

# Inspection of Queen Mary's College

Inspection dates: 6 to 9 December 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Queen Mary's College is part of the North Hampshire Education Alliance Trust which was created in October 2017. Currently, around 2,000 students study at the college. Almost all of these students are aged 16 to 18. Most students study level 3 courses, with around two thirds studying A levels and a third studying vocational or mixed courses. Just under 100 students study level 2 courses and 40 students study foundation courses. At the time of the inspection, there were 75 students with high needs. Around two thirds of these students study in a discrete high-needs provision. The college does not subcontract any provision.

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

Students, including those with high needs and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), enjoy their time at college. They feel safe and rightly value being part of a highly inclusive, welcoming and diverse community. Most students develop the knowledge and skills they need to pass their examinations and be successful with their next steps. The proportion of students achieving high grades in their examinations, despite declining in some areas, is generally high or very high in most subjects. Students make very strong progress in subjects such as chemistry and politics due to the quality of teaching and the support they receive from staff.

Students are proud of the new knowledge and skills they are learning. For example, art students talk enthusiastically about the new techniques they have learned such as stitching, embroidery, printmaking and pottery which they use to enhance their practical work. Students studying politics discuss in detail the complexities of elections in America and contrast these to the electoral system in the United Kingdom, analysing successfully the strengths and weaknesses of both systems. Teachers work closely with local businesses and social enterprise organisations to ensure that students with high needs benefit from valuable work experience opportunities which help prepare them very well for future employment.

Students behave very well in lessons and around the college. Teachers model professional ways of working extremely well. Teachers have high standards, expectations and compassion for their students. As a result, almost all students improve their confidence and become more resilient during their time at college.

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

Leaders have developed a wide range of academic and vocational courses to give students the breadth and depth of studies that they need for their next steps. For example, in chemistry, staff chose the curriculum because it allows students to see how the various strands of the subject interconnect across the different units of study. Leaders review the curriculum frequently to check that it meets students' needs. Leaders work effectively with companies and employers in the local area. For example, they recently introduced an esports course to help students build the skills they need for employment in this industry.

Staff plan the curriculum effectively to ensure that students learn in a logical and sequential manner. For example, mathematics teachers initially reinforce the skills that first-year students learned at school and then improve students' knowledge of algebra. This enables them to move on confidently and quickly to more complex mathematical topics. In exercise science, teachers start by teaching functional anatomy, which gives students the underpinning knowledge they need to understand the subject and approach practical coaching with confidence. Leaders and managers have developed a coherent and bespoke curriculum for students with high needs that meets individual students' specific educational needs and enables these students to develop their independence and communication skills well.

Teachers and support staff are suitably skilled and experienced. They have a genuine passion for their subjects and for supporting students with their learning. Most students complete a wide range of useful tasks and activities in lessons which help them to gain new knowledge and skills. For example, photography students talk enthusiastically about adding paint to photographs to create mixed-media prints. In politics, teachers remind students to use the 'facts, frequency and significance (FFS)' acronym to put forward a coherent argument for or against the 'first past the post' electoral voting system. However, on a few occasions, students were not clear about the purpose of the tasks they carry out and lack confidence in describing what they are doing or what it is leading to. These students make slower progress in understanding the key concepts of the subjects they study.

Most students with high needs and those with SEND, including those studying academic and vocational subjects, make at least good progress in line with their peers. They develop the appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours that they need for their everyday lives. However, teachers do not always ensure that students in the discrete high-needs provision understand new English and mathematical concepts before they move on to new learning. As a result, these students are slower to commit these concepts to their long-term memory and apply them fluently.

Most teachers check students' learning carefully to find out what they do and do not understand. For example, in chemistry and politics, teachers are particularly skilled at using questioning to enhance, develop and deepen students' understanding. Almost all students receive good feedback from teachers which indicates what they need to do to improve their work. Most teachers assess students' work and progress carefully and intervene swiftly and effectively when required. Teachers provide very good support to students outside of lessons through email contact and workshops.

Students attend well. They arrive at lessons on time and ready to learn. They are very respectful of each other, listening to their peers and teachers well. Teachers organise a wide range of activities, community projects and competitions that help students increase their confidence and their communication skills. For example, esports students take part in frequent competitive gaming events and recently won the national championships they competed in. Art students complete projects in the local community about the positive implications of inclusion and the negative consequences of exclusion.

Specialist, impartial careers staff and subject teachers ensure that students understand in detail the options available to them in higher education. Staff support students who wish to progress to prestigious universities effectively. Leaders and managers have not given the same level of priority to supporting students not going to university. Leaders have sensible actions in place to improve the quality of careers advice that these students will receive but it is too early to comment on the effectiveness of these plans. Students benefit from a wide range of talks, virtual events and activities that help them to understand the world of work. However, too

few students following vocational programmes currently benefit from external work placements to develop their knowledge of employment further.

Staff discuss a wide range of topics with students to help them understand about subjects such as living in a diverse society, consent and healthy relationships. Students speak highly of the inclusive and tolerant college environment where teachers deal with the very few instances of harassment very effectively. However, leaders do not plan their tutorial curriculum in the same detail they plan their academic and vocational curriculum. Where tutors adapt, contextualise and personalise this curriculum, they cover these subjects well. For example, teachers of students who have high needs skilfully alter topics to ensure that they are suitable and relevant for the level and needs of the students they work with. While other students can recall many of the topics they have discussed in tutorials, they are less clear on why they did this work or what the relevance of these topics is to them in their daily lives.

Almost all staff are proud to work at the college. Teachers rightly value the training that they receive in subject meetings where they share effective strategies to help them plan to teach forthcoming topics. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers in the discrete high needs area receive the training they need to develop their teaching expertise for students with complex needs.

Members of the local board of governors and trustees have appropriate skills and experience. They receive useful training to help them understand their roles and commitments as governors. Governors challenge leaders effectively in areas such as improving students' safety and ensuring that the college has enough money to deliver the curriculum they want. Governors test out their challenges by talking with students and staff frequently to help them see the impact of leaders' actions. Although governors know the strengths of the college in detail, they do not know enough about the weaknesses of the college. They do not challenge leaders sufficiently robustly to ensure that leaders identify, plan sensibly and improve weaknesses effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Well-trained and experienced safeguarding staff meet frequently with other experts in the county to help them stay up to date with safeguarding topics. They record safeguarding concerns carefully and involve appropriate external agencies when required. Leaders have effective safeguarding policies and procedures and make sure that they recruit new staff safely. Leaders ensure that staff update their safeguarding knowledge when appropriate. They oversee children looked after well. They have effective systems in place to help students stay safe when working online. Students know how to raise safeguarding concerns and feel safe in lessons and when on the college campus.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders should improve the curriculum for personal development to better prepare students for life in modern Britain and the world of work.
- Leaders should improve the quality of careers advice so that students are fully informed of all options open to them for their next steps and those students who wish to take an alternative route are as well prepared and supported as their peers moving on to university.
- Curriculum leaders, supported by their managers, should improve the quality of teaching in the few areas where performance is low so that all students, including those with high needs, make the progress that they are capable of.
- Senior managers should ensure that governors understand fully the weaknesses of the college and hold leaders to account so that they improve these weaknesses rapidly.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145175
<b>Address</b>	Cliddesden Road Basingstoke Hampshire RG21 3HF
<b>Contact number</b>	01256417500
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.qmc.ac.uk">www.qmc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Mark Henderson
<b>Provider type</b>	16 to 19 academy
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	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 monitoring visit 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

Andy Fitt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Stewart Jackson	His Majesty's Inspector
Robert Bamford	His Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Smith	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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