personal supervisors track the attendance, punctuality, progress and welfare of students diligently and intervene when necessary to help them to achieve. They know and understand their students well. Students choose to study at the college because of its caring and supportive ethos.
- Almost all students take part in a wide range of work-related activities which develop the skills they will need for work. These include talks from employers and professionals, and practical work based on real-life situations. However, despite improvements since the previous inspection, too few students studying vocational subjects benefit from external work experience.

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Of the 52 students following apprenticeships, all currently follow frameworks. Around two thirds are at advanced level and the remainder are at intermediate level, with very small numbers studying at the higher level. Apprentices study business administration, and customer service and work within the National Health Service in the local area.
- Despite recent improvements in achievement rates, too few apprentices complete their programmes successfully by the planned end date.
- Leaders and managers have not analysed and evaluated the apprenticeship programme in sufficient detail to identify the strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they do not have enough information to help them to improve the programme and to make sure more apprentices complete their apprenticeship successfully by the planned end date.
- Too few assessors and tutors skilfully support apprentices to develop their English and mathematics skills. As a result, not enough apprentices achieve their functional skills qualifications in these important subjects.
- Apprentices on the intermediate-level business administration course do not benefit from consistently high-quality college-based training. They also lack access to well-organised learning resources and technology to support their independent work. Because of this,

they are unsure about what they have learned and the progress they are making.

- Assessors do not use progress reviews effectively to develop apprentices' understanding of topics such as British values and equality. Because assessors do not always cover planned work on these subjects, apprentices do not get enough opportunities to discuss these important topics.
- Apprentices' understanding of how to protect themselves from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism requires improvement. Teachers and assessors do not discuss this in sufficient detail during lessons or progress reviews to make sure that apprentices have a full understanding of how the 'Prevent' duty legislation applies to them.
- Employers work effectively with college managers to choose vocational units which reflect both the needs of the workplace and the apprentices. However, not all employers participate fully in apprentices' progress reviews. Because of this, some employers are insufficiently aware of apprentices' targets or progress.
- Apprentices who started their programmes recently are making good progress on their vocational courses. Assessors identify their starting points very accurately and track their progress frequently. Apprentices produce work of a high standard.
- Apprentices benefit from skilled and knowledgeable assessors. They value their experience of working in health care settings and their understanding of business administration and customer service assessment requirements.
- Apprentices develop good information technology skills which they apply appropriately in the workplace. For example, an advanced apprentice who initially lacked skills and confidence in using technology at work was encouraged to successfully develop and use spreadsheets for specific projects.
- During their progress reviews, advanced apprentices engage in constructive dialogues with their assessors and reflect on how they can improve their work. They relate their learning very effectively to their workplace roles.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130757
Type of provider	Sixth-form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,196
Principal/CEO	Paul Wilson
Telephone number	01162 554629
Website	www.regent-college.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 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	113	3	286	11	643	55	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	3	10	-	37	-	2		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	3							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	The Leicester College of Performing Arts Limited Studio 79 The BACA Charity							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, 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 learners 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.

Inspection team

Andy Fitt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ken Merry	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tony Day	Ofsted Inspector
Kathleen Tyler	Ofsted Inspector

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