

New College Leicester

Glenfield Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE3 6DN

Inspection dates

21–22 November 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	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders have established a culture where expectations of pupils and teachers are high and improvement is rapid.
- There is a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching. Senior leaders work effectively with middle leaders to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment meet the needs of pupils. This stronger leadership and management have resulted in improved teaching, learning and assessment.
- Middle leaders are keen and enthusiastic. They contribute effectively to improving the school by ensuring that their actions address whole-school priorities.
- Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders. They ensure that leaders have identified the right areas for improvement.
- The curriculum is well suited to the needs and interests of the pupils. Pupils follow a broad range of appropriate academic and vocational subjects at key stages 3 and 4.
- Weak teaching in the past means that pupils have not achieved as well as they should have done. Too few of the middle ability pupils have achieved well. Current pupils are making more rapid progress and are catching up with similar pupils nationally.
- Most teachers plan activities that suitably challenge and interest pupils, enabling them to make good progress. In a small number of classes, where this is not the case, pupils lose focus and make less progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. There are strong relationships between pupils and with adults in the school. These are contributing to improved rates of progress in many subjects.
- Attendance has improved and is close to the national average. However, rates of absence for some disadvantaged pupils are too high and this hinders their progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are making improved progress from their starting points. However, leaders do not incisively analyse the impact of actions taken to further accelerate their progress so that they can make progress in line with other pupils nationally.
- Programmes of study in the sixth form meet the needs of students and support their future career pathways.
- Pupils speak positively about their school experience because they feel supported and valued.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes by:
 - ensuring that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils improves even more rapidly, so that their attainment compares well with that of other pupils nationally
 - further accelerating the rates of progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - analysing more precisely the impact of the different strategies and actions taken to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Further improve the attendance of those disadvantaged pupils who have high rates of absence.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- This is a rapidly improving school. The principal and governors have established a culture of high expectations of staff and pupils. The four core values of respect, responsibility, resilience and resourcefulness support this culture.
- Leaders have accurately identified priorities for improvement and put appropriate actions in place. These are monitored to ensure that they are making a difference.
- Over the last academic year, the rate of change in the school has accelerated. This is due to the strengthening of leadership at all levels to relentlessly focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. This is resulting in improved rates of progress and higher standards of attainment for pupils currently in the school. Leaders have demonstrated that they have the skills and capacity to improve teaching even further.
- Middle leaders are motivated and focused on improving the school because they feel empowered and supported. Subject leaders are accountable for the performance of their teams and are, in most cases, stepping up well to the challenge. Senior leaders have raised their expectations of subject leaders. However, while most subject leaders are effective, there are a few areas where they are not yet completely competent in their role of ensuring the high quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Senior leaders are working alongside these leaders to strengthen the impact of their work.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, meeting the needs of pupils. Leaders have ensured that pupils are guided to courses that match their aspirations and abilities. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and the achievement of pupils currently in the school is improving rapidly.
- Staff provide a wide variety of activities, clubs and visits so that pupils can pursue their sporting, artistic or creative interests. During the course of the inspection, some pupils took responsibility for a health and well-being event for local primary school children, hosted by the school. These activities, together with the personal, social, health and economic education programme, assemblies and other opportunities identified across the curriculum, provide strong support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Through a structured programme in tutor time and in the wider curriculum, pupils are helped to gain a greater insight into British values. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer and high numbers of pupils take up these opportunities.
- Most parents view the school positively. One parent commented, 'My daughter has excelled at New College completely blowing my doubts out the water. I've had no concerns or issues and neither has my child.' Pupils spoken to during the inspection were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and are pleased with the changes that have taken place.
- Leaders' systems for the management of teachers' performance are clear and well considered. Teachers' targets link to whole-school priorities and the development needs of individual teachers. Despite recruitment difficulties, leaders do not hesitate to address underperformance by taking swift and appropriate action. Teachers are positive about the personalised programme of training and development provided for

them.

- Leaders are making increasingly effective use of the Year 7 catch-up funding in raising standards in English and mathematics. For example, one-to-one tuition and support with reading are helping Year 7 pupils catch up with their peers.
- The targeted actions of leaders have worked well for some disadvantaged pupils, resulting in improved attendance. However, leaders have not used pupil premium funding effectively to sufficiently diminish the difference between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in all lessons.
- Leaders' actions are improving the outcomes of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Reading and writing programmes have been used well to improve pupils' skills. However, additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not having as much impact as it should across the school because these pupils do not get the support that they need in all lessons. These pupils do not make as much progress as others.
- Leaders use alternative provision to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. They closely monitor pupils' attendance and progress through regular contact with the providers. These pupils complete their education and gain some qualifications because of this provision.

Governance of the school

- Governance is provided by the governing board and the trustees of the foundation.
- Governors know the school well, including its strengths and its priorities for improvement. They understand what actions are being taken by leaders and how these are adding value. Governors hold school leaders to account well and ask increasingly challenging questions. As a result, the school is improving rapidly.
- Governors know how the additional funding for pupil premium and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used. However, they do not fully evaluate the effectiveness of the use of this funding through its impact on, for example, raising these pupils' achievement.
- Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge to senior leaders. This has contributed to the increased pace of improvement in the school. For example, they have supported senior leaders by challenging aspects of underachievement with other leaders and teachers.
- Governors have ensured that the management of the principal's performance links to improving achievement for pupils in the school. Targets set are realistic yet ambitious, reflecting the raised aspirations and expectations that are rapidly improving the school.
- Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe. They ensure that staff receive appropriate training and that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The school's record of checks made on the suitability of staff to work with children is accurately maintained and compliant. Policies related to safeguarding, including the child protection and safeguarding policy, are up to date and meet the requirements of statutory guidance.
- Staff receive appropriate training in all aspects of child protection, including the 'Prevent' duty to keep pupils safe from radicalisation. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Appropriate and prompt referrals are made to external agencies where necessary. Thorough records of such referrals are accurately kept and monitored to ensure that follow-up actions are timely and effective.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from a variety of risks, including safe use of the internet, social media and mobile technology. As a result, pupils have a high awareness of e-safety and feel confident about how to stay safe. The school's website contains detailed and accessible information for parents and pupils about sensitive and complex safeguarding issues. As a consequence, parents are well informed and most agree that their child feels safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- School leaders have a major focus on teaching and learning and show great determination to improve the quality of teaching, which has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Carefully targeted professional development has had a real impact and teachers respond well to it. In many meetings with staff during the inspection, teachers shared how they have valued the opportunities to improve their skills. As a result of this better teaching, the progress pupils make has accelerated rapidly.
- Teachers and leaders are quick to identify the importance of the much improved behaviour and attitudes of pupils. Positive relationships and mutual respect feature strongly in the school. Teachers have purposeful classroom routines which pupils follow without question, and this enables almost all lessons to progress smoothly and without interruption. As a result of this, pupils feel safe to openly share their views and thoughts. For example, in a religious education lesson, pupils discussed maturely what is meant by the sanctity and quality of life.
- Most teachers use their subject knowledge and assessment information carefully to plan activities that interest pupils and effectively support their progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work in books indicates that teaching is accelerating the progress that pupils make. This is in a range of subjects and includes English, mathematics and science.
- The great majority of teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have positive relationships with pupils, and time is well used so that lessons flow smoothly and effectively. Consequently, pupils focus well on their activities and are keen to learn. Pupils are positive about their learning and they say that teachers really help them and this motivates them to work hard. Examples of this positive learning culture were seen during the inspection in almost all lessons, with the exception of some in computer science.
- Teachers are providing challenging learning activities for pupils in most lessons. In

English, for example, Year 11 pupils are being challenged to reflect on and infer from character behaviour at a high level.

- Pupils like the consistent approach teachers use to provide feedback to them, particularly through using the 'yellow box' system. Pupils say that this is helping them to know what to do to improve their work. They value the regular opportunities they have to revisit their work, saying that it is helping them to learn better. However, some teachers do not consistently implement the school's policy to ensure that all pupils have completed this. Consequently, these pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- The school has had difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified and skilled mathematics teachers. This has led to outcomes being low for too many pupils. However, pupils are now making more rapid progress in mathematics as a result of strong teaching.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not always get the support they need to make good progress. Consequently, some of these pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils. However, their ability to read is showing improvement and is helping them to learn effectively in lessons.
- Teachers do not routinely use their knowledge of disadvantaged pupils to identify and overcome the particular barriers to learning they face. While some disadvantaged pupils are well supported to make good progress, others need more specific teaching and do not always receive this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils agree that they feel safe and are safe in school. All staff and most parents agree that this is true. One parent commented, 'My daughter stated she feels safe in school and knows where she can go to get help and support to address any issue.'
- The school is a courteous and tolerant community. Pupils understand the importance of fundamental British values. They listen to each other's views respectfully and are welcoming of the views of those different from themselves. They challenge and debate beliefs in a respectful and tolerant manner. They are polite to adults and visitors and treat each other with respect. Pupils say that they are made to feel welcome and a valued member of the school community. Another parent said, 'My son absolutely loves going to school now. He has just started in Year 7 this year and is the happiest I've seen him.'
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well, they listen carefully to teachers when they explain topics and they complete the tasks they are set.
- Pupils in all year groups access good-quality, independent careers information, advice and guidance. This ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Pupils have the opportunity to be members of the faculty, year and school councils.

Pupils say they appreciate the opportunity they have to influence the direction of the school.

- Leaders work successfully to help pupils become more resilient by building their confidence. This helps to develop pupils' emotional well-being and mental health. Pupils who are potentially vulnerable or who are facing additional difficulties in their lives are given the extra support they need to allow them to become successful. School staff work hard to raise pupils' self-esteem, and with other agencies and parents to provide them with a safety net.
- The school curriculum ensures that pupils receive a range of opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Religious education lessons, assemblies and personal development are all planned activities that successfully develop this area of work.
- Some parents believe that the school does not deal well with bullying. However, pupils confirmed that incidents of bullying are rare and when they do occur, they are usually dealt with effectively by adults. Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils are taught about anti-bullying, for example, through the use of pupil anti-bullying ambassadors.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have set very high expectations and worked hard to ensure that pupils behave well. Pupils' conduct has improved significantly, as a result of the new zero tolerance procedures. Leaders and teachers have insisted on higher standards of behaviour and, in the main, they have been successful. When these were first introduced, they led to an initial increase in exclusions. However, these have now reduced as pupils' behaviour has improved in line with the raised expectations of their conduct.
- The vast majority of pupils behave very well in lessons. They are punctual, listen attentively and want to engage in their lessons.
- Pupils say that they like the more strict approach to behaviour, although not all of their parents agree with this. Lessons observed during the inspection showed almost all pupils conducting themselves very well. On the rare occasions when this was not the case, a few pupils were slower to engage with their learning.
- Pupils behave well out of lessons, around the school site at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. They socialise well with their friends. They move around the large site in a calm, respectful and orderly fashion.
- Leaders clearly recognise the negative impact that poor attendance can have on pupils' learning. They now have in place highly effective, rigorous systems to monitor and improve attendance. As a result, attendance for all pupils has improved since the previous inspection and is now in line with the national average. However, rates of absence and persistent absence for some disadvantaged pupils are still too high and this hinders their progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, pupils did not achieve as well as they should have by the end of key stage 4. The proportion of pupils who made good progress over their time at the school was below the national average. As a result, the number of pupils who reached the highest examination grades was low in 2017, and the achievement of disadvantaged pupils was well below that of other pupils nationally. These have remained low since the previous inspection.
- However, the school's own analyses of 2017 results indicate some improvements as a result of gradually overcoming a legacy of weak teaching. Attainment in a number of subjects, including English and science, increased, with mathematics remaining broadly similar to 2016 levels.
- The school's own assessment information indicates that, in this academic year, more pupils are on track to make good progress by the end of key stage 4. Inspection evidence suggests that this is also the case for pupils currently in Years 9, 10 and 11. From observations and checking pupils' work, inspectors agree that progress is more rapid for most pupils in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and humanities. School leaders recognise where progress needs to accelerate further and have firm plans in place to address this.
- Pupils in key stage 3 are making better progress than in previous years, due to an improved quality of teaching. These pupils are now making strong progress from their starting points so that more of them will reach the higher standards required by the end of key stage 4.
- Historically, the middle attaining pupils have not made the progress that they should have, and so have not achieved as well as similar pupils nationally. Leaders have ensured that, in most classes, teachers provide greater levels of challenge to these pupils to push them towards the highest standards. This has rapidly increased the progress for these current groups although, occasionally, some teachers still do not expect enough of these pupils.
- Although some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have been making strong progress, this is not the case for most of them. This is because the support provided has not always met their needs. Leaders acknowledge that there is a need to further accelerate the rates of progress for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities by ensuring that they are able to overcome emotional or behavioural difficulties that act as barriers to their learning.
- In previous years, disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress that they should have, particularly in mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are making more rapid progress across a range of subjects, including mathematics. This is due to teachers having a clear focus on their progress. However, the difference in progress of these pupils with other pupils nationally remains wide. More work is still required to ensure that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reach the required standard by the end of key stage 4 increases further.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The leadership of the sixth form is effective. Leaders have a clear vision for the development of the sixth form, which they communicate clearly. Leaders are caring, passionate and know students well. There is a strong drive to provide as many experiences as possible for students to raise aspirations and meet their individual needs. Retention rates from Year 12 to Year 13 are very high.
- The small sixth form offers a limited range of academic and vocational courses. The number of students on roll in the sixth form remains well below average. Leaders recognise that this needs to expand to offer a wider choice of study programmes.
- Unvalidated results in 2017, showed that attainment is very high for academic and vocational courses. Both of these were above national averages and showed a significant improvement from the previous year. In 2016, progress was broadly average for both academic and vocational courses.
- Students without good passes in GCSE mathematics or English usually gain success, even though lower attainers are less successful historically.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers' strong subject knowledge, high expectations and careful planning extend and deepen students' learning. Students are completing work more consistently than before and making strong progress.
- Students display positive attitudes to learning and are proud to be members of the sixth form. All students spoken to during the inspection say they are well supported by teachers in their learning.
- All students in the sixth form are enrolled on to the national citizenship service and participate in a three-week induction at the start of their studies in Year 12. This is helping to build their confidence as well as giving them helpful information about their future careers and study at university.
- Students are safe and told the inspectors that they feel safe. Students behave well, and their relationships with their teachers and their peers are positive. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Students value their learning and consequently, their attendance in the sixth form is very high.
- The sixth form meets the requirements for 16 to 19 study programmes, including appropriate opportunities for students to gain work experience and participate in enrichment activities. Impartial careers advice enables students to take effective next steps into education or employment. As a result of this good provision, all students progressed to higher education or employment for the past three years.

School details

Unique reference number	131945
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10036074

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	947
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Billington
Principal	Jane Brown
Telephone number	0116 231 8500
Website	www.newcollege.leicester.sch.uk
Email address	ehodgson@newcollege.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 November 2015

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized secondary comprehensive. The number of pupils in the sixth form is small.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- Over a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is nearly double the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. Fewer than nationally are in receipt of education, health and care plans.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is much higher than schools nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 4.
- There are 10 pupils who study courses off-site. The alternative provision is sourced through the Leicester Partnership Schools. Pupils access full-time and part-time courses from The Carisbrooke Specialist Learning Centre.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium and information about its values and ethos on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 49 lessons, eight of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors made short visits to tutor time.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised, in detail, a sample of pupils' books in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the principal, senior and middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and other governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils from all year groups in meetings, in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, its action plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations of the quality of teaching and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 55 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 112 responses to the online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jamie Clarke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Lynn Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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