

Short inspection of Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

Inspection dates:

4–5 March 2020

Outcome

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College provides study programmes to just over 2,000 young people from Darlington and the surrounding area. It was judged to be a good provider at the last short inspection in March 2016. The college offers a wide range of subjects. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,777 learners studying 33 different A-level courses. Of these, 745 were also studying vocational courses at level 3. A further 173 learners were on wholly vocational study programmes at level 3. There were 33 learners on study programmes at level 2. Additionally, 19 learners were on an art and design foundation programme.

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

Learners benefit from meaningful activities which help them build their confidence and communication skills. They speak comfortably in public, respond well to questions and react positively to constructive criticism.

Learners are enthusiastic about the subjects that they study. They demonstrate high levels of motivation and are keen to share their enthusiasm. For example, learners in A-level politics eagerly debate topics linked to governments around the world.

Learners enjoy a calm, purposeful and inclusive learning environment in which they learn and interact with each other very well. They willingly cooperate to achieve shared objectives and often critically review each other's work. Learners know how to keep themselves safe and use safe working practices.

Learners who intend to progress to university receive good information, advice and guidance. They benefit from various guest speakers and visits to different universities. However, the small minority of learners who hope to progress to apprenticeships or employment are less clear about their next steps.

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

Almost all teachers are ambitious for their learners and set high expectations. Learners develop relevant skills in, for example, problem-solving and research, which teachers expect them to apply when learning new topics. Teachers in chemistry demand a lot from learners, who they encourage to examine complex concepts such as equilibrium. As a result, learners demonstrate a secure application of their knowledge and produce work of a high standard. Most learners make good progress on their courses and a high proportion achieve their qualifications.

Teachers plan and structure their classes very well to build on what learners already know. They expertly design tasks that become more complex as the programme progresses. Learners accurately identify key concepts and apply these to unfamiliar situations. For example, learners in health and social care link anatomy to disease and treatments to understand healthcare needs better.

Teachers skilfully craft their teaching to provide regular opportunities for learners to recall and apply knowledge and skills. Learners regularly repeat and review what they learn, and are able to recall accurately what they have learned previously. For example, learners in economics build their knowledge of economic policy so that they can confidently describe the impact on the economy of government changes.

Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and teach in a way that motivates learners. They link theory to practice well and expertly use subject-specific vocabulary. As a result, learners rapidly develop new knowledge and skills. For example, learners in economics use subject-specific terminology very well and learners in chemistry accurately interpret formulae.

Teachers make good use of in-class assessment. They regularly test learners to identify gaps in knowledge and to prepare them for examinations and assignments. As a result, learners know what they need to do to achieve the grades of which they are capable. Learners in photography receive very good support to self-evaluate their work so that they are fully prepared for their independent final assessment.

Leaders and managers successfully implement a well-structured staff development programme to enhance teaching standards further. They deliver a series of highly effective research-informed workshops for teachers and support them to share good practice. As a result, teachers clearly identify the impact of different teaching techniques on the progress that learners make. However, leaders and managers do not apply the same level of structure to subject-specific or industrial updating for staff.

Leaders and managers provide beneficial support to most course teams to identify poor performance and implement improvements to the quality of education. For example, modern foreign language teachers benefit from useful support to help learners to improve their essay writing practice. However, actions to improve the

learners' experience in art and design have been too slow. Leaders and managers have not monitored performance rigorously enough to effect rapid improvement.

Leaders and managers have rightly recognised the need to provide further opportunities for learners to engage with meaningful work-related learning activities. There are now many examples of this taking place. For example, learners in photography and media benefit from live projects. However, practice across college is not consistent. Therefore, too many learners are unable to access the work-related learning they need to support them with their future careers. Leaders and managers have plans for more activities, but it is too soon to assess the impact of these plans.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders effectively implement appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard learners. They support learners very well when difficulties arise and make timely referrals for further help if necessary. Leaders follow safe recruitment practices when they employ new staff.

All staff and governors receive appropriate training in safeguarding and compliance with the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders make good use of local authority links to keep themselves up to date with recent developments.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should monitor programme performance and take decisive steps to ensure that all learners benefit from the same high quality of education.
- Leaders and managers should consider ways in which they can support more staff to undertake subject-specific or industry-relevant training.
- Leaders and managers should continue to implement the new programme of employability and work-related learning activities so that all learners are suitably prepared for their next steps. This should include guidance for those who wish to progress to an apprenticeship or employment.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130662
Address	Vane Terrace Darlington DL3 7AU
Contact number	01325 461315
Website	http://www.qeliz.ac.uk/
Principal	Tim Fisher
Provider type	Sixth form college
Date of previous inspection	4 March 2020
Main subcontractors	n/a

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College was judged to be good in January 2012.

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 learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Andrea Shepherd, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bev Cross

Ofsted Inspector

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