

Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth 1 College

Inspection report

Provider reference	130756
Published date	November 2007

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth 1 College (W&QE 1) is the largest sixth form college in Leicester, focusing mainly on level 3 qualifications for learners aged 16 to 18. It has Beacon College status, but no Centre for Vocational Excellence (CoVE). Its mission is 'to provide challenge, encouragement and support for students in order to maximise their achievements'.
2. The college is one mile from the city centre, adjacent to the University of Leicester. The city has two other sixth form colleges, a large general further education (FE) college, four schools with sixth forms and an adult education college. Leicester city is one of the 30 most deprived areas in the country; unemployment rates are high, earnings are low and the proportion of 5+ A* to C GCSEs (including English and mathematics) was 33.5% in 2005/06, compared with the national average of 45.3%.
3. The college offers 45 GCE AS and A level subjects including five in applied subjects. Students with lower entry qualifications follow a one year GCSE programme. The college introduced the International Baccalaureate qualification in 2006.
4. In 2005/06, nearly 1,900 students provided over 14,500 enrolments. The college serves a large catchment area in and outside the city and recruits learners from a wide range of socio-economic and black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Over 70% of students aged 16 to 18 are from minority ethnic groups and about 43% of students aged 16 to 18 are male. The college has provision in 11 of the 15 sector subject areas, the largest areas being science and mathematics; business, administration and law; and arts, media and publishing.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding: Grade 1
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Outstanding: contributory grade 1</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

5. Overall effectiveness is outstanding. Success and retention rates are consistently high. Many students achieve beyond expectation and obtain high grades, irrespective of their backgrounds, gender or learning needs. As a result, achievement and standards are outstanding. Students produce high quality work and enjoy college life thoroughly. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are very committed and motivate their students to progress well and achieve. Assessment is comprehensive and relates effectively to students' target grades, but marking and feedback are occasionally insufficient. The college meets the needs and interests of its students outstandingly well. They benefit greatly from a wide range of provision and enrichment. Educational and social inclusion are outstanding as are guidance and support. Marketing, recruitment and induction are very effective. Academic, pastoral and welfare support are outstanding. Leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding. The quality assurance system and the professional autonomy given to managers at all levels combine to raise standards and improve students' experiences. However, systematic monitoring of aspects of quality assurance is underdeveloped. Self-assessment is rigorous. Accommodation is good and improving. Financial management is strong and the college provides outstanding value for money.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

6. The capacity to improve is outstanding. The self-assessment report is accurate and improvement plans are detailed and realistic. Development planning reflects the strategic objectives clearly. Managers' confidence in their ability to secure improvements is well founded in the progress they have made with areas of relative underperformance. Quality assurance processes are well established and most are highly effective. Managers use information from monitoring activities and from detailed examination of data extremely well to improve the quality of learners' experiences and to raise standards even higher.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

7. The college has made outstanding progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The introduction of curriculum managers with responsibility for quality has significantly strengthened the effectiveness of quality assurance arrangements. The sharing of good practice both within and across curriculum areas has increased considerably. Professional development opportunities are substantial and frequently available. The college has improved much of its accommodation and information technology (IT) facilities significantly. In parts of the college, accommodation remains inappropriate, but further building work has begun to address these

issues. The college has maintained, and even improved, students' very high achievement and standards. The college remains in a strong financial position.

Key strengths

- very high success and retention rates
- excellent progress made by students of all abilities
- outstanding enrichment provision
- excellent academic support
- outstanding personal and pastoral support, advice and guidance
- highly developed self-critical ethos
- outstanding governance.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- unsatisfactory marking of and feedback on a minority of students' assessments
- underdeveloped learning resources in the virtual learning environment
- insufficiently systematic monitoring of aspects of quality assurance.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

8. Achievement and standards are outstanding and this agrees with the college's self-assessment. Most success rates have risen over the last three years and are well above national averages. This is because retention rates have consistently been very high. Retention on the new International Baccalaureate course is also very high. Pass rates are close to national averages, except for students on level 2 provision where they are higher. The proportion of students gaining high grades is above national averages, but the proportion of those gaining the highest grade is just below. The progress made by students of all abilities is well above that expected from their prior attainment on entry to the college and is especially so for those taking GCE AS subjects, putting the college in the top 10% of colleges. Most students are very successful, irrespective of their backgrounds, gender or learning needs. Key skills success rates have improved and are high in most areas, except for the few students taking level 2 application of number.
9. Attendance is high and students are punctual. The standard of students' work is very high. Approximately 85% of final year students progress to higher education each year. Students adopt safe practices and many pursue a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy their whole college experience thoroughly.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

10. The quality of provision is outstanding and this agrees with the college's self-assessment. Teaching and learning are good and have improved since the last inspection. Most lessons are good or better. The less effective lessons are too teacher-led and lack a range of different learning activities to stretch learners of all abilities. Teachers' subject knowledge, commitment and enthusiasm are very good. They expect high standards of their students and plan their lessons accordingly. Students are very attentive and well behaved in lessons. The availability and effective use of information learning technology to aid learning have improved since the last inspection. The provision of learning resources in the virtual learning environment has also improved, but is underdeveloped in several subject areas. Lesson observations and feedback are detailed and focus appropriately on learners and learning. In a minority of lesson observations, the grades appear to overstate the quality of the lesson, compared with the written comments.
11. Assessment is comprehensive and relevant and emphasises examination requirements. Most feedback is detailed and provides constructive advice, but not all teachers correct grammatical and spelling errors or return students' work promptly. The college does not monitor the quality of assignment feedback systematically and a minority of feedback comments lack formative advice. Teachers use assessment outcomes very effectively to compare students' attainment with their minimum expected grades. This process motivates students, provides frequent monitoring of their progress and is fully accepted

- by students and their parents, carers and guardians. The diagnosis of students' additional learning needs is detailed and very effective, but it gives little information on numeracy. Managers ensure the provision of support is prompt and very effective.
12. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students is outstanding. Students benefit from a very wide range of GCE AS and A level subjects, applied AS and A level subjects and the International Baccalaureate course. The college collaborates well with other colleges and local schools to ensure complementarity of provision and support for minority subjects. Its response to employers' needs is satisfactory. The approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. Recruitment procedures reflect the attainment and expectations of students from different schools and attract many more applications than places available. Managers encourage and achieve participation by students from diverse backgrounds and from those underrepresented in further education.
 13. The enrichment provision is outstanding. Most students participate fully in a very wide range of activities, including courses leading to additional qualifications, and many sports to high levels. Students make an outstanding commitment and contribution to college life and to their communities. They are involved fully and effectively in a wide range of worthy causes and support many local, regional and national charities.
 14. Students receive outstanding guidance and support. Information and guidance to prospective students are highly effective. College marketing and course literature are of a high standard. Students make well informed choices and enrol on appropriate courses. The highly effective induction programme ensures students settle quickly into college life and makes them aware of the extensive range of guidance and support services available.
 15. Academic, pastoral and welfare support are outstanding. Teachers provide excellent advice and guidance during 'subject support' time and outside normal timetabled sessions. A dedicated team of tutors gives extremely good support to students who request it or are likely to benefit from it. Financial and welfare support and the provision made by counsellors and student mentors are excellent. The links with external agencies, including Connexions and higher education institutions, are strong. Support, advice and guidance on progression to higher education are outstanding.
 16. Subject and personal tutors agree appropriately challenging targets with their students and review their progress frequently and very effectively. The tutorial programme, which covers many of the Every Child Matters themes, promotes students' personal development effectively. It develops skills such as team working and financial literacy that will contribute to students' future economic well-being.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Outstanding: grade 1

17. Leadership and management, as the college itself has judged, are outstanding. The principal provides strong and consultative leadership enabling managers to have significant professional autonomy and yet be accountable. The college has developed a very successful, self-critical culture which focuses on improving students' experiences and their progress. Staff understand and support fully the college's mission and values.
18. Quality improvement is extremely effective and managers have raised standards in areas identified as relatively underperforming. They have improved the arrangements for quality monitoring within departments and curriculum managers now have a significant role in ensuring timely compliance with quality procedures. Managers have good access to data and use them very effectively to target areas for further improvement. However, certain aspects of quality monitoring are insufficiently thorough and systematic. The self-assessment process is rigorous, robust and based on valid evidence.
19. Teachers are well qualified. Staff benefit from extensive opportunities for training and development and the college has invested in a specially designed leadership programme to build capacity and assist with succession planning. Communication within the college is good and staff appreciate the open and consultative style of managers. Accommodation is good and improvements have been made to enable better access for students with restricted mobility. However, accommodation in some curriculum areas remains inappropriate and the provision for washing facilities and prayer rooms is insufficient. New building work to address these issues has started.
20. The college has many very effective links with external organisations and managers collaborate very well with other education providers. Links with many partner schools and with higher education institutions are excellent.
21. Governance is outstanding. Experienced and knowledgeable governors provide excellent support. They challenge senior managers appropriately and robustly and monitor the academic and financial performance of the college extremely well. Arrangements for linking governors to curriculum areas are not yet fully effective. Financial management is strong and the college provides outstanding value for money. The college meets its statutory obligations under the Child Protection Act, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 (SENDA). The college's ethos is one of genuine consideration of students' needs through recruitment policies, curriculum offering and guidance and support and consequently its approach to equality of opportunity is outstanding.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates* on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	04/05	73	73	64	9	-			
	05/06	50	80	71	9	-			
	06/07	64	80			-			
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	-				-			
	05/06	-				-			
	06/07	-				-			
NVQs	04/05	-				-			
	05/06	-				-			
	06/07	-				-			
Other	04/05	73	73	64	9	-			
	05/06	50	80	71	9	-			
	06/07	64	80			-			

Table 2

Success rates* on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	04/05	479	96	73	23	-			
	05/06	428	95	78	17	-			
	06/07	289	92			-			
GCSEs	04/05	455	97	78	19	-			
	05/06	374	95	82	13	-			
	06/07	270	92			-			
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	-				-			
	05/06	-				-			
	06/07	-				-			
NVQs	04/05	-				-			
	05/06	-				-			
	06/07	-				-			
Other	04/05	24	92	62	30	-			
	05/06	54	91	70	21	-			
	06/07	19	84			-			

Table 3

Success rates* on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	04/05	6,686	88	82	6	7	71	59	12
	05/06	7022	88	83	5	11	73	65	8
	06/07	6934	89			11	55		
A/A2 Levels	04/05	2291	96	92	4	-			
	05/06	2293	97	93	4	8	88	78	10
	06/07	2351	96			-			
AS Levels	04/05	4310	84	78	6	-			
	05/06	4432	83	79	4	-			
	06/07	4225	85			8	50		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	84	76	74	2	-			
	05/06	112	79	74	5	-			
	06/07	-				-			
NVQs	04/05	-				-			
	05/06	-				-			
	06/07	-				-			
Other**	04/05	-				-			
	05/06	185	87	75	12	-			
	06/07	358	90			-			

* Data for 2004/05 and 2005/06 are from the iCPR. Data for 2006/07 are supplied by the college.

** Data for 2005/06 are for applied AS subjects and for 2006/07 are for applied AS and A-level subjects.

- Data not included if less than 5 starts.