

Cadbury Sixth Form College

Sixth form college

Inspection dates		16 - 19 October 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This college requires improvement because:

- Too many students underperform at AS level with wide variations in performance across subjects. Pass rates in all qualifications, although increasing, are below average and not enough students achieve high grades.
- Gaps in achievement between a few groups of students are not closing quickly enough. Female students outperform male students to a greater degree than nationally.
- Teaching and learning are not consistently good. Students are insufficiently engaged and unchallenged in some AS-level lessons and support to help them learn independently is not consistently effective enough.
- Managers' use of quality assurance arrangements to ensure a consistently high quality of provision lacks rigour. Managers' checks on the success of actions are insufficiently frequent and lack thoroughness.

This college has the following strengths:

- A harmonious and productive working environment which includes a highly diverse student population and which students appreciate and enjoy.
- Information and learning technology are used well to support learning.
- A high number of students stay on until the end of one-year courses.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Reduce gaps in achievement between the few underperforming groups and the average college success rate. Increase the analysis of the factors that contribute to the groups' underperformance. Develop sharply focused actions to ensure that gaps close rapidly.
- Help students to make the transition from school to sixth form by supporting them to develop independent learning skills. Ensure that teachers use strategies that promote and develop self-directed study but also that teachers support students' learning by checking regularly that their knowledge and understanding of topics are being consolidated.
- Promote high levels of challenge in all learning activities by increasing teachers' expectations of students' rate of progress. Encourage teachers to use their subject expertise and vitality to inspire students to be ambitious and become passionate about their subjects.
- Develop teachers' skills in ensuring that lessons start crisply using clear objectives that are concentrated on making sure that students make the maximum progress.
- Emphasise to students the importance of keeping well-ordered, neat and detailed note-files; ensure teachers promote such good practice by checking students' notes regularly and by taking supportive action where needed.
- Find ways of increasing the uptake of additional learning support amongst students who are identified as needing this but who decline to accept the support offered.
- Develop the quality of subject teachers' input into tutorial records so that this is timely and supports the provision of helpful and sharply focused learning plans for students.
- Increase the emphasis on the development of students' employability skills, particularly by increasing students' work experience and implementing the literacy strategy.
- Improve the coherence and effectiveness of systems for monitoring of students' progress so that students at risk of underperforming are promptly and more easily identified.
- Strengthen quality assurance of teaching and learning by ensuring that action points identified through lesson observations are followed up promptly and monitored closely. Make a strong link between these actions and performance management objectives for individual teachers.
- Improve the effectiveness of improvement plans by insisting that managers at all levels take full accountability for checking progress with actions frequently and rigorously. Make sure that the accompanying targets set have clear and specific success criteria against which to measure progress.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Students' success rates increased between 2009/10 and 2011/12 including recovering from a marked decline in 2010/11. Most students who enrolled on courses in 2011/12 completed them compared to a below average proportion in the previous year. The increase in students' pass rates over the previous three year period is small and rates are just below average.
- Success rates for A-level qualifications in 2011/12 are high but rates are average at AS level. Achievement of high grades for both qualification types, although improving over time, is below average, particularly for AS-level qualifications. In part, this reflects students' often slightly below average prior attainment, however, some teachers' insufficiently high expectations of students are also a contributory factor.

- Students' progress compared to their starting points at A level is more consistent across subjects than at AS level, where there are wide variations across subjects. Overall, most A-level students make expected progress but only exceed expected progress in a few subjects. Too many students underperform at AS level and have to catch up in their second year.
- A small but increasing number of students take small-sized vocational qualifications as part of their programme of study. Success rates on these courses increased markedly in 2011/12 and are high. The very few students who resit GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics achieve below average A* to C grades.
- Students' rate of attendance is increasing and is mostly at an acceptable level. However, managers and teachers allow too much slippage in attendance in the summer term. A minority of students are unpunctual to lessons, a factor that sometimes contributes to a lacklustre start to lessons.
- Inequality between the achievements of different groups of students is declining as gaps in achievement between most are closing. However, the gap between the success rate for students of mixed White/Black Caribbean heritage and the success rate for the college is widening. The achievement gap for students of Asian/Pakistani heritage is not closing sufficiently quickly. Female students have outperformed male students by a wider margin than nationally for several years.
- Up until 2012/13, too few students progressed from AS-level to A-level study. Of students who completed their first year of study in 2011, only two-thirds carried on to a second year; however, in 2012/13, nearly three-quarters of first year students have continued with their studies. Around three-quarters of students secure higher education places year-on-year; information about the destinations of other students is not formally collected.
- Students' personal and social development is largely good. Teachers' focus on developing students' confidence and their ability to work together productively is mostly successful. Many students make good use of the opportunities provided to broaden their horizons, for example, through visits and field trips and involvement in Birmingham Youth Parliament.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
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- The quality of teaching and learning is uneven across subjects, reflecting the variability in outcomes, particularly across the AS-level subjects. The style of teaching often matches the needs of A-level students better than those of AS-level students. Teachers' strategies do not support students fully as they make the transition from school to sixth form, in part because of insufficient development of independent learning skills.
- Little of the teaching and learning is outstanding and a substantial minority requires improvement. Where the teaching is good, lessons are carefully planned, include an appropriate variety of activity, sufficient challenge and all the students learn well. Teachers in these lessons often make good use of information and learning technology and give strong attention to the development of technical terms.
- Where improvement is required, teachers are insufficiently demanding of students and their progress is, at best, satisfactory. The start of lessons sometimes lacks sufficient purpose and not enough attention is given by the teacher to the ongoing assessment of learning. Students are often allowed to answer questions superficially. Too much time is spent on note taking and students' skills in this are sometimes underdeveloped and the filing of notes haphazard.
- Assessment of coursework is mostly good and scheduled regularly. Set work is usually marked helpfully and returned promptly. A good feature in some subjects is the posting on the intranet of a summary of the quality of the work produced in specific assignments. Appropriate attention is given to the development of language and spelling.
- The majority of teachers monitor individual student's progress increasingly carefully making good use of target and current working grades to challenge students to make better progress.

Subject support is often good. Students benefit from regular contact with their teachers, in part through the use of workshop time, recently introduced, which provides extra time for individual support and catch-up activities.

- The monitoring of students' progress across the entirety of their programme requires improvement because some summary reports of students' progress and their learning plans are either superficial or absent. This limits the overview that can be made and prevents necessary remedial action being put in place promptly. Attendance is managed robustly.
- Additional learning support provided for students who need it is good and is valued by them. Students receiving support achieve success rates which are higher than other students at AS level. However, the proportion of students who decline support when it is deemed that they need it, although reducing, is too high.
- Students benefit from a suitable range of subject enrichment. Subject 'immersion' weeks are used well to foster deeper subject understanding. A few wider aspects of a student's programme, such as the development of employability skills, are underdeveloped. A programme of work experience is not offered. The implementation of the literacy development policy is patchy.
- Initial advice and guidance are effective at ensuring students choose subjects which suit their aptitudes and aspirations. Students speak highly of this and, where they transfer from one subject to another, of the additional support they receive. Support for students when they apply to university is appropriate. Careers advice and guidance for employment is limited to those students who do not apply to university.
- Students benefit from successful promotion of equality and diversity. Equality and diversity are considered during induction, in tutorials and developed in cross-college activities. Most subjects use opportunities to promote them during the teaching. Lessons observed supported the judgement that equality and diversity are promoted well.

Science

Learning programmes for 16-18

Good

- Teaching and learning are good for the large majority of science lessons which matches the improving and often good outcomes in most subjects. Teachers are highly qualified with good specialist knowledge. They use questions intelligently to check the progress of students and challenge them to think more deeply.
- The few less effective lessons are too teacher-led with long periods of teachers talking and note-taking. This lack of variation in activity results in students becoming bored and not concentrating fully. The impact of this style of teaching is that students do not develop quickly as independent learners and do not always make sufficient progress at AS level, particularly in physics.
- Teachers use timed activities effectively to keep students focused and motivated. Animation and other learning resources keep students on-task and make lessons interesting. For example, the Greenhouse Effect was illustrated clearly by an animation that consolidated students' understanding.
- Students' practical laboratory skills are developed well through a wide range of science practical work. They have a clear understanding of and implement correct health and safety requirements. Teachers are supported well by science technicians which helps to ensure that practicals run smoothly.
- Students are highly motivated to learn and work well with each other. They enjoy science lessons and attendance is high. A high proportion of science students enter higher education. However, too few students progress from AS to to take the full A level.

- The virtual learning environment provides a range of useful resources which students appreciate. A significant proportion of AS-level students struggle to learn well independently, but these skills are well-developed in A-level students.
- The English and mathematics skills of students are developed well during lessons. Teachers extend students' use of correct scientific terminology and increase the precision of their mathematical skills.
- Students receive good support outside of lessons. Additional workshops provide help to students struggling to understand specific topics. Teachers spend significant time helping students to understand difficult concepts and give additional work to stretch them further. Tutors meet with students to check their progress towards targets regularly, but these targets are often too general and insufficiently subject-specific.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well by posters and wall displays, but resulting themes are not always discussed sufficiently in lessons.
- The assessment of learning is good. Teachers use previous examination papers appropriately to reinforce key learning points and to help students to develop good examination techniques. Students answering incorrectly are encouraged sensitively by teachers to think more deeply to make a correct response.
- Students often mark each other's work during lessons, thus learning the importance of keeping answers relevant to the question and developing further their own understanding and knowledge. Assessed work is marked regularly and the work is returned to students promptly with useful comments on how to improve. Spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes are corrected.

Social sciences including psychology

Learning programmes for 16-18

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning are most effective at A level which matches the better outcomes in these qualifications. At AS level, more variation in the effectiveness of teaching and learning exists which is borne out in the variable outcomes across subjects.
- Although much teaching contains good features, there is little that is exciting or inspiring. Teaching is generally well-planned, interesting and includes variety to meet different learning preferences. Resources, including social media, Youtube, video and music are used well to support learning. For example, in a lively sociology lesson the teacher used the words of a 'pop' song to develop students' understanding of a particular theory.
- Course planning and the use of workbooks particularly in sociology and psychology enable students to make progressive steps in their learning. In several lessons and across different subjects, teachers use questioning techniques, quizzes, discussion, paired and group work to engage students in learning. However, in some lessons, questioning is too superficial and not probing, and students are not required to develop answers.
- Although teaching has many good features, too many lessons have insufficiently crisp starts. In some lessons, when students have completed work set, there are too few extension tasks and activities to stretch them. In too many lessons, stretch and challenge are insufficient and, overall, students are not pushed to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers are mostly well-qualified and experienced in their subject and use their expertise well to benefit students. Teachers ensure that at A level their students are well prepared to progress in social sciences. Students develop a sound understanding of, and ability to apply, social science theory and concepts and they develop appropriate analytical and evaluation skills.

- Assessment is mostly good. Work is set and marked regularly and students know what they need to do to improve. They speak highly of revision booklets provided in psychology which have useful exam tips and questions. However, in a small minority of cases, comments on students' written work are too brief.
- Teachers and students make good use of information and learning technology and students are encouraged to use self-directed study outside of the classroom. Teachers are setting more homework this year to help develop independent learning skills and to prepare students for the next step.
- A number of enrichment activities such as visits and field work contribute to the development of students' personal and social skills. Appropriate attention is paid to students' English, mathematical and functional skills. Attendance is generally good, but too many students arrive late at lessons.
- Students receive good care, guidance and support, including additional learning support. Curriculum workshop sessions introduced this year are beginning to help students to become more successful learners. Students work towards target grades and their progress is monitored regularly. They have learning plans which identify targets but these are not always useful or specific enough nor is their achievement monitored.
- Students from a range of ethnic backgrounds work well together and learn from each other. Working relationships in lessons are pleasant, friendly and cooperative. Equality and diversity themes are addressed directly and integrated into a number of learning topics.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Managers have clear and appropriate strategic objectives to improve outcomes, raise the quality of teaching and learning and to maintain student numbers. Longer term targets for improvement are realistic at subject and department level and, for the most part, were met in 2011/12. The quality improvement plan is focused closely on actions to improve students' experience, and to give them a greater voice in the college.
- Managers have ensured recovery from a significant decline in outcomes in 2010/11. Success rates increased in 2011/12; students' absence is more robustly challenged and several underperforming subject areas show a marked improvement. Most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have improved, although a few remain as areas of concern.
- Managers have initiated a number of actions successfully to help students to work independently; these include effective use of information and learning technology, homework clubs and catch-up sessions that have increased greatly the amount of homework and independent study completed by students. Teachers increasingly use more student-centred classroom activities and weak teaching has been largely eliminated.
- Annual lesson observations outline areas of strength and for development largely accurately. However, grades are often overgenerous because observers focus too often on teaching rather than learning. Methods to ensure that individual teacher's development points are checked at the next observation are not consistently implemented.
- Performance reviews of staff focus on improving students' outcomes and curriculum development to meet students' needs, but not sufficiently on improving teaching and learning. Too little mention is made of development points arising out of lesson observations as part of reviews.
- A systematic approach to the overall monitoring of students' progress is not yet securely in place. Various systems are used which collate data at different levels of management but these lack coherence as a whole. The newly revised management structure clarifies roles and responsibilities in this respect but is not yet fully effective.

- Self-assessment uses appropriate data, including the views of students and their carers or parents but the reports are insufficiently evaluative. Improvement plans do not contain sufficient short term targets, nor do managers monitor targets frequently enough to assess and evaluate accurately the rate of progress and the impact on improving students' learning.
- Governors know the college well and provide appropriate challenge. They receive accurate data on outcomes at appropriate times, and receive regular reports on progress and value-added measures. The quality committee has sufficient expertise in educational matters to interrogate the data effectively.
- The curriculum meets the needs of students by offering small-sized vocational qualifications that complement and extend the predominantly AS- and A-level provision and by having a GCSE pathway as an entry to AS level. Managers have co-located subject areas with better teaching and learning with those with less effective practice to encourage the sharing of innovative ideas.
- In lessons and around the college, inspectors saw a high degree of racial harmony and integration among the diverse student population. Equality and diversity are promoted well through a variety of student groups and activities. Success rates for all groups have increased, and gaps in achievement between most groups are closing. Statutory requirements for safeguarding students and for health and safety are met.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

College name: Cadbury Sixth Form College

Inspection grades are based on a college's performance:									
1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	3		3						
Outcomes for learners	3		3						
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3		3						
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3		3						

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Science	2
Social Sciences	3
Psychology	3

College details

Cadbury Sixth Form College	
Type of college	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16-18
Approximate number of all students over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1,119
	Part-time: 32
Principal	Mr Jeremy Rogers
Date of previous inspection	November 2009
Website address	www.cadcol.ac.uk

College information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of students (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	N/A	N/A	37	N/A	965	5	N/A	N/A
Part-time	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	7	0	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Additional socio-economic information

The college is small-sized and based on one main site in Kings Norton, approximately six miles south-west of the city centre. Almost all of the students are aged 16 to 18 and live in Birmingham. The student population mirrors the ethnic diversity in the city with approximately a third of students of White heritage, a third of Asian heritage and one fifth of Black heritage. Nearly two-thirds of students come from low income households. The college has partnership arrangements with nine schools. Students' prior attainment on entry to the college is slightly below the average for sixth form colleges. The curriculum is based on A- and AS-level qualifications with new small provision of a GCSE-based course.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Philippa Francis HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the vice principal as nominee, carried out the inspection at short notice. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on students' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews to gather the views of students; these views are reflected in the report. Inspectors observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the college's provision. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the provision and graded the subjects as listed in the report.

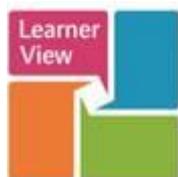
What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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