

# Inspection of Wilberforce Sixth Form College

Inspection dates: 23 to 26 April 2024

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

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

## Information about this provider

Wilberforce Sixth Form College provides A-level and vocational courses for young people in Hull and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection, the college had 1,134 students following study programmes, of whom 181 were on A-level courses, 754 were on level 3 vocational courses, including 44 on T-level courses, 183 were on level 2 courses and 11 were on level 1 courses. There were 405 students enrolled on English and mathematics GCSE courses and 30 students with high needs, five of whom were on supported internship programmes.

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

Staff have high expectations of what their students can achieve. They support students well to improve their confidence and resilience. A high proportion of students come to the college from very disadvantaged backgrounds, and staff recognise and respond to the challenges that many students have to overcome. Students know that staff will support them academically and in their development as young citizens. They appreciate the time that staff devote to enhancing their experience at college.

Students demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and actively participate in lessons. They behave well in lessons and around the college. They exhibit a calm, orderly approach to their studies and work very well with their peers.

Most students have a very good understanding of what constitutes healthy relationships, sexual harassment and abuse. Students benefit from tutorial sessions that enable them to discuss topics such as consent and banter, and how harmful sexual behaviours can become normalised. As a result, students are better prepared to recognise and call out unacceptable behaviour and know that such behaviours are not tolerated in the college.

Students feel safe. Staff ensure that students understand the risks in specific local areas, including knife crime and gang culture. Students do not experience bullying or harassment at the college. They feel sure that, if there were incidents, they would be taken seriously by leaders and dealt with appropriately.

Most students attend well. For example, attendance in A-level English and performing arts is exemplary. Students with high needs attend particularly well. However, in a few subjects, such as health and social care and GCSE mathematics, too many students do not attend frequently enough and miss out on valuable learning. Leaders have taken action to help improve attendance where it is not high enough, but this has not yet had sufficient impact.

Students benefit from an extensive programme of activities beyond their main programme to develop their interests, personal skills and attributes. For example, an 'upskilling' programme provides opportunities for students to learn about topics that will be of value for their future careers. These include medicine, space science, time management and leading difficult conversations. In addition, students participate in activities such as volunteering and creating a science workshop for primary school children at the college. A high proportion of students participate in these enrichment activities.

## **Contribution to meeting skills needs**

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders work at a strategic level with stakeholders across the city region. They have a thorough understanding of the need to upskill the workforce in developing

industries, such as vehicle electrification and artificial intelligence in agriculture. Leaders are aware of current skill shortages in technical, information technology, green and net-zero industries. They have developed an effective working relationship with the local authority and lead a working group on reducing the number of students not participating in employment, education or training, which has had a significant impact on increasing participation.

Stakeholders are very positive about their relationships with leaders in the college. They describe the college as a 'can-do' place with staff who are always willing to help and volunteer services and facilities for events. Most staff work well with employers to ensure that students benefit from a curriculum that is relevant to sector needs. For example, teachers of hairdressing and beauty therapy engage with industry professionals to ensure that students develop skills and knowledge that reflect current industry practice. A hair salon owner regularly works with students to demonstrate current styling techniques, such as curling with a wand and straighteners. However, in a few areas, employers are not fully involved in the design and implementation of the curriculum, even though they express a willingness to contribute.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale for the courses that they provide. They offer an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of their students, many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Leaders offer academic and vocational courses that aim to develop students' readiness for employment, higher education and further study. They ensure that most students, including those with high needs, achieve outcomes that enable them to progress to the next stage of their education and career.

Teachers plan and sequence the curriculum effectively. For example, health and social care staff start by teaching fundamental anatomy and physiology content that underpins all units, subjects and content throughout the course. Teachers re-order units or assessments when this benefits students. A-level English staff changed the sequence of the curriculum in response to feedback from internal quality reviews. They now focus on developing students' spoken English skills at the start of the programme, which students value because it builds their confidence and the critical thinking skills that they apply to creative writing.

Teachers are well qualified and experienced. They make good use of their expertise in their teaching. For example, health and social care teachers use their rich experience of the sector when teaching topics such as the operation of adult care homes and sport and physiotherapy-related treatments. This provides students with deep insights into the sector in which they aspire to work. Leaders provide teaching staff with relevant professional development opportunities, including support from dedicated teaching and learning coaches who share good practice across departments to support teachers' development. Staff appreciate this support, which enhances their teaching.

Most students benefit from high-quality teaching. Teachers allow time for students to take their own notes for retrieval exercises and to check against previous notes they have made. They use skilful and challenging questioning that helps students recall previous learning. However, in a few instances, teachers do not check learning well enough to ensure that students have a secure grasp of the content before moving on to the next stage of learning.

Most teachers assess students' work accurately against the course specification. In health and social care, staff indicate clearly where students are performing well and successfully meeting the requirements for passing the course, and how they can achieve higher grades. Most teachers also provide students with helpful developmental feedback on their work. However, the quality of feedback is not consistently high across departments, which means that a few students do not deepen their knowledge as well as they could.

Staff support students with high needs particularly well to enable them to progress rapidly and achieve their qualifications in line with their peers. Students receive effective individual support, such as academic mentoring, to develop their study skills. They benefit from targeted support in relation to their physical needs, where this is needed. For example, in the event of lift failure, staff move the whole class to the ground floor to ensure that students with physical needs are not disadvantaged. As a result of the support that they receive, students with high needs are able to overcome barriers, improve their confidence and progress to positive destinations.

Leaders and managers have developed a high-quality supported internship programme in partnership with City Health Care Partnership, Hull City Council and East Riding Council to support students with high needs into employment. Students undergo mandatory training and are then matched to three separate job roles over a period of 12 months. As a result, the vast majority of students improve their confidence in the workplace and successfully gain employment.

Staff place a strong emphasis on supporting students to identify and prepare for their next steps. An extensive careers advice and guidance programme helps students to consider and identify realistic future career paths, often outside their initial expectations. Students are exposed to different employers who visit the college as well as visits to and from higher education institutions. Most students have good opportunities to experience the world of work through work-related activities or exposure to employers. Many students take short courses that improve their employment opportunities, such as health and safety and first aid.

Most students achieve well, and a high proportion progress to a positive destination such as an apprenticeship, a higher education course or employment. For example, many students of A-level English progress to degrees in linguistics and creative writing.

Staff successfully help students to develop their English and mathematics skills as part of their main programmes of study. However, too many students who need to

re-take a GCSE mathematics qualification do not achieve it. Leaders have done much to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics, although this is not yet borne out in the results. Most students do, however, achieve a grade higher than their previous attempt when at school. Leaders' actions to improve achievement in GCSE English have had a positive impact, and achievement has improved significantly.

Leaders and managers have in place an effective board of governors. Leaders ensure that governors receive training to ensure that their knowledge of the provision and education is current. Board members draw on their experience in business, finance and education to provide effective challenge and support to senior leaders in the college.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Ensure that all teachers check that students have fully understood content and provide consistently helpful feedback.
- Improve attendance in subjects where it remains too low.
- Maintain the strong emphasis on improving achievement outcomes for students studying GCSE mathematics.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130580
<b>Address</b>	Saltshouse Road Hull HU8 9HD
<b>Contact number</b>	01482 711688
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wilberforce.ac.uk">www.wilberforce.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Colin Peaks
<b>Provider type</b>	Sixth-form college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this inspection

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

### Inspection team

Glenise Burrell, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Frear	His Majesty's Inspector
Joanne Stork	His Majesty's Inspector
Anne Tyrrell	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Townsley	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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