

Short inspection of Bilborough College

Inspection dates:

29–30 January 2020

Outcome

Bilborough College continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Bilborough College is a sixth-form college situated on the outskirts of Nottingham. In November 2019, the college converted to a 16–19 academy and joined the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust, sponsored by Coventry University. The current principal and some senior leaders have been in post for less than five months.

At the time of the inspection, the college had 1,738 students. Of these, 1,264 were taking A levels, 346 a combination of A-level and applied general qualifications and 128 were taking applied general qualifications only. A-level qualifications cover a very broad range of subjects with a particularly large number of students taking science and mathematics.

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

Students are proud of their college, enjoy attending and are enthusiastic about their experiences. Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve. They create a vibrant atmosphere in lessons in which students work hard and thrive.

Students' behaviour and conduct are exemplary. They attend well, arrive on time and are ready to learn. They have very good attitudes to study and take pride in their achievements. They respond well to the feedback that they receive from teachers and are open to constructive criticism.

Students enjoy productive relationships with teachers. Teachers provide additional help to students who need it and students are rightly positive about this aspect of their learning.

The college is a welcoming and inclusive place. Learners feel safe and do not worry about bullying. They know how to report any concerns that they have and are confident that staff will take swift and appropriate action if they do.

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

Leaders have developed a clear document that gives a broad description of the aims of the curriculum. Teachers use it well to develop detailed subject plans. These plans identify the skills and knowledge that students will develop. In a few cases, such as in A-level chemistry, teachers' subject plans go well beyond the requirements of qualifications.

Subject plans clearly indicate the sequence in which topics will be taught and how different activities will contribute to the broader development of students' characters. In most cases, topics are introduced in a logical sequence, ensuring that students understand component knowledge before working on more complex themes.

Teachers have good subject expertise that they use well to provide students with clear explanations of topics. They have a good understanding of examination requirements and develop activities that prepare students well for the rigours of assessment. Most students develop a good knowledge of their subjects and, as a result, they achieve their qualifications. A-level students achieve slightly higher grades than might be expected given their prior attainment.

Managers have correctly identified a few skills that teachers need to strengthen. These include their use of questioning, their feedback on marked work and, in a few cases, the level of challenge that they provide. Inspectors also found that a few students make poor notes in lessons and teachers do not do enough to help them to improve. Teachers do not always provide enough activities that require students to recall the full range of topics that they have studied throughout their courses.

Leaders and managers place a strong emphasis on preparing students for their next steps and on developing their characters. A high-quality programme of activities, 'Bilborough Xtra', offers useful additional learning opportunities that help students to become well-rounded individuals.

The proportion of students who participate in meaningful work placements is too low. Managers have not made their expectations about the completion of work experience clear enough and work experience is not a coherently planned element of the curriculum.

Students benefit from an extensive range of careers guidance and support. Students are well aware of their options for further study and employment. They rightly value the expertise of careers advisers, of which they make good use.

Leaders and managers focus well on the quality of education. They assess it accurately and provide teachers with the training that they need. They have taken steps, such as introducing a programme of action research, that aim to develop a culture of innovation and of sharing good practice. Governors have appropriate experience and support senior leaders well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and fit for purpose. Staff and governors receive appropriate training. Managers follow safer recruitment practice. Safeguarding leads record and monitor reported incidents effectively. They have good relationships with external agencies that they use to support students. Students make good use of a wide range of routes to report concerns. The use of an anonymous online system is particularly effective for students to raise concerns confidentially.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Managers should work to strengthen the skills of teachers in relation to their use of questioning, feedback and reinforcing learning over time.
- Managers should help teachers to provide greater challenge in lessons.
- Teachers should monitor the quality of notes taken by students and equip them with the skills they need to help them to improve the standard of their note taking.
- Leaders must ensure that work experience arrangements are clear and well understood by staff and students, and that preparation for work becomes an integral part of the curriculum.

Provider details

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Unique reference number | 147285 |
| Address | Bilborough Road Bilborough Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG8 4DQ |
| Contact number | 0115 8515000 |
| Website | www.bilborough.ac.uk |
| Principal/CEO | David Shaw |
| Provider type | 16 to 19 Academy |
| Date of previous inspection | 27–30 September 2016 |
| Main subcontractors | Fernwood School |

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Bilborough College was judged to be good in September 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the director of teaching, learning and assessment, 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 learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Russ Henry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Emma Woods

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Parton

Ofsted Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020