

# Inspection of Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College

Inspection dates: 12 to 15 December 2023

## Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Outstanding</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Outstanding</b>

## Information about this provider

Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College has one site which is located close to central Birmingham and is the only sixth-form college in the city. Most learners who attend the college come from local areas of significant deprivation and a very high proportion of learners are from ethnic minority backgrounds where English is not the first language spoken at home. The sixth-form college provides academic and vocational courses ranging from entry level to level 3. These include education programmes for young people, adult learning programmes and provision for learners with high needs.

At the time of the inspection, there were 2,375 learners on education programmes for young people on a range of academic and vocational courses. Fourteen of these learners qualified for high-needs funding. The largest subject areas were in science, mathematics and statistics, business management, sociology and social policy.

There were 790 adult learners studying on part-time courses. Most adult learners study on English language and vocational English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. The college was using one subcontractor.

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

Learners demonstrate highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education. They strive to develop their study skills and improve their learning. For example, most younger learners take part in curriculum enhancement activities such as grade booster sessions, skills workshops, attending the debating society and taking part in competitions such as the science Olympiads.

Learners are extremely positive about their learning. They enjoy the high-quality teaching that they receive. As a result, learners are enthusiastic in their lessons and routinely volunteer their ideas and opinions.

Learners' attendance is high. Staff set high expectations for attendance and punctuality and challenge lateness positively and firmly. In adult learning courses, staff follow up instances of non-attendance swiftly and provide learners with additional work to enable them to stay on track with their studies.

Learners feel safe at college. Staff create a positive and respectful culture. Learners value the security team who are present across the college site and social areas. Younger learners have an assigned personal progress tutor who supports them with any barriers to learning and acts as a point of contact for parents and teachers. Learners' behaviour is exemplary, and they understand that bullying or harassment is never tolerated.

Learners benefit from a broad range of opportunities to help them prepare for their next steps. Younger learners take part in work experience placements and work-related projects. For example, applied science learners complete a variety of employer-led projects on scientific investigations, electrical engineering and human health and diagnostics. This helps learners to understand the variety of career opportunities available to them.

Adult learners on ESOL courses develop confidence and fluency in their English-speaking skills. Staff help learners find opportunities to practise speaking English, such as playing speaking games with their friends and children and using online learning resources. As a result, learners gain skills that prepare them well for their next steps, community integration and independence.

Learners take part in a broad range of activities and experiences which help them to be prepared for life in modern Britain. Younger learners, including learners with high needs, learn about how to keep themselves and others safe in the local area. They attend lessons on knife crime, and teachers make them aware of the very real and current local risks linked to county lines drug transportation. Learners learn about joint accountability and shared consequences of being part of a gang involved in violence. Adult ESOL learners learn about diverse cultures and religions. They learn about driving a car in Britain and develop a better understanding of the British school system.

## **Contribution to meeting skills needs**

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Senior leaders work extensively with a wide range of strategic groups to understand the skills needs of the local, regional and national economy. This includes the West Midlands Combined Authority, Birmingham City Council and the Asian Chamber of Commerce. They actively seek out diverse employers and stakeholders to understand the local skills needs, as well as the local employment trends, and respond rapidly to develop appropriate curriculums.

Senior leaders and governors understand how they contribute to skills needs. They have targeted skills development across their curriculums, including prioritising digital skills in adult learning courses. They rightly focus on raising aspirations to ensure learners move into higher education in skills shortage areas, in line with the skills priorities as outlined by the West Midlands Combined Authority.

Leaders have successfully developed curriculums that support learners to develop the key skills they need for employment, such as project management, collaboration and communication. Employers and representatives from higher education providers work effectively with learners on live projects. For example, business learners work with the Birmingham Museums Trust to develop marketing strategies aimed at a younger audience. As a result, learners develop skills which help them to be successful in either their future studies or employment.

Curriculum managers and teachers have strong links with employers to provide up-to-date curriculum content through guest lectures, visits and workshops. In many cases, such as BTEC National Diploma level 3 health and social care, employer insight is used to change the curriculum content to ensure learners are prepared to move into the workplace. Leaders reflect on the changing local employment sector to ensure that A-level business learners rapidly understand the skills needed to run their own business and the opportunities available in developing local financial industries.

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

Leaders have developed highly ambitious curriculums that are designed to enable all learners, many of whom are from areas of deprivation or speak English as an additional language, to develop the knowledge and skills they need for their next steps. Leaders work to proactively improve the opportunities available to disadvantaged learners and increase their participation in education.

Leaders have successfully designed courses for younger learners which give them the skills and knowledge they need to move on to the next stage of their education, including higher education, and employment. Learners make substantial and sustained progress from their starting points. They successfully achieve their

qualifications, with most learners achieving high grades. Almost all younger learners progress successfully to further or higher education or employment when they complete their course.

Leaders and managers have highly effective relationships with their subcontracting provider, Birmingham Ethnic Education and Advisor Service (BEEAS). Leaders and managers have put in place robust systems to oversee the quality of education that the subcontractor provides. Leaders and partners are actively involved in designing an adult vocational ESOL course that targets the hardest-to-reach members of the community, including refugees and migrants. Adult learners access lessons at venues in the heart of their communities to encourage participation. Consequently, these adult learners develop the skills they need to successfully integrate within their communities.

Leaders have developed a highly coherent structure for governance. The governing board includes very experienced practitioners who scrutinise leaders' performance effectively. Governors provide robust challenge and actively support leaders and staff to achieve their strategic goals. For example, they challenge leaders to adapt information to better scrutinise performance, teacher retention and equality and diversity at the college.

Teachers expertly use a variety of teaching strategies and resources which help learners to remember what they have learned long term. Learners successfully link their prior learning to more complex concepts and can apply their skills fluently. For example, in A-level psychology, teachers introduce learners to new topics and materials before lessons. This helps them to deepen and build on what learners already know and can do. Teachers reinforce second-year learners' recall of 'attachment theory' from their first-year learning. Teachers use questioning very effectively to check understanding and correct any misconceptions. Teachers check and correct learners' understanding of key terms such as 'relapse' and help them to understand new ideas such as 'reciprocation'.

Teachers teach learners to use subject-specific technical vocabulary exceptionally well. Learners can use increasingly complex technical and subject-specific language through their academic writing and when speaking in lessons. For example, in A-level law, teachers introduce and consistently model the use of legal terminology in lessons. Learners frequently use terms such as 'judicial change' confidently and accurately and understand the difference between the legal terms 'consolidation' and 'codification'.

Teachers skilfully use assessment to inform and plan their teaching. They plan regular assessment points throughout the year to ensure learners are making the progress of which they are capable. As a result, learners know what they need to do to improve and make considerable and rapid progress. Learners develop substantial new knowledge and skills and produce work to a consistently high standard.

Teachers are qualified and experienced in the subjects they teach. Leaders ensure teachers have access to extensive professional development opportunities to keep

their teaching practices and subject knowledge up to date. This includes specific training on how to support learners with additional learning support needs and learners with high needs ahead of them joining lessons. As a result, the curriculums remain ambitious and are tailored to meet individual needs so that all learners make significant progress.

Learners with high needs study curriculums alongside their peers. They meet regularly with their key workers and learning support assistants. They benefit from well-planned support from staff and teachers which encourages them to become more independent. For example, learners with hearing impairments use digital hearing amplifiers in lessons. As a result, learners with high needs can actively take part in lessons and attain the same high levels of achievement as their peers. Learners successfully move on to higher levels of education when they finish their programme.

Learners receive impartial and useful careers education, information, advice and guidance. For example, staff give extensive support to learners with their applications to university. Learners can refine their personal statements and practise their interview skills. An increasing number of learners are moving on to degree-level apprenticeships as an alternative to degree courses.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130468
<b>Address</b>	Belgrave Road Highgate Birmingham West Midlands B12 9FF
<b>Contact number</b>	01214462223
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.jcc.ac.uk">www.jcc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Tony Day
<b>Provider type</b>	General sixth form college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 to 10 November 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Birmingham Ethnic Education Advisory Service (BEEAS)

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal and chief executive officer, 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

Rachel Clark, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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