

# Newham Sixth Form College

Inspection report

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## Contents

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Background information.....	3
Summary of grades awarded .....	5
Overall judgement.....	6
Key strengths and areas for improvement .....	7
Main Findings.....	8

## 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](http://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](http://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. Newham Sixth Form College is a large sixth form college located on three sites in the London Borough of Newham. The college provides courses for students aged 16 to 18, adult learners and students aged 14 to 16. The majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18 and study at level 3.
2. The curriculum is very broad and provides courses from levels 1 to 3, including courses in most sector subject areas. Entry requirements for advanced level courses are generally lower than for most other providers of post-16 provision. The college is involved in teaching new Diplomas at levels 2 and 3 to students aged 14 to 19. It also provides entry to employment programmes.

3. The college has a Centre of Vocational Excellence in digital and broadcast media (Circus Media). It provides teacher training courses. College staff teach on degree courses in performing arts and on year zero of extended degrees in social sciences and business.
4. Most of Newham is classified as disadvantaged and it is ranked as the sixth most deprived local authority in England. There are high levels of economic, health and social deprivation among its residents. Newham is the most ethnically diverse area in the country. Over 90% of students are from minority ethnic groups with many from Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian and Black African heritage. Around 70% of students receive support from the educational maintenance allowance (EMA) or learner support funds. Seventy-five per cent of students speak a language other than English at home.
5. The college mission statement is: 'We are committed to providing our students with a high quality of education, which will encourage them to achieve their best. We have a range of specialist services on offer to ensure students get all the help, support and advice they need. We aim to create an exciting and stimulating approach to learning and encourage all students to progress successfully to a career or higher education'.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

6. The overall effectiveness of provision is good. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Many students have below average qualifications when they start their courses. Most students are aged 16 to 18. Their retention and pass rates were average in 2007/08. Success rates are high on vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 and for students aged 14 to 16. Success rates are low for the small proportion of adults and on level 1 courses.
7. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are adept at developing students with a range of abilities. Many lessons promote equality and diversity. The assessment of students' work is good. The development of literacy skills is not sufficiently well integrated into the curriculum.
8. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. The breadth of courses is extensive. The college has outstanding links with schools and community organisations. It offers an imaginative alternative Key Stage 4 provision. Students come from diverse backgrounds and the college's response to educational and social inclusion is good.
9. Guidance and support are good. Initial advice and guidance are impartial and help students to make informed decisions about courses. The tutorial and pastoral curriculum is well structured and effective. Target-setting in student progress reviews is sometimes generic and not sufficiently specific.
10. Leadership and management are good. There is strong leadership and commitment to quality improvement. The self-assessment process is integral to quality improvement but needs to be more rigorous in some areas. Management information systems are used effectively. The college has productive partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders. The college is financially strong.

### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

11. The college's capacity to improve is good. A new leadership team has set challenging but realistic targets for improvement. Quality assurance arrangements are thorough and effective and there is an extensive programme of lesson observation to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The college collaborates very effectively with representatives of its local community and other education providers. Communication is good and there is a shared commitment amongst staff to improve performance. Management information is timely and readily accessible. The college has maintained its good provision but its self-assessment, although broadly accurate in its commentary, is over-generous in the grades awarded. Financial management is good.

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

12. The college has made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Pass rates for both students aged 16 to 18 and adult students have improved. There have been significant improvements to the accommodation, although the main college is still overcrowded. Support for vocational level 2 students has improved and success rates are now at the national average. Whilst there has been some improvement to target-setting within the self-assessment process, this is still an area for further development.

### Key strengths

- high success rates on vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 and for students aged 14 to 16
- strong inclusive ethos
- good teaching and learning
- extensive curriculum provision
- good support for students
- good equality of opportunity
- strong leadership
- excellent links with the community and partners
- good resources for learning.

### Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- success rates at level 1 and for adult students
- target-setting in students' progress reviews
- the integration of opportunities to develop literacy skills across the curriculum
- the systematic evaluation of cross-college processes.

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates improved from well below average in 2006/07 to broadly average in 2007/08, and to slightly above the success rates of 2005/06. Many students have below average attainment when they start their courses. The success rate, retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 were all at an average level in 2007/08. The in-year retention rate at the time of inspection was 98%. Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 were low at level 1 and around the national average at levels 2 and 3. Ninety-eight per cent of full-time equivalent students are aged 16 to 18 and most of them study at level 3. Success rates are consistently low for the small proportion of adult students and on short courses.
14. Most students at level 2 and just over half at level 3 take vocational qualifications. Success rates on vocational qualifications at levels 2 and 3 are high and students make good progress on national diplomas. Success rates on A-level qualifications are average but they are below average on AS-level qualifications. Generally, students studying at level 3 make progress in line with expectations. Achievement and success rates for AS-level qualifications improved in 2007/08 and, overall, students made significantly better progress than expected based on their previous attainment at GCSE. The proportion of students achieving grades A\* to C on GCSE qualifications is lower than average.
15. Success rates on qualifications for students aged 14 to 16 are high. Success rates for key skills improved sharply in 2007/08 and are satisfactory. Success rates in most sector subject areas are satisfactory. There are no substantial differences in the success rates of male and female students or those from different minority ethnic heritage groups. Students receiving additional learning support or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have a higher success rate than the college average. Students on entry to employment courses have good outcomes. Progression rates from level 2 to level 3 courses are good. Most students progress onto university after leaving college.
16. Average attendance is good and rising and in 2007/08 it was 91%. The college analyses student performance in detail but the self-assessment grade for achievement and standards was over-generous.

### Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

17. The quality of provision is good. The college's self-assessment grade for teaching and learning is accurate. The college has maintained teaching and learning strengths since the last inspection but the self-assessment report does not clearly identify why teaching and learning are good. College observers identify most of the strengths and areas for improvement in lessons and grade them accurately but areas for improvement are sometimes missed. Action planning for teachers to help them improve their performance is not always



sufficiently clear. Teachers create good materials for the virtual learning environment, which students use effectively. Most teachers use information and learning technology (ILT) well in lessons but occasionally it does not add value to learning.

18. Students' behaviour, enjoyment and achievement in lessons are good. Students are generally well motivated and appropriately challenged by pertinent and interesting tasks, questions and activities. Teachers are knowledgeable and adept at developing students with a range of abilities by supporting those who struggle to keep up. Many lessons promote equality and diversity in the way the subjects are taught. In some particularly effective lessons teachers skilfully plan learning activities which meet course requirements and also relate to students' everyday lives. Teachers generally maintain an active dialogue with students to check their learning and promote social inclusion. In the minority of weaker lessons, teachers do not involve students well, there is insufficient checking of learning and teaching is mundane. The assessment of students' work is good and feedback is generally clear. Students' progress is systematically monitored. The environment is not always conducive to good learning in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons.
19. The initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy skills is effective and students who receive additional learning support make good progress. Many students, at all levels, have literacy development needs. The development of literacy skills is not sufficiently well integrated into the curriculum across the college.
20. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students is outstanding. The breadth of courses is extensive and includes a wide range of vocational courses at levels 2 and 3. Students choose from over 50 A- and AS-level courses, 14 advanced and 13 intermediate level vocational courses and an access to higher education programme. The range of level 1 courses is more limited. The college has a lead role in the planning and delivery of the new 14-19 Diplomas at levels 2 and 3. The college has outstanding and highly productive links with schools and community organisations. It responds to employers' needs well. It offers an imaginative alternative Key Stage 4 provision, including a programme for Year 11 students who are new to the borough. Participation rates by students are high on the very wide range of enrichment activities. These enhance students' learning and support their personal growth and development. Students come from diverse backgrounds and the college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Students' contribution to the college and wider community is outstanding. Students are safe and make good progress towards achieving economic well-being.
21. Guidance and support are good. Initial advice and guidance are impartial and help students to make informed decisions about courses. Well planned induction arrangements ensure that students settle quickly into the college and their courses. The tutorial and pastoral curriculum is well structured and good. The college embraces the principles of the Every Child Matters themes and promotes the five outcomes through its pastoral curriculum. Tutors follow a well designed college-wide programme with common lesson plans and good learning

materials. Tutorials provide students with good advice on a range of topics including, for example, being healthy, staying safe, and money management. Progress reviews set students agreed targets for improvement. However, the targets set are sometimes bland, generic and not sufficiently specific. The college gathers insufficient evidence to reliably evaluate the consistency and quality of tutorials and it does not monitor the impact of tutorial outcomes. Feedback from student questionnaires is not used coherently. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and support is provided promptly. Welfare and support services are good. Careers education and guidance are well planned. Students applying to university are very well supported.

Leadership and management Good: Grade 2

*Contributory grade:*

*Equality of opportunity* *Good: grade 2*

22. Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership by the principal, supported by managers at all levels, has renewed the emphasis on a set of shared goals. These goals are focused on working to high standards, having shared responsibility and ensuring highly effective teamwork. Recent interventions have raised the success rate more quickly than the national rate of improvement. The college has a strong inclusive ethos. Clear values that are supported by staff underpin all of the college's work.
23. Success rates are satisfactory and are improving for full-time students aged 16 to 18, who constitute the bulk of the college's enrolments. Teaching and learning are good. The college is committed to improving the quality of learning. A well devised system of lesson observations is implemented throughout the college. Morale is high and staff enjoy working at the college.
24. Communication with staff and students is good. The principal has consulted widely on the new curriculum vision. This has engaged staff well. Collaborative partnership working with a wide range of partners and stakeholders is extremely productive. The college is a key partner in the culture-led regeneration of Stratford. It is presently leading on the development of a number of new 14-19 Diplomas.
25. The governance of the college is good. Governors are supportive and challenging and have high expectations of staff and students. They bring a wide range of expertise to their roles and monitor the college's performance effectively. They are well briefed. They set a clear strategic direction for the college but have not reviewed the key strategic objectives on an annual basis.
26. The quality assurance process has been revised and is now more rigorous. Thorough analysis of student data, including participation, retention, and performance of particular groups, is undertaken across the college. The annual performance review focuses on underperforming courses, some of which are removed from the college if they fail to meet the standards expected. Self-

assessment at curriculum level is sometimes insufficiently evaluative and does not always contain measurable targets for improvement. Cross-college processes for support services are not systematically evaluated.

27. Learning resources for students are good. Teachers are well qualified and effectively supported. The college actively encourages all staff to undertake professional development. The induction process for new staff is good. The college's accommodation is well maintained and significant investment has been undertaken to provide more study spaces, IT resources and a new arts block. The college has invested in the Stratford Circus, an impressive arts centre. The college's financial position is very strong and resources are used efficiently. Enrolment targets are met or exceeded for students aged 16 to 18. The college provides satisfactory value for money.
  
28. Equality of opportunity is good. The college has responded satisfactorily to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The single equalities policy and child protection procedures are appropriate. The needs of vulnerable students are dealt with sympathetically. All staff and governors have received training on the safeguarding of young people. The college environment is diverse and harmonious. Staff and students are committed to equal opportunities and managers pay close attention to the success rates of different minority ethnic groups of students. The college actively promotes a positive attitude to equal opportunities through the curriculum and through the celebration of a range of religious festivals and events.

## Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 long qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, 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
All Long - Level 1	05/06	82	74	68	6	40	60	51	9
	06/07	117	62	69	-7	107	42	55	-13
	07/08	294	43			53	30		
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	05/06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other	05/06	82	74	68	6	40	60	51	9
	06/07	117	62	69	-7	107	42	55	-13
	07/08	294	44			53	28		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 long qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, 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
All Long - Level 2	05/06	1,250	80	81	-1	143	66	65	1
	06/07	1,203	80	83	-3	128	59	68	-9
	07/08	1,079	84			113	59		
GCSEs	05/06	790	79	83	-4	90	64	...	...
	06/07	774	78	85	-7	108	61	...	...
	07/08	654	82			83	60	...	...
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	130	88	82	6	...	...	...	...
	06/07	39	62			...	...	...	...
	07/08	29	83	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	05/06	3	100	...	...	18	67	...	...
	06/07	1	100	...	...	16	56	...	...
	07/08	3	0			20	65	...	...
Other	05/06	327	77	74	3	35	69	...	...
	06/07	389	86	77	9	4	0	...	...
	07/08	393	89			10	40	...	...

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 long qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, 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
All Long - Level 3	05/06	3,219	78	78	0	75	67	73	-6
	06/07	3,595	75	80	-5	111	47	72	-25
	07/08	3,435	81			65	75		
A/A2 Levels	05/06	908	91	91	0	10	90	...	...
	06/07	1,117	91	92	-1	21	52	...	...
	07/08	1,135	92			14	93	...	...
AS Levels	05/06	1,853	70	72	-2	18	78	...	...
	06/07	2,023	66	75	-9	10	70	...	...
	07/08	1,643	72			9	89	...	...
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	178	94	73	21	16	100	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	05/06	...	...	...	...	24	42	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	26	65	...	...
	07/08	1	100	...	...	13	54	...	...
Other	05/06	280	82	71	11	7	14	...	...
	06/07	455	79	72	7	54	31	...	...
	07/08	656	91			29	72	...	...