

# King Edward VI College Stourbridge

Sixth form college

**Inspection dates**

3–6 October 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>		<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>	16 to 19 study programmes <b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>	
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>	
Outcomes for learners	<b>Good</b>	
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		<b>Outstanding</b>

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Governors, leaders and staff have high expectations and ambitions for students. The large majority of students achieve well and progress to higher education.
- Managers have clear accountability for the quality of teaching and learning, which is good.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and a very strong understanding of the requirements of the A-level course and assessments. Teachers prepare students well for the examinations.
- Senior leaders have improved the systems to monitor the progress of students. Where students fall below their targets, teachers provide high-quality individual support; consequently, the large majority of current students are making good progress.
- Teachers support students well to develop independent learning skills. Students have the confidence and skills to learn effectively inside the classroom and are well prepared for higher education.
- Students participate in and lead a wide range of additional activities, which they enjoy. They make good progress in a broad range of personal and social skills.
- Students' attendance is high. They arrive promptly and ready to learn. Students respond quickly to instructions and participate fully in the learning activities.
- Safeguarding arrangements are very effective in ensuring that students understand risks, including those of radicalisation and extremism.
- Despite the actions of leaders and managers, in 2017 too many of the most able students did not achieve the grades of which they are capable.
- While teachers know their students well, they do not use this information effectively to enable all students to achieve their best.
- Senior managers do not provide sufficient support for students who wish to progress directly into employment and training.
- Students do not understand British values well enough.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- King Edward VI College Stourbridge is in the metropolitan borough of Dudley in the West Midlands. Just under half of the college's students are from Dudley and the remainder are from the neighbouring areas of Sandwell, Worcestershire and Birmingham. At the time of the inspection, 2,116 students were studying at the college, with the vast majority aged 16 to 18 years. All current students follow programmes of study which include a core of at least two A levels. The student population has a higher proportion of minority ethnic groups than the local population.
- The population of Dudley is about 317,000. Dudley ranks among some of the most deprived areas in the country. Dudley's unemployment rate is above the national rate. A higher proportion of the population are without qualifications compared to the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining five GCSEs at A\* to C in Dudley, including mathematics and English, is below the national average.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Enable more students to achieve their best by:
  - ensuring that all teachers use the current student profiles and assessments of learners' starting points to plan and execute learning activities that reflect the different needs of students, enabling them to make swift progress.
- Improve the learning and progress of the most able students by:
  - focusing more closely on the progress of these learners during the observations of teaching, learning and assessment in the college
  - ensuring a greater sharing of the good practice of teachers who successfully extend learning and provide increasing levels of challenge
  - providing relevant training and development for teachers to support them in designing activities for the most able students.
- Improve the support for students who wish to progress directly into employment and training by:
  - increasing the proportion of students who benefit from a high-quality work experience placement
  - improving the advice and guidance for those students who wish to progress to higher-level apprenticeships or directly to employment.
- Improve students' understanding of British values by:
  - ensuring that students understand the concepts of democracy, respect, and the rule of law, so that they can discuss and appreciate their relevance to life in modern Britain.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The principal and senior managers have developed a culture of high expectations for staff and students. They ensure that teachers have high ambitions for their students and provide good support. As a result, the large majority of students pass their A levels and achieve high grades.
- Students benefit from well-designed study programmes, which include A-level courses and the development of English and mathematics skills. A wide enrichment programme means that students experience courses that develop their academic and personal skills well. Senior managers, teachers and tutors provide strong support for progression into higher education. However, advice for progression into employment and apprenticeships is less comprehensive; too few students participate in high-quality external work experience.
- Senior managers strive to improve performance continuously. Self-assessment is detailed, self-critical and largely accurate. The most recent college self-assessment report identifies a decline in the progress of the most able students. Senior managers have produced detailed and appropriate development plans. After a period of change, the actions of senior leaders are having a positive impact on the progress that current students are making.
- The principal has introduced a comprehensive review of the management structure and given greater accountability and responsibility to middle managers. Managers are now accountable for all aspects of their courses. Early signs indicate they are improving the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment through the sharing of good practice.
- Managers now analyse information which demonstrates the progress of students and courses. They use this well, and as a result they identify those aspects of the college which are underperforming. Managers convey these messages through formal meetings with staff, course teams and individual students. As a result, students' progress and higher grade results improved in English literature and Spanish in 2016/17.
- Arrangements for managing staff performance are effective. Managers use a range of indicators to evaluate teachers' performance accurately. They include data on students' performance, the observations of teaching, learning and assessment, and feedback from students. Most actions for improvement are specific. Senior managers implement a well-planned, highly valued programme of staff development for managers and teachers linked to their staff reviews and targets. It focuses on teaching, learning and assessment and in particular on students' progress in lessons and over time. This is having a positive impact. The majority of teachers check the progress of students in lessons effectively and check students' progress over time using the new monitoring system.
- The college is responsive to local needs and priorities. The A-level programme provides a wide choice of subjects for students. It provides a clear route into higher education, and a high proportion of students study science, technology and mathematics subjects. These subjects are priorities for the local enterprise partnership. Leaders and managers promote equality and celebrate diversity successfully. They have created an inclusive ethos. They ensure that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make a

smooth transition from school to college. A high proportion of this group of students achieve well. Students in receipt of bursary funds make better progress than their peers. There are no achievement gaps between students from different ethnic backgrounds. Students are encouraged to establish groups and societies which reflect the diversity of the student body. Events are regularly organised to broaden students' understanding and appreciation of different views.

### **The governance of the provider**

- In recent years, new leadership and membership of the governing body have provided an impetus for change. Governors, leaders and managers have established a new management structure and systems, while improving the college finances.
- The governing body has a wide range of expertise and skills, combined with knowledge of the local community, that they use effectively to support the college in its strategic direction.
- The principal reports frequently, accurately and in depth to the governors. They are well informed. Governors are able to challenge managers' performance across the college to improve progress for students. Governors are clear about the need to improve the progress of the most able students.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers have a comprehensive single central register, which is secure and accessible to those responsible for the monitoring of it. Staff place a high emphasis on students' safety and security, and as a result students feel safe and work safely. Staff receive and complete regular safeguarding and 'Prevent' training and updating. Comprehensive records and tracking of students identified and/or referred with regard to safeguarding are good.
- Recent changes and investments to remove car parking from the college campus site and introduce swipe identity cards have further increased students' security.
- Leaders and managers have implemented effective e-safety processes to monitor students' access to inappropriate online material.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- All students at the college follow full-time 16 to 19 study programmes. The vast majority of the provision is academic rather than vocational. The college offers 37 different A-level subjects, and GCSE English and mathematics. The largest A-level subjects are biology, chemistry, mathematics, English and psychology.
- Students have already achieved high grades in their GCSEs on entry to the college. They are ambitious for their futures and are very keen to do well. Students enjoy their lessons and demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for their learning.
- Teachers encourage students to work hard, develop an intellectual curiosity and a thirst for knowledge. As a result, the majority of current students produce work of a high

standard.

- Students are confident and articulate. They have plenty of ideas and are willing to share them with the rest of the class. Teachers design activities that develop the students' discussion and debating skills very well. In discussion tasks, students relish the opportunity to hear the thoughts of others and are highly respectful when listening to the range of views held by their peers. For example, in an effective English language and literature lesson, students could explain the effect of Oscar Wilde's use of abstract nouns and complex sentence structures in an extract from his letter 'De Profundis'.
- Teachers successfully encourage students to develop as independent learners, preparing them well for higher education. They set regular homework tasks for students and expect them to work hard independently. Students respond well to the high expectations their teachers have of them. Students talk fluently about how they manage their studies, use the library and online resources. Teachers are effective in encouraging students to be creative and analytical thinkers. For example, in a successful drama lesson students demonstrated high levels of imagination, as they drew connections between a range of Shakespearean characters and an image provided by the teacher of a sumo wrestler with a child.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and a very strong understanding of the requirements of the A-level course and assessments. Teachers design learning activities that place a strong emphasis on developing the students' exam techniques. The majority of written assessment tasks that teachers set are exam-style questions. Marking closely follows the marking schemes of the awarding bodies. As a result, students have a sound understanding of what they need to do, and are well prepared for their final examinations.
- The majority of teachers use effective strategies to check students' understanding in lessons. Teachers are particularly successful in encouraging students to evaluate the quality of their own work. However, a small minority of teachers do not carry out sufficiently comprehensive checks on learning to evaluate students' level of understanding. As a result, teachers do not always have a clear insight into what students have understood, what they can do, and what they still need to learn.
- Managers have recently revised systems to track and check the progress of students. Assessment practices are now strong. Teachers use information about the progress of students well. They identify where current students are not achieving as well as they might and provide a range of effective support. This includes workshops, revision classes and drop-in sessions throughout the week and after college. Current students are finding this support very helpful. After attendance at these sessions, they are now making quicker progress than they had previously.
- Teachers set regular written work, and their assessment of it is accurate and timely, providing teachers and students with a clear indication of progress. Students have a strong understanding of how to improve their written work and the majority of students do so over time. On the majority of written work, teachers identify errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar to support students to improve.
- Teachers and managers give comprehensive information and advice to students at the start of their studies. Teachers use the outcomes from initial assessment tasks and their very strong understanding of A-level courses well. As a result, students choose a combination of A-level subjects that meets their career goals and gives them the best

chance of success.

- Teachers integrate well-designed activities into lessons that develop the mathematical skills of students effectively. A course in statistical problem-solving provides an excellent opportunity for those students who are not studying A-level mathematics to develop their skills. For example, students use the concepts of range and median, within a software package, to aid decision-making. This course supports their progress in subjects such as psychology, geography and sociology, where a command of these statistical skills is required.
- Teachers develop students' information technology skills well through the use of a range of learning technologies. For example, in a very effective dance lesson, the teacher consolidated learning at the end of the lesson well with an interactive quiz for which students used their mobile phones.
- Staff work in close partnership and communicate well with parents and guardians. They report regularly on the learning and attendance of students and keep parents and guardians very well informed about their progress. Attendance at consultation evenings is high. Students value the productive dialogue that takes place at these events between them, their teachers and their parents.
- While assessments in all subjects are appropriate and generate useful information about the skills gaps of students, teachers do not use this information routinely to develop and provide learning activities that maximise the progress of individual students.
- For the most able students, lesson activities are too often insufficiently challenging. The pace of activities for these students is too often too slow; teachers' questioning does not sufficiently extend or deepen learning. Consequently, a minority of the most able students do not make the progress or achieve the high grades of which they are capable.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Students are positive about their education and demonstrate high standards of behaviour. Students work well together and show a high level of respect for other individuals, cultures and perspectives. This reflects the success of leaders, managers and staff in promoting inclusion and diversity.
- Students demonstrate a good understanding of different cultures. A student-led lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender group enables new students to discuss issues and support each other well. The yearly 'culture day' and 'kindness day' are highly successful, and as a consequence students feel an intrinsic part of their community.
- Staff develop well the study skills students need for higher education, for example independence, time-management and personal organisation. Students who are applying for places at prestigious universities feel particularly well supported through additional sessions and preparation for specific entry examinations.
- Students' attendance at lessons is very high. They arrive promptly and ready to learn. They demonstrate a very strong work ethic, displaying positive attitudes both inside and outside of the classroom. Students respond quickly to instructions and are eager to participate in learning activities.
- Enrichment is fully part of student life. Students benefit from a wide range of well-

planned and well-organised additional activities. They develop a broad range of personal and social skills and lead some of the activities. However, tutors and students do not explicitly identify which skills they plan to develop.

- Students benefit from effective impartial careers advice from experienced specialist advisers. This enables them to make informed choices about their future education and long-term career paths. However, advice and guidance for those students who wish to progress to higher-level apprenticeships or directly to employment are less well developed. These students are not as well informed about the next steps they need to take.
- Students feel very safe at college. Their safety is of highest priority for all support staff, teachers and managers. Recently introduced mechanisms such as the 'swipe system' have meant students feel even safer this academic year.
- In tutorials, students cover a broad range of topics, which enhance students' personal development well. These include challenging stereotypes, online safety and radicalisation. Students have a very strong understanding of safeguarding through tutorial activities. Students engage fully in tutorials and speak highly of the support they receive from their tutors.
- Students can articulate well the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. They know how to keep themselves safe online and have a sound understanding of the dangers associated with social media. They know how to report any concerns. However, students do not understand British values well enough. Too few students can talk confidently or in depth about how the values of democracy, respect and the rule of law relate to their daily lives.
- Students who have undertaken worthwhile work experience value it greatly. The majority of these students gain experience of the health sector. However, too few students undertake a valuable and relevant work-experience placement. College managers are planning to address this in the current academic year by increasing the number and range of placements through the new Pathways programme.

## Outcomes for learners

**Good**

- The majority of students make good progress and achieve well. The proportion of students who complete their courses and achieve their qualifications is in line with that of similar providers. In A-level courses, a high proportion of students achieve high grades.
- In 2016/17, the majority of students on the first year of the A-level courses made expected progress. However, for students completing their A level, the most able students did not make the progress of which they are capable and did not achieve the high grades to which they aspire.
- Students make strong progress in communication and culture, dance, geography, German and law A-level courses.
- The large majority of current students are developing their skills, knowledge and understanding at the appropriate level for the course.
- The large majority of students produce work of a high standard, which matches or exceeds that which is expected. Students can explain the skills they have developed, and

what they have learned.

- A high proportion of students on English and mathematics GCSE courses make good progress in improving their skills and a high proportion achieve high grades. This is a small cohort of students. Students develop English and mathematical skills well on their study programmes.
- There are no significant gaps in achievement for students from different ethnic backgrounds or students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students who receive financial support progress more rapidly than their peers. Female students do not progress as well as male students, given their starting points.
- A very high proportion of students progress to higher education and more than a third of these students gain places on the most competitive courses. A much smaller proportion of students progress to employment with training and apprenticeships. The destinations of too many students, who do not progress to higher education, are unknown. Managers have put plans in place to reduce this number for 2017 leavers.
- In a very small minority of A-level courses, too many students did not progress to the second year. Managers have identified the reasons for this pattern and have made changes to the entry criteria for biology and physics for students starting in 2017.



## Provider details

Unique reference number	130478
Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,035
Principal/CEO	Mrs Remley Mann
Telephone number	01384 398 100
Website	www.kedst.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	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	-	2,113	2	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
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	1							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal curriculum and quality, 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 and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and parents; 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

Martin Ward, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kate Hill	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tony Day	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Parton	Ofsted Inspector

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