

Inspection of Solihull Sixth Form College

Inspection dates: 19 to 22 March 2024

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
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Solihull Sixth Form College is a 16 to 19 academy based in Solihull, West Midlands. The college is part of the Summit Learning Trust. At the time of the inspection, 2407 learners were studying education programmes for young people. This included 16 learners with educational health care plans, of which 12 learners in receipt of high needs funding. There were 17 learners studying level 2 GCSE mathematics and seven studying GCSE English qualifications alongside their main programme of study.

Most learners study a combination of three A-level subjects. Learners choose from 42 subjects offered by the college. The most popular subjects offered are psychology, mathematics, biology, and chemistry. Approximately one-quarter of learners choose to study alternative level 3 qualifications instead of, or alongside their A levels. These include qualifications in criminology, applied science, and health and social care. There were 16 learners on the first year of their T-level course in education and early years who were not in scope for this inspection.

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

Learners benefit from a positive and supportive learning environment where they develop their character. In English literature, learners are encouraged to develop a growth mindset and learn from their mistakes. As a result, they develop independence and become more resilient.

Following interventions by leaders, learners' attendance has improved. Leaders monitor attendance closely and have implemented a range of strategies to support improvements. They hold attendance panels involving meetings with parents of learners who are not attending as expected. Learners know the importance of attending and that if their attendance falls, the college will implement interventions to support them in improving. As a result, most of learners now attend well.

Teachers have implemented strategies to help learners stay physically and mentally healthy. For example, in A level mathematics, teachers teach lessons on effective exam revision techniques to reduce stress, such as making flashcards to generate active recall. Consequently, learners understand the importance of physical and mental well-being.

Most learners have a good understanding of healthy personal and sexual relationships. Academic coaching lessons teach learners about misogyny, consent, and sexual harassment. As a result, learners understand that they need to consider how they behave towards others.

Learners feel safe. Staff create a positive culture where bullying or harassment is not tolerated. Learners feel confident that staff would quickly deal with any bullying or inappropriate behaviour. However, too few learners can recall learning about radicalisation and extremism.

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

Leaders are ambitious for their learners. They are proud of the work their staff do to support young people, including those from disadvantaged areas. Leaders and teachers ensure learners have access to the training and qualifications that support them in achieving their higher study and career aspirations.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened the quality review process. They have, in most cases, a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. Where they have identified areas for improvement, such as consistency relating to the feedback that learners receive, they quickly put in place strategies to improve. However, in some areas, such as support for learners with high needs, leaders have not yet identified the need to provide teaching to ensure learners develop the skills they need to achieve the outcomes set out in their educational health care plans. As a result, these learners do not always develop the broader skills they need, such as shopping independently, to support them to move on to further training or employment.

College and trust leaders complete detailed curriculum reviews that focus on the quality of teaching, the standard of work, and feedback to learners. They use this information to implement specific interventions to support improvements in these areas. For example, in geography, new teachers receive training to improve their understanding of the new specifications and subject-specific training at the Royal Geographical Association.

The local board of governors has a membership that allows it to provide support and challenge to leaders. Governors understand the strengths and areas for development and can articulate where improvements have been made. For example, governors with a speciality in accountancy participated in curriculum reviews, contribute suggestions regarding the content and provide support with external speakers. As a result, leaders are supported to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the college.

Most teachers use information about what learners already know and can do to plan their teaching effectively. As a result, most learners develop their understanding of key concepts and consolidate their learning. In chemistry, teachers check what learners know before starting new topics. However, in geography, while teachers gather information about learners' starting points, the use of this information is early in its implementation and is not yet fully developed.

Teachers are well-qualified and experienced in the subjects they teach. They use their subject expertise well to plan and sequence lessons. Learners learn new concepts and can apply them in context. For example, in English literature teachers use their expertise to develop logically sequenced lessons. These lessons start with a recap of learning, before progressing on to new topics. As a result, learners are supported to know more and remember more.

The majority of teachers ensure that learners develop the specialist English and mathematical skills they need for the subjects they study. However, in A-levels most teachers do not identify more broadly what gaps learners have in relation to their wider mathematics and English skills to plan the closure of those gaps. Where this is done better, for example, on vocational courses, learners are supported to develop their English and mathematics skills. Such as, the structure of paragraphs and applying connectives to link concepts. As a result, learners feel well-prepared to achieve their best in their assessments.

Teachers use teaching strategies effectively to support learning. In geography, they use questioning skilfully, using nomination and exemplification to check that the learners are providing detailed answers. Teachers use their expertise to model and demonstrate new knowledge and skills in innovative and interesting ways. During workshops, teachers explain new ideas and concepts that enable learners to manage and manipulate various manual and digital devices and mediums to explore their function and application. As a result, most learners enjoy their learning.

The majority of learners develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. In sport, learners develop an understanding of the bones and muscles in the body, which is applied to injuries that maybe sustained in elite sports performers. Learners can articulate how this will help them to move onto higher education to study physiotherapy and sport and exercise sciences.

In most subjects, teachers use assessment effectively to check what learners know and understand. They use assessment frequently to identify any gaps in learners subject knowledge and use this to plan further learning. In art and design, teachers use graphic, digital and fine art techniques to inspire learners. They have designed an ambitious assessment strategy that stretches learners to combine their various skills through experimentation and analysis to achieve their desired outcomes. As a result, learners know more and can do more.

Most teachers provide learners with helpful feedback. For example, teachers help learners 'repair' their work to improve. As a result, most learners are clear on what to do to achieve higher marks in their assessments and develop independence in their study skills. In A level mathematics teachers use assessments and subsequent question-level analysis to identify gaps in learners knowledge and understanding. However, in some subjects, a few teachers do not always sufficiently stretch all learners to achieve their best.

Most students, the majority of whom aspire to move onto higher education, benefit from careers, education, information, advice and guidance, and are well-prepared for their next steps. However, for a small minority of learners who do not want to progress immediately into higher education, the curriculum does not sufficiently focus on the skills they may need to move on to their next steps, such as a gap year, an apprenticeship, or employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that learners with high needs are supported to develop the specific skills identified in their educational and health care plans, so that they develop the skills they need when they complete their studies.
- Ensure that all learners are supported to achieve the level of which they are capable.
- Continue to develop the use of learners starting points when planning learning so that all learners make sustained progress.
- Ensure all learners receive detailed careers, education, information, advice and guidance about the range of progression opportunities available to them including apprenticeships and employment.

Provider details

Unique reference number	144887
Address	Widney Manor Road Solihull West Midlands B91 3WR
Contact number	01217042581
Website	www.solihullsfca.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Dr Martin Sullivan
Provider type	16-19 Academy
Date of previous inspection	11 to 14 February 2020
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal 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 lessons, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Sharon Dowling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rachel Clark

His Majesty's Inspector

Jacqui Ecoeur

Ofsted Inspector

Jack Bullock

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Deane

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