

Inspection of WQE and Regent College Group

Inspection dates: 22 to 25 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

WQE and Regent College Group in Leicester was formed in 2018 from the merger of two sixth form colleges: Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College and Regent College.

Just over 3,500 students attend the college. Of these, 3,225 study level 3 courses. Most of these students study A levels, with smaller numbers studying a combination of A levels and vocational qualifications or full-time level 3 vocational courses. The college also has 291 students following GCSEs and vocational programmes at levels 1 and 2.

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

Most students enjoy attending the college. They find it a welcoming and inclusive place with a good atmosphere in which to study. They are well motivated and keen to learn.

A large majority of students benefit from good, demanding teaching, which they value greatly. Teachers plan well, explain topics clearly and in-depth and check that students understand and can remember what they are taught. However, a small number of vocational students do not benefit from teaching that challenges them enough and consequently, they do not develop a detailed understanding of topics.

Most teaching promotes independence and develops students' study skills. This prepares students well for their next steps, which for most means studying at university. Careers information and guidance helps students to select appropriate next steps and to apply for higher education courses. However, vocational students do not always benefit from links with local employers and not enough of them participate in well-planned work experience. This means that those who wish to progress to employment are not always as prepared as they might be.

Students feel safe at college. They can access a range of tools to support them with managing their own safety. This includes a mobile app that they can use to get immediate help if they need it or to access out-of-hours helplines and support.

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

Leaders have developed a varied curriculum that meets the needs of local young people. The vast majority of students study A-level courses, but the college also offers vocational provision so that students have the broadest possible choice of what to study. Leaders work with a small number of carefully selected subcontractors to complement the courses taught at the college.

Leaders provide level 1 and level 2 courses to help students with high potential but who experience barriers to studying at level 3, such as limited English language skills. Their intention is to enable these students to progress to level 3 courses. However, too few do so.

Teachers have good subject and teaching expertise. Most make good use of this expertise to plan well-structured, ambitious and challenging courses. They provide high-quality explanations, use well-crafted resources and give students frequent opportunities to practise what they learn. As a result, many students develop a good understanding of challenging topics. However, a few teachers of vocational programmes do not teach topics in sufficient depth and consequently, their students sometimes struggle with more complex material.

Most teachers make very effective use of assessment to check that learners have understood topics. They use oral questioning and a wide range of exercises,

activities, quizzes and tests. As a result, teachers are clear about what students understand and what they do not. Teachers also use activities specifically designed to test whether students have misunderstood topics. For example, GCSE mathematics teachers make use of hinge questions and erroneous problem solutions that incorporate common misconceptions for which students have to identify the mistake.

Most teachers continually revisit earlier topics through frequent testing that helps to strengthen students' recall. They also make effective and extensive use of exam questions and mark schemes, so that students practise, extend their understanding and increase their preparedness for examinations.

Teachers and other staff do not always do enough to support students who need extra help, including those who have additional learning needs. Although staff are aware of the needs of their students and endeavour to provide support, their actions are not always effective. Managers do too little to monitor the impact of additional support arrangements.

Most students achieve well and gain good grades. The large majority of students progress to higher education courses, for which they are well prepared. However, a small number of current vocational students do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Most students produce work to a high standard, demonstrating a sound grasp of material. They can use complex terminology, diagrams and formulae accurately and fluently. However, the work of vocational students too often focuses on the minimum requirements of their qualifications.

Most students attend lessons with a frequency that is in line with expectations. However, a small number of vocational and GCSE students have poor attendance. Although staff monitor attendance and intervene quickly to tackle problems, their actions are not always effective.

Most students have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities in sport, arts and crafts, technology, history and foreign languages. These activities are valued by students and help them to broaden their outlook.

Leaders and managers have developed a tutorial programme to develop students' study skills and their understanding and awareness of a wide range of topics related to citizenship and health and well-being. However, the content of tutorial lessons is often too basic.

Students benefit from a good range of welfare and support services. For example, students can rapidly access support for their mental health. They learn helpful techniques that enable them to continue to study, feel better and gain confidence.

Students participate in a comprehensive careers programme. They receive helpful independent guidance on their next steps. Careers activities align with students'

aspirations and can be highly personalised. For example, if a student wishes to pursue a degree apprenticeship, they can attend a relevant mock assessment centre. Staff provide effective help for students who apply to universities, which includes extra support for those who wish to go to Oxford or Cambridge.

Staff who teach vocational programmes do not always forge good links with local employers and, as a result, teaching does not always prepare students well for entering the workplace. In addition, not enough vocational students benefit from high-quality work experience. Leaders and governors recognise this but are yet to secure effective partnerships with employers to provide enough work experience opportunities for students.

Leaders and managers have developed a clear quality improvement plan that includes a range of suitable activities at appropriate points in the year. These activities include course reviews, data reviews and lesson observations. However, lesson observation records can be quite brief and tend to focus on the progress students make in lessons rather than the actions of teachers and the impact these have on students. As a result, too many individual staff development plans do not focus on the right things.

Governors are well qualified and experienced. They participate in helpful insight visits to the college. They meet staff, talk to students and gain a good understanding of curriculum areas. They receive detailed and frequent updates on performance from leaders. This means that governors know the college well and that they can ask relevant and challenging questions to hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Since the merger, managers have made significant improvements to the systems that they use to monitor and manage safeguarding concerns. Policies and procedures are clear, comprehensive and useful. Staff's training is thorough. It relates well to the specific risks and issues that students at the college may face. The designated safeguarding lead and deputies all undertake appropriate training to carry out their roles. They keep detailed and accurate records, respond quickly to any concerns and take appropriate actions. Managers follow safer recruitment practices for staff. Staff work in partnership with several helpful organisations to support students who have exceptionally difficult personal circumstances.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should review the level 1 and level 2 curriculum to ensure that it fulfils its purpose and that teachers are ambitious, teach topics in enough depth and use assessment well to develop students' knowledge and skills.

- Leaders should strengthen arrangements for providing and monitoring the effectiveness of support for students who have additional learning needs or who experience other barriers to success.
- Leaders should work with teachers and other staff to improve responses to low attendance.
- Vocational teachers should work to strengthen links with local employers and use these links to ensure that all their students benefit from relevant and well-planned work experience.
- Managers should work with staff to enhance the tutorial programme so that it provides students with opportunities to consider in detail topics that will help them to stay fit and healthy and to participate as active and informed citizens.
- Managers should review lesson observation processes to ensure that they complement the range of other quality assurance activities and help teachers to understand how their teaching practices may affect learning.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130756
Address	University Road Leicester Leicestershire LE1 7RJ
Contact number	01162471147
Website	www.wqe.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Paul Wilson
Provider type	Sixth form college
Date of previous inspection	31 October to 3 November 2017
Main subcontractors	Baca Leicester College of Performing Arts Studio 79

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the associate principal - planning, performance and curriculum, 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 visiting 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
Tracey Greenaway-Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Loxton	Ofsted Inspector
Franki Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Gibson	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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