

# Itchen College

Monitoring visit report

---

**Unique reference number:** 130704

**Name of lead inspector:** Bob Cowdrey, Her Majesty's Inspector

**Inspection date:** 12 February 2020

**Type of provider:** Sixth-form college

**Address:** Middle Road  
Bitterne  
Southampton  
SO19 7TB

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Itchen College was inspected in December 2018. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Itchen College is a medium-sized sixth-form college on the east side of Southampton and is one of three colleges in the city. The college offers academic and vocational courses at entry level and at levels 1, 2 and 3. Most students are aged 16 to 18, although there has been a significant increase in adult provision over the last two years. The large majority of enrolments are at level 3.

### Themes

#### **What progress have leaders made to improve the quality of education in those subjects that have been underperforming for several years? Significant progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have continued to embed a culture of high expectations for staff and students. Leaders and managers introduced changes to the management of the curriculum that have led to improvements in teaching practice and, consequently, students' achievement. Heads of faculties plan and deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of their students. For example, in sociology they have introduced a range of different assessment methods to give teachers and students the opportunities to revisit subjects and fill any gaps in their knowledge. College governors support heads of faculties to bring about improvements in the quality of education. For example, governors complete learning visits to classes and share the good practice they observe.

Leaders and managers have implemented a well-considered and focused approach to improve the quality of teaching. They use performance management and appraisal processes effectively in order to make improvements where required. Since the previous inspection, managers provide support for all staff through learning communities, where they identify good practice, share it and use it to good effect. Teachers have clear targets for improving their teaching skills and managers support them to achieve these, and, as a result, the quality of teaching has improved.

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to ensure more students remain on their courses and achieve their qualifications. Leaders and managers make sure that the curriculum meets the needs of students, that they are on the correct courses and that staff effectively monitor their progress. Because of these actions, achievement rates have improved, particularly at level 2, where they are now high. Most A-level students now complete their courses. Achievement rates on a few

courses remain low. Managers have identified the reasons for this and have introduced actions to bring about improvements. However, it is too early to measure the impact these actions have had.

**What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that teachers take sufficient account of students' prior learning and starting points to enable students to achieve their qualifications at the level of which they are capable? Significant progress**

Since the previous inspection, teachers have improved their use of students' starting points to make sure students achieve their full potential. Teachers carefully assess students' previous knowledge, prior attainment and experience and use this information to plan learning activities that challenge students to extend their knowledge further. As a result, students learn and remember more and gain in confidence, so they can answer complex questions correctly.

In the subjects focused on during the visit, which were weaker at the previous inspection, teachers deliver their topics in a clear and logical order. They make sure students develop the knowledge and understanding they need. They check carefully that students understand the key concepts before moving on to the next topic, using interesting activities that enthuse students and help them to remember. For example, in sociology, students clearly articulate a good understanding of the effects of economic and political systems that exploit sectors of society and relate this to theorists such as 'Hall and Jefferson'. Students can discuss and evaluate the relevance of theory in a broad range of sociological contexts. They accurately link key terms such as 'scapegoats, unemployment and crime' and the use of stereotypes such as 'minority ethnic groups in mugging'.

Students benefit from teachers who are passionate subject experts and who participate in professional development activities to help them introduce a range of different approaches and activities to their teaching.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that teachers give feedback to students that enables them quickly to improve the quality of their work? Significant progress**

Leaders and managers have worked closely and effectively with teaching staff to improve the quality of feedback to students. Teachers now provide useful and detailed information to students about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further. Students feel very well supported, they benefit from frequent feedback and have a clear understanding of their progress and their targets for improvement.

Students value the classroom resources used in lessons to support discussion, debate and research activities and, because of these, they make good progress. Teachers use questioning techniques well to be sure that students understand the topics.

Leaders and managers make sure that teachers use the recently introduced electronic recording system to monitor and record accurately the progress students are making. Where students are identified as falling behind, managers swiftly provide support to get them back on track.

Teachers provide a good range of support that helps students to model answers or research available information to help them problem-solve. Teachers use digital quizzes that assess students' recall and application of knowledge both in lessons and during independent study. For example, on completion of activities such as past exam paper questions, students mark their answers using the marking criteria. They accurately identify areas for development to achieve a higher grade, and then complete a further question, using their newly gained knowledge.

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020