

Inspection of Kimberley 16-19 Stem College

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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	Good

Information about this provider

Kimberley College is a small 16 to 19 academy specialising in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The college is part of Wootton Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust. Most students study at the Stewartby campus, Bedford. The remainder, who are on arts-based programmes, study at the trust's other campus, Wootton Upper School.

At the time of the inspection, there were 628 students, most of whom were aged 16 to 18 years old. There was one student in receipt of high needs funding. All students study on level 3 programmes. Approximately two thirds of students study A-level programmes, with around a quarter that study a mix of A level and vocational programmes. The remaining students study a vocational programme. Most students have achieved 9 to 4 grades in English and mathematics before starting college.

The college does not subcontract any provision.

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

Students enjoy studying at Kimberley College. Students treat each other and staff with high levels of dignity and respect. Students appreciate the way that staff recognise their maturity. Students value the inclusive community in which they study. Their voices are heard and diversity such as sexuality and ethnicity is accepted and celebrated.

Students develop their confidence quickly. They value a calm environment where it is easy for them to get on with their work. Students demonstrate consistently good behaviour in lessons and around the college campus.

Students are highly motivated to achieve and progress. A high proportion of students go to university or progress to an apprenticeship in their chosen subject area. Over half of the students at the college participate in social mobility and skills development activities, for example mathematics and biology Olympiads, recital evenings and an amnesty group that writes to local MPs about international human rights issues.

Students feel safe in college. They find the open plan structure of the building a safe place in which to learn. Staff have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying or discrimination. Students are confident that they know who to contact should they need to report anything.

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

Leaders and governors are focused on their mission to provide a responsive high-quality broad academic and vocational level 3 offer. They evolve the provision to meet the demands of students that see the college as their preferred destination for post-16 education. However, leaders and managers do not draw on the expertise of local employers in the development of vocational curricula. As a result, students do not benefit from content that is relevant to the jobs and opportunities available locally or further afield.

Leaders and managers skilfully design programmes. In A-level mathematics, students revisit algebra in more depth before they start learning calculus. In A-level chemistry, students learn about organic chemistry and apply their learning to the experiments they carry out. They later learn the different functional groups of compounds and the characteristics of reactions when they are present. As a result, most students develop the knowledge and skills they need to pass their assessments. Most students achieve high grades. However, in a few subjects such as A-level chemistry and geography, the quality of education is not yet consistently good. Leaders have taken decisive action, but it is too soon to judge the impact of these interventions.

Students benefit from qualified teachers that have the appropriate knowledge and expertise. Teachers use their expertise to explain more complex topics. For example,

in A-level sociology, teachers build on students' learning to enable them to evaluate the different sociological theorists that they study. In level 3 engineering, teachers support students to calculate resistance and impedance values. As a result, students use specialist terminology fluently in their verbal explanations and written work.

Teachers provide highly effective support to students with special educational needs and those that have educational health and care plans. Managers assess the needs students have before they start at the college. Specialist staff provide one-to-one training for teachers. They write useful 'support passports' for teachers with effective strategies to aid students in their learning. As a result, students with special educational needs achieve broadly in line with their peers.

Most teachers use the assessment of students' starting points purposefully to individualise the curriculum. For example, in A-level business, students complete a mathematics assessment. As a result, students that need extra mathematics support receive it. However, a few students find the mathematics content, within the engineering programme, too easy.

In lessons, teachers frequently use a range of effective approaches to present topics and check student learning. In sociology, teachers use higher order questioning effectively to get students to analyse their understanding and retain new learning. Teachers in mathematics check student learning using mini whiteboards. Teachers use this to tailor their teaching. In media, teachers help students to critically evaluate the key aspects of a good-quality showreel. As a result, students gradually develop the depth of knowledge they need to be successful in their subjects.

Teachers use assessment highly effectively. Teachers provide helpful developmental feedback to students. In A-level sociology and philosophy, teachers provide useful prompts to indicate on student work what they have done well and areas they can further develop. In business, teachers provide frequent feedback on the past examination papers students complete. They highlight where students have made misconceptions. As a result, students become more evaluative and improve the quality of their work overtime.

Most teachers support students effectively to improve their English and mathematics skills. In business, students learn how to calculate labour productivity and break-even points. Students in A-level philosophy and chemistry routinely have their work corrected for spelling, punctuation and grammar errors. However, in a minority of subjects, these errors are not routinely corrected and so students do not improve the quality of their written work.

Students' attendance at lessons is good. However, in a few subjects, attendance was not high enough. Most students are punctual and return to classes promptly and ready to learn after their break. Attendance to tutorial sessions is too low and does not meet the levels leaders expect.

Students benefit from excellent support tailored to their individual career goals. All students attend a week's work placement. Highly trained careers staff provide a

comprehensive careers development programme. Students applying to university receive the guidance that they need with applications and how to budget when at university. Staff support students effectively to apply for early entry to universities via the 'aspire programme'. Staff arrange mock interviews and support students in successfully completing scholarship applications. Students choosing employment or an apprenticeship have sessions on curriculum vitae writing and experience at a mock assessment centre. As a result, students feel better prepared for their next steps. Most students progress to further or higher education when they complete their studies.

Leaders have developed a highly relevant personal development curriculum which reflects student needs. Pastoral staff support students appropriately to understand a wide range of topics such as healthy relationships, consent and sexual harassment. Students receive useful information on strategies to promote healthy living. Most students participate in extra curricula activities such as sports teams, clubs and the student leadership group. A recent cultural awareness day highlighted the vibrant diversity of the student community. However, staff have not ensured that students have a sufficiently good understanding of democracy. Too few students know what they need to do to register to vote. As a result, they were not able to participate in the democratic process of the local elections.

Leaders take effective steps to improve the consistency of the quality of education across the curriculum. They implement useful systems and use a broad range of indicators to inform their interventions. Leaders form subject 'local area groups' where managers and teachers work on action plans to improve teaching, learning and assessment. They share their successes with other staff at whole college meetings. As a result, teachers benefit from frequent and targeted staff development sessions to improve their classroom practice.

Trustees and governors have detailed knowledge about the curriculum and the strengths and areas for development. They utilise the 'link governor' scheme effectively and frequently visit the college. As a result, they understand the judgements leaders make in their reports and challenge them effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have established an effective culture of safeguarding at the college. They ensure that staff are suitably trained and know how to protect students from harassment, bullying and discrimination. Students have an effective awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. However, students do not have a sufficient understanding of the local risks of radicalisation in the areas in which they live.

Designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs) have the appropriate experience and training to carry out their roles effectively. They closely monitor the safeguarding reports they receive and take suitable action to ensure that students are safe. DSLs

swiftly refer students to external agencies to access further support. DSLs discuss with governors the trends in the support that students require. As a result, governors know and can challenge DSLs about the steps they take to support students.

Leaders and managers have implemented effectively appropriate safer recruitment processes. All members of staff are appropriately checked before they commence work at the college.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should improve the quality of education in the few subjects where teaching is not yet consistently good so that all students make good or better progress.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that attendance to lessons and tutorial sessions is consistently high.
- Leaders and managers must involve employers in the design and implementation of the vocational curriculum so that it meets local and regional employer needs.
- Leaders must ensure that students know about the local risks of radicalisation and extremism in the areas in which they live.

Provider details

Unique reference number	139798
Address	Green Lane Stewartby Bedford Bedfordshire MK43 9LY
Contact number	01234762890
Website	www.kimberleycollege.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Tim Detheridge
Provider type	16 to 19 academy
Date of previous inspection	24 to 26 January 2017
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Head of College, 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 students' work, seeking the views of students, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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Teresa Kiely	Ofsted Inspector
Shane Langthorne	His Majesty's Inspector

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