

King Edward VI College, Stourbridge

Inspection report

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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 achievement 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. King Edward VI College, Stourbridge is a sixth form college in Stourbridge. Stourbridge is part of the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley. The college's mission is 'to aim to provide the highest quality education in a supportive, purposeful environment'.
2. Around three quarters of the college's students are from Dudley and the remainder from neighbouring areas. The college has 1,457 students, all aged 16 to 18-years-old. Just under three fifths of students are female and just under one sixth are from minority ethnic groups. The college offers courses in ten sector subject areas almost entirely at GCE A and AS level. The highest numbers of students study in science and mathematics; languages, literature and culture; arts, media and publishing; history, philosophy and theology; business administration and law; and preparation for life and work and social sciences.
3. The population of Dudley is 305,155. Dudley ranks 109 out of 354 for the highest levels of deprivation in England. Dudley's unemployment rate is similar to the national unemployment rate of 5.3%. Some 6% of the local population are from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils gaining five GCSEs at A* to C in Dudley, including mathematics and English, in 2007 was 43.6% compared to a national average of 46.7%.

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>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

4. Effectiveness of provision is outstanding. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Students' success rates are very high, they make extremely good progress compared to their prior attainment and their work is of a very high standard. Teaching and learning, and guidance and support are outstanding. The teaching and learning along with the support and guidance students receive are highly effective, particularly for those who require additional support to complete their studies successfully. The response to the needs and interest of students is good. Leadership and management are outstanding and quality improvement arrangements are very successful at maintaining and raising standards. The promotion of equality of opportunity and educational and social inclusion are good. However, the college's site is cramped for the number of students.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

5. Capacity to improve is outstanding. Managers and staff, supported well by governors, are very effective at maintaining and raising standards. They work very successfully to ensure that achievement and standards, teaching and learning, and support and guidance are outstanding. Managers and staff take extremely effective action, based on the outcomes of particularly thorough progress reviews to improve students' performance. Managers and staff use very comprehensive data on students' performance particularly well. Well established quality improvement arrangements are rigorous and very effective. Good financial management ensures students receive a good range of resources.
6. The well established self-assessment process is very rigorous. It makes very good use of data and students' views. The self-assessment report is very thorough and is an accurate assessment of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. A very effective quality improvement plan supports the self-assessment report.

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

7. The college has made outstanding progress in building on its strengths and improving areas of concern identified at the last inspection, with the exception of cramped accommodation, an issue the college clearly recognises. Most areas of the college's work that were judged good are now outstanding and that which was outstanding has been maintained at this high level.

Key strengths

- outstanding success rates, particularly the high proportion of students achieving grades A or B at GCE A and AS level
- extremely good progress by students compared to their prior levels of attainment
- very high standards of students' work
- highly effective teaching and learning
- excellent assessment and monitoring of students' progress
- outstanding guidance and support
- outstanding leadership and management
- extremely effective quality improvement arrangements.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- cramped accommodation
- sharing the best teaching and learning practice.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

8. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Since the last inspection, the college has maintained very high success rates. The college's main work is GCE A and AS level provision for students aged 16 to 18. A strength recognised in the self-assessment report is the particularly high proportion of students achieving grades A or B for GCE A and AS level subjects. Students taking GCE A and AS level qualifications make extremely good progress compared to their prior levels of attainment. The proportion of students taking qualifications at levels 1 and 2 is small, with the exception of GCSE. The success rates for this qualification were particularly high between 2004/05 and 2006/07. Success rates for male and female students in 2006/07 were both very high. Success rates for students from minority ethnic groups in 2006/07 were similar to the college as a whole. The success rate for those of Pakistani heritage has increased significantly from below the college average in 2004/05, to a rate similar to the average in 2006/07. Success rates for key skills, although not high, compare particularly favourably with similar colleges. The proportion of students that progress to higher education is very significant with most of the remaining moving to employment.
9. Students work hard and achieve very high standards in their written, practical and oral work. They are enthusiastic and demonstrate genuine interest and knowledge of their subjects. Students contribute very knowledgeably in subject discussions and use technical vocabulary confidently. They are particularly articulate, express their views well and take a keen interest in the college. Their behaviour generally is very good. The students' attendance rate in 2006/07 was very high and has been since the last inspection.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

10. The quality of provision is outstanding. This concurs with the college's self-assessment. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers prepare lessons very thoroughly and ensure the purposeful use of students and their time. Students benefit from a wide range of highly effective teaching and learning strategies that maintain their interest and encourage active participation in lessons particularly well. Teachers are extremely effective at developing students' subject knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers' assessment and monitoring of students' progress are excellent, including giving very good advice on how they can further improve their work. Teachers are very well qualified and demonstrate a particularly high level of subject expertise, valued and commented upon by students.
11. The college has a clear and accurate view of the quality of lessons through the lesson observation system. Thorough observations concentrate very effectively on students' learning as well as teaching. Joint observations carried out during

the inspection reflected a close match between the judgements made by college observers and inspectors. College records show that a very high proportion of lessons observed in 2006/07 were good or better with a significant proportion being judged outstanding. Good practice in teaching and learning is shared well informally and at departmental level; however, the systematic sharing of the best teaching and learning practice is less well developed.

12. As the self-assessment report judges, the college's response to the needs and interests of students is good. A very wide range of GCE A and AS levels is available in most combinations and includes minority subjects. The college offers an extensive range of extension activities for the gifted and talented. The number of students attending the college has grown significantly in recent years and it is substantially over-subscribed. The college enjoys a very high reputation within the local community and students express their pride in attending the college. Despite a significant re-organisation of general studies, this subject is less valued by students. Enrichment is very good. It is varied, relevant and well attended. Enrichment includes sporting, cultural and voluntary activities, contributing well to students' ability to staying healthy and making a positive contribution to the college and local community. The college provides students with a wide range of well organised work related activities to develop their understanding of the needs of employers, including extended work experience and accredited courses. Students' employability skills are improved successfully through effective promotion of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.
13. Guidance and support are outstanding. Students receive excellent advice and guidance on application and entry to the college. Close liaison with local schools ensures a smooth transition to college life. Educational and social inclusion are good. The college recruits from local areas of disadvantage and from minority ethnic groups, and there is a particular focus on supporting looked after children. Systems to identify students with additional learning support needs are effective. In particular, staff are highly aware of, and sensitive to, the needs of students with dyslexia and a significant and growing number of such students are very well supported. Visually and hearing impaired students are provided with adaptive technology. Those in receipt of additional support achieve the same high standards as other students. Teachers, support staff and personal tutors communicate well. Teachers know their students well and are very responsive to requests for additional help. Detailed and up-to-date centralised records provide extensive and accurate information on progress and support. Targets in individual learning plans are particularly well written and monitored closely. A full range of welfare support, including external agencies is available and the college supports its most vulnerable students very well. Tutorials are well organised and personal tutors coordinate pastoral and academic support very well. Students are very positive about the help they receive. Study skills and subject workshops provide excellent support for students. Careers education and guidance are well planned with particularly effective support for students applying to higher education. Students

progressing to employment are also well supported. Attendance monitoring is extremely rigorous.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

14. Leadership and management are outstanding; a strength recorded in the self-assessment report. Senior and curriculum managers are very successful at maintaining a very high standard of provision for students. Senior and curriculum managers work very well with teachers to monitor students' performance very closely, and take very effective action to maintain achievement and standards and the quality of provision at a very high level. Since the last inspection, senior managers have improved areas of concern and maintained and built on strengths. The college very successfully achieves its strategic aim of providing high standard sixth form education for the local area for students aged 16 to 18 years, an aim well supported by managers and staff. Communication between managers and staff are supportive and very good.
15. Governance is outstanding. Governors monitor extremely thoroughly the college's academic performance. Their understanding of this area is very good. Governors bring a very good range of skills to support the work of the college. They have a strong focus on the needs of the local community and employers. Governors contribute very effectively to monitoring and setting the college's strategic direction.
16. Quality improvement arrangements are extremely effective at ensuring students achieve very high standards. Senior managers respond very effectively to the outcomes from the well established programme of surveys and meetings which collect students' views. Students' opinions of the college are very positive. Comprehensive observations regularly assess the quality of teaching and learning. Regular and thorough reviews assess the performance of curriculum areas. Quality improvement arrangements are supported by an established staff appraisal and development programme which links very effectively to the college's priorities, the individual needs of staff and to improving provision for students. Managers and teachers make particularly productive use of a broad range of high standard data on students' performance to improve the quality of provision and to set challenging and realistic targets. Senior managers monitor the actions and targets in the quality improvement plan very closely to ensure they are effective at resolving issues and sustaining strengths. The college has well established and robust arrangements for self-assessment.
17. Equality of opportunity is good. It is promoted effectively in wall displays and through tutorials, lessons and college events. The college successfully recruits from under-represented groups. Senior managers analyse the performance of students from these groups thoroughly. There is no substantial difference in the

performance of different groups. The college complies with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 (SENDA). Procedures for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults are fully in place. The college is a safe environment for students.

18. Financial management is good. Systematic arrangements assign funding to subject and cross college areas. Resources, including for information and learning technology, are good. Some accommodation is good, most satisfactory but a key issue is that the college site is cramped for the number of students, an area for improvement recorded in the self-assessment report. Given its very high success rates, highly effective teaching and learning, good responsiveness to and the excellent support for students, the college provides outstanding value for money.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to 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	60	95	64	31	*	*	*	*
	05/06	87	95	71	24	*	*	*	*
	06/07	33	58	*	*	*	*	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	05/06	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	06/07	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
NVQs	04/05	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	05/06	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	06/07	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	04/05	60	95	63	32	*	*	*	*
	05/06	87	95	71	24	*	*	*	*
	06/07	33	58	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to 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	728	95	73	22	*	*	*	*
	05/06	671	96	78	18	*	*	*	*
	06/07	798	94	*	*	*	*	*	*
GCSEs	04/05	703	95	78	17	*	*	*	*
	05/06	656	96	82	14	*	*	*	*
	06/07	731	96	*	*	*	*	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	05/06	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	06/07	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
NVQs	04/05	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	05/06	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	06/07	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	04/05	25	88	62	26	*	*	*	*
	05/06	15	73	70	3	*	*	*	*
	06/07	67	67	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to 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	5638	92	82	10	*	*	*	*
	05/06	5551	93	83	10	8	100	65	35
	06/07	5839	94	*	*	*	*	*	*
A/A2 Levels	04/05	2530	95	92	3	*	*	*	*
	05/06	2597	95	93	2	8	100	78	22
	06/07	2678	96	*	*	*	*	*	*
AS Levels	04/05	3108	89	78	11	*	*	*	*
	05/06	2940	91	79	12	*	*	*	*
	06/07	3235	93	*	*	*	*	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	05/06	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	06/07	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
NVQs	04/05	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	05/06	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	06/07	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	04/05								
	05/06	14	100	75	25				
	06/07	26	100						