

Short inspection of Connell Co-op College

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 April 2024

Outcome

Connell Co-op College continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Connell Co-op College is a 16 to 19 academy based in east Manchester. In 2019 the college joined the Co-op Academies Trust, a chain of academies across Greater Manchester, Merseyside, West Yorkshire and Staffordshire. Connell Co-op College provides a range of academic and vocational education to young people. Connell Co-op College was last inspected in January 2018, when inspectors judged the quality of the provision to be good.

At the time of the inspection 761 students were studying education programmes for young people. Students study either A levels, vocational courses, or a blend of vocational and A-level courses across a range of subjects at level 3. Of the 761 students, 361 study vocational courses in health and social care, business, sport, computing, criminology, applied science and applied psychology. There were 62 students studying a blend of vocational and A-level courses and 189 students studying A-level courses in sciences, business, law, English, mathematics, history, media studies, geography, psychology, sociology and economics. There were no students in receipt of high-needs funding.

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

Students improve their confidence and independence because of the education they receive. Sport students confidently plan and teach micro-coaching sessions to their peers in their specialist sports such as volleyball and netball. Biology students develop their practical skills. They apply correct techniques in laboratories to avoid contamination when carrying out practical activities.

Students are highly motivated and enjoy their learning. They take part in a range of activities to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, students volunteer in the local community by carrying out activities such as coaching local school children in sports and organising fundraising events. These activities develop the skills they need to support students to progress to their next steps.

Students' behaviour is exemplary and they demonstrate high levels of respect for staff and their peers. They feel very well supported by their teachers and progress tutors, who they say help them to improve.

Students feel safe. They know how and to whom they should report concerns. Students benefit from a 'core' curriculum where they learn about local risks such as knife crime, spiking and county lines.

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

Leaders develop ambitious curriculums that are planned in a logical order. This means that students build their knowledge and skills gradually over time. In A-Level biology, students study the history, development and structure of DNA before learning about genetics. They apply this knowledge well when discussing the effects of genetic manipulation for DNA profiling. Sports students develop their knowledge of the different systems of the body such as the musculoskeletal system, the respiratory system and the circulatory system. They move on to accurately identify muscles to focus on before conducting a sports massage.

Students develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours because of their learning. Sports students practise and master key coaching concepts. They incorporate activation and pulse raising activities while conducting warm-ups. Learners use these new skills when volunteering in the community.

Teachers use assessment effectively to check and consolidate students' learning. They use a range of activities such as effective questioning, modelling and self-reflection to check that students understand and recall previous knowledge. In biology, students confidently explain key terms in fish respiration such as the purpose of the primary and secondary lamellae. Sports students recall previous knowledge on the key principles of rehabilitation. They identify which treatments are suitable for each stage, such as the use of thermotherapy to increase the range of motions in joints following injuries. As a result, students become fluent in their knowledge over time.

Students benefit from high-quality impartial careers education, advice and guidance. They attend careers fairs and career insight days, where they access information about university courses, degree apprenticeships and employment opportunities. Progress tutors work with students to carefully create individual career plans. Students regularly review their career plans and targets so that they monitor their progress towards their development of knowledge, skills and behaviours required for their career aspirations. Progress tutors support students to research their career pathways, providing guidance on completing applications for university or employment. Most students progress to higher education, apprenticeships or employment.

Leaders have effective quality assurance and improvement processes in place. They use these well to monitor the quality of education that students receive. Leaders

have rectified all the weaknesses from the previous inspection. For example, leaders have improved the education and training that students receive on vocational courses. Most students achieve merits and distinctions in their final assessments.

Leaders and governors know the strengths and the key areas to improve. They take swift actions to improve the number of students that remain on courses and the grades that students achieve on a few A-level courses. For example, students that are at risk of not achieving are identified early and actions put in place to support them. This means that retention has increased when compared to the same time as last year. Leaders need to continue to carefully monitor this to ensure that more students remain on their courses and progress to the second year of their studies.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Continue to increase the number of students who remain on their courses and progress to the second year of their studies.
- Continue to develop the teaching skills of A-level teachers so that all students achieve their potential.

Provider details

Unique reference number	139730
Address	301 Alan Turing Way Manchester Greater Manchester M11 3BS
Contact number	0161 231 9200
Website	www.connell.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Emma Soper
Provider type	16 to 19 free school
Date of previous inspection	15 to 17 January 2018
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Connell Co-op College was judged to be good in January 2018.

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

Inspection team

Alison Humphreys, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Suzanne Horner	His Majesty's Inspector
David Towsey	His Majesty's Inspector

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