

Inspection of King Edward VI College Stourbridge

Inspection dates: 30 January to 2 February 2024

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

Information about this provider

King Edward VI College Stourbridge is a 16 to 19 academy based in the metropolitan borough of Dudley, West Midlands. The college is one of three 16 to 19 academies in the Heart of Mercia multi-academy trust. The college joined the trust in February 2021.

At the time of the inspection, 2,320 students were studying on education programmes for young people. This included less than five students in receipt of high needs funding. Six students were studying level 2 GCSE qualifications alongside their main programme of study.

Most students study a combination of three A-level subjects. Students choose from the 37 subjects offered by the college. The most popular subjects offered are psychology, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and business. Approximately one quarter of students choose to study alternative level 3 qualifications alongside their A levels. These include qualifications in finance, applied science and criminology.

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

Students benefit from the highly supportive culture that college staff provide. They develop positive working relationships with enthusiastic and committed staff successfully. Students enjoy their learning, and they thrive both personally and academically through their studies.

Students demonstrate excellent commitment to their studies. They attend their learning very well, and instances of absence are rare. Students arrive promptly to lessons eager to learn. Where student attendance does not meet leaders' high expectations, college staff take swift and sensible action to remedy this quickly. For example, pastoral tutors devise clear targeted action plans for the very small number of students who need to improve their attendance.

Nearly all students participate in a broad variety of activities outside their academic studies which serve to enrich their learning. Activities include debate clubs, international trips, martial arts classes, drama societies and scientific research projects. Through these activities, students develop confidence, communication skills and self-management skills successfully.

Students, through their studies, become highly respectful and active citizens. They give their time generously and make a positive contribution to wider society. For example, students independently raise funds for a local soup kitchen, and for those caught up in international conflict.

Students fully embrace the values of tolerance and mutual respect, and they feel comfortable expressing their individuality. They celebrate the diversity of the college community frequently. Students deepen their understanding of fundamental British values in taught lessons. For example, students studying classical civilisation explore political systems, democracy and the rule of law when learning about the Athenian assembly.

Students know how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Through their learning, they develop an understanding of the importance of healthy relationships. They develop a deeper understanding of the dangers associated with poor mental health, drug use and the risks posed online. For example, students learn to identify and report the dangers of involuntary celibates' activity.

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

A new team of leaders has worked hard to create a culture of determination, passion and commitment for students. Nearly all members of the college community share this commitment. Leaders ensure that students feel motivated to achieve and nearly all students have the aspiration to study in higher education.

Teachers sequence curriculums logically and sensibly, helping students to build on their prior knowledge and skills over time. For example, biology students learn the

fundamentals of cells and biomolecules before progressing to more complex content such as cell division, the structure of DNA, mutation and genetic engineering.

Teachers have high levels of subject expertise. They are very well qualified and are enthusiastic about the subjects that they teach. Teachers use this expertise to help explain new information to students clearly and concisely. For example, through teachers' clear presentation of key knowledge, history students can give fluent and detailed reasons for Cromwell's dismissal of the Rump Parliament in 1653.

Most teachers plan learning carefully and check students' understanding effectively. As a result, students build their knowledge correctly and securely. Where gaps in students' understanding appear, teachers revisit prior learning skilfully. Students are given opportunities to rehearse their understanding and improve their competency. For example, applied science students revisit and secure their knowledge of basic numerical methods before moving on to carry out complex statistical analysis.

Most teachers use teaching strategies which are effective and allow students to commit new knowledge to their long-term memory. In lessons, teachers use techniques which help students grasp key concepts quickly. These include glossaries, learning grids, knowledge organisers and cleverly labelled diagrams. Consequently, students' knowledge of complex concepts is well-embedded, and this supports success in examinations and assessments.

Teachers ensure that students develop their subject and technical terminology effectively. Law students confidently use legal terminology, such as parliamentary supremacy and automatism. As a result, students are thoroughly prepared to use and apply this terminology in their further studies, at both university and beyond.

In most cases, teachers provide students with constructive feedback which helps them to improve. Business teachers use feedback to clarify the meaning of new concepts, such as franchising, organic growth, and retrenchment effectively. In these cases, students are aware of how to improve the quality of their work. However, in a small number of instances, teachers' feedback is not always as well developed. Students in these cases are not fully able to recognise the actions they need to undertake to make improvements in their future work.

Teachers do not identify all students' individual starting points consistently well. In some cases, teachers assess students' prior knowledge thoroughly, using a range of assessment and diagnostic tools to determine initial understanding. They then use this information to modify future learning. However, in a small number of cases, students' wider knowledge and skills are not determined well enough. In these cases, teachers place too much reliance on prior qualification achievement. As a result, not all students are progressing as quickly as they are able.

Leaders ensure that students receive high-quality careers education, advice and guidance. Students benefit from a range of activities, such as visits and guest speakers, which support them to explore the options available when they complete their studies. Similarly, those students who do not wish to study at university

undertake valuable activities which explore other progression routes, such as degree apprenticeships. Students, because of their studies, can make ambitious and informed decisions about their futures.

Leaders have acted to increase the number of students who undertake a work experience placement during their studies. Students now access more opportunities to broaden their knowledge and experience of the world of work. Some curriculum areas, including accounting and graphic communication, ensure that placements are highly relevant and meet individual student's needs successfully. However, not all students currently have access to or undertake well-planned placements. Leaders have plans in place to ensure that all students benefit from high-quality work-related experience placements, but it is too early to assess the full impact of these actions.

Leaders implement clear and robust quality assurance processes successfully. As a result, they are acutely aware of their strengths and areas for development. Leaders take clear actions to improve the quality of education that students receive. For example, as a response to the identified need, leaders recently implemented strengthened processes to ensure that teachers develop their teaching skills further. However, it is too early to fully measure the impact of these processes on students' attainment.

Leaders and managers ensure that they are held to account through a well-structured governing board. The board contains experienced practitioners who scrutinise and challenge leaders' performance effectively. Governors ably support leaders to achieve their strategic goals.

Leaders invest carefully in coordinated specialist support for those students who are in receipt of high-needs funding. For example, leaders upgraded the college facilities to further support wheelchair users and those students who require specialised personal care. Leaders ensure that learning environments are inclusive and those with specialised needs can thrive.

Nearly all students develop new and worthwhile knowledge, skills, and behaviours through their studies. Students with high needs and special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well to gain confidence and additional skills that support progression, for example developing the confidence to buy lunch off-campus independently.

Students achieve well. Nearly all students gain the qualifications they need to progress to a destination that meets their interests and ambitions. A significant number of students go on to study at prestigious higher education institutes.

Leaders acknowledge that too few of the most able students make the progress of which they are capable and achieve the highest possible outcomes in their final examinations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Increase the number of students who attain the very best grades, ensuring that the most able students make the progress of which they are capable.
- Continue to improve the consistency in the quality of teaching that students receive, ensuring that all teachers challenge students to achieve their very best in the classroom.
- Improve the quality and consistency of students' encounters with the world of work, ensuring that the work-ready skills being developed are reinforced through taught curriculums effectively.

Provider details

Unique reference number	148142
Address	Lower High Street Stourbridge West Midlands DY8 1TD
Contact number	01384 398100
Website	www.kedst.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Holly Bembridge
Provider type	16 to 19 academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal for curriculum, quality and attendance, 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

Mark Parton, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sharon Dowling	His Majesty's Inspector
Beth Selwood	Ofsted Inspector
Tony Day	Ofsted Inspector
Patricia Rogers	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2024