

Inspection of St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College

Inspection dates: 15–17 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Education programmes for young people	Requires improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College is based on a single campus in North Kensington within the borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The college enrolls students from across most London boroughs and has a Catholic ethos at the centre of college life. Around a third of students are Roman Catholic.

At the time of the inspection, the college had 992 students on education programmes for young people and 29 students were in receipt of high-needs funding. Over the last few years, the college has increased the range of vocational courses on offer, while reducing A-level courses to around a third of the provision. The college offers a broad A-level and vocational curriculum, mostly in business, science, English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, sport, arts, media, travel and tourism, languages and humanities. Most students study programmes at level 3, with a small minority on level 1 or 2 programmes.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students take part in a wide range of additional activities outside of their main area of study. For example, many participate in the extensive range of sporting activities. College teams are highly successful in sports such as basketball and football. These sports help students to celebrate success together, work successfully in diverse teams and build their confidence.

Students respect the Catholic values of the college, even if this is not their religion. The religious education programme helps to instil positive citizenship across the college. Students are keen, for example, to organise fundraising activities for an array of worthy causes, demonstrating their generosity, kindness and compassion.

Students for whom the college receives high-needs funding are supported highly effectively by staff. This helps them to gain their qualifications and move into further education or employment when they finish their course.

Staff keep a close eye on students who may be struggling. They provide a variety of effective support, including a counselling service, which is well used and appreciated by students.

In too many subjects, and particularly in A levels, students are not pushed hard enough to achieve. Teachers have not taught the curriculum effectively enough to ensure that students gain the grades expected of them given their prior attainment. Students in their second year have noticed recent improvements to the organisation of their courses.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, governors and senior leaders have not managed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, they have not rectified the main areas for improvement in order to raise standards. Examination results in A-level programmes remain poor. However, governors have recently started to provide more challenge to the leaders of the college. The new chair of governors and new principal have agreed a radical improvement plan. They have a renewed focus on improving teaching and assessment, which is supported by staff.

At the heart of their improvement plan, leaders have recently implemented more effective professional development to teachers, focused on the craft of teaching. Staff have individualised training programmes based on their development needs. Heads of department also attend a weekly training course to develop their capacity to lead on quality improvement.

Leaders and managers have not given sufficient consideration to the courses they offer to students. Nor have they adapted their teaching of the A-level programme adequately to take account of the switch to linear courses. In recent years, as fewer students have enrolled on A-level programmes, leaders have increased the

vocational programmes offered. However, they have not done enough to ensure that the curriculum offer is matched closely to either their students' needs or the needs of local stakeholders, including employers.

The majority of teachers have appropriate subject knowledge. In the vocational subject areas, teachers use this subject knowledge to teach the programmes in an appropriate way to help students build upon their knowledge logically. For example, in health and social care, topics covered in the level 2 programme are selected to help students prepare to extend their knowledge when they start level 3. In sport studies, learners draw on earlier knowledge of anatomy and physiology to explain the causes of muscle pain.

In the majority of subjects, teachers fail to use assessment effectively. As a result, too many students struggle to remember key concepts taught earlier on the course. For example, in health and social care, students struggle to remember terms such as 'psychological abuse' or recall the age when you stop becoming vulnerable. In mathematics A level, second-year students struggle to recall the basics of the topic of functions from the first year.

Too few students produce good standards of written and practical work. For example, in travel and tourism, students use technical terminology well and apply their knowledge to industry examples. However, in other subjects such as health and social care, too many students do not produce assignment work to the required standard.

Staff give good careers advice and guidance to support students to apply for and go on to both employment and further study. Information is impartial and comprehensive. A very high proportion of students who achieve their qualifications go on to higher education and employment.

Through a well-planned tutorial programme and interesting assemblies, students have a comprehensive religious education programme. They are aware of British values, the values of the college, underpinned by its Catholic ethos, and of what it means to be a responsible citizen.

Leaders and staff place a high emphasis on making sure that students attend. Student attendance at lessons is improving but is not yet good enough. Leaders and managers have not set high enough expectations in relation to student punctuality, which requires improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff take the safety of their students very seriously. They have appropriate safeguarding and 'Prevent' policies and procedures in place to safeguard their students and raise and respond to concerns. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy have attended suitable training and have established effective

links with external agencies to ensure that safeguarding referrals are followed up promptly.

The DSL and safeguarding team keep a close eye on those students who are at risk or could become at risk.

Leaders ensure that staff are safe to work with students.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should focus on developing a stronger and more focused rationale for the curriculum offer so that it meets students' needs and those of local stakeholders.
- Teachers need to improve assessment so that they identify gaps in students' knowledge and understanding and take action to reduce these.
- Teachers need to ensure that curriculum planning, sequencing and teaching in all A-level subjects are adapted towards two-year linear courses.
- Leaders and teachers need to set higher expectations in relation to students' punctuality to lessons.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130411
Address	74 St Charles Square North Kensington London W10 6EY
Contact number	02089687755
Website	www.stcharles.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Martin Twist
Provider type	Sixth form college
Date of previous inspection	5–7 December 2017
Main subcontractors	None

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. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including observing learning sessions, scrutinising students' work, seeking the views of students, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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