

King Edward VI College Nuneaton

Sixth form college

Inspection dates		10–13 December 2013
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 do not successfully complete their AS-level qualifications and males in particular under achieve.
- A significant minority of students do not make expected progress based upon their prior attainment.
- Too much teaching requires improvement and not enough is outstanding.
- Teachers' assessment of learning does not always provide students with sufficient guidance on how much progress they are making.
- Teachers do not challenge all students sufficiently in lessons to achieve their full potential.
- Leaders and managers have not secured the consistent improvements to teaching, learning and assessment needed to raise students' outcomes rapidly enough.

This college has the following strengths:

- Students develop their personal and social skills with confidence through targeted tutorials and a variety of enrichment activities.
- Teachers and tutors guide the large numbers of students applying to university very well and consequently the majority of students secure a place.
- Committed and dedicated staff provide good pastoral and academic support.
- Quality assurance processes are rigorous. Leaders and managers now have a much sharper focus upon what needs improving and the strategies required to secure these improvements.
- Leaders and managers have implemented robust management of staff performance that is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in some key curriculum areas.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the college's range of learning programmes is suitable for all students and the initial advice and guidance they receive enables them to enrol onto courses on which they can succeed.
- Improve the frequency of good and outstanding teaching through targeted staff training and individual support.
- Increase the variety and effectiveness of techniques that teachers use to assess learning so all students know how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure teachers plan all lessons sufficiently well to meet the needs of each student and to challenge them to fulfil their potential.
- Ensure that the standards and rigour that have led to improvements in some curriculum areas have consistently positive impact across the whole college provision.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- The number of students gaining their qualifications has increased steadily over the last three years and is now broadly in-line with similar colleges. The rise in the past year is due to marked increases in achievement rates for the smaller number of students that study on intermediate-level programmes and advanced-level vocational courses. In contrast, the number of students achieving on all other advanced-level courses has remained static, below the rates for similar colleges. Of concern, is the large number of students studying on AS-level courses that do not successfully complete their qualifications.
- Before 2012/13, students' progress relative to their prior attainment had been broadly at expected levels, but it dropped in the last academic year. Students in subject areas with high enrolments do not achieve well enough, for example in psychology A-level and business studies and English language AS-level. A smaller numbers of students are making good or better progress, including health and social care A-level and media studies AS-level.
- The number of students achieving high grades on advanced-level courses has risen over the last three years and, although below national averages, is around the same level as similar colleges. The number achieving A*-C grades on GCSE courses is high. Attendance at lessons is good and students generally arrive on time, ready to learn. Students' work is adequate, but teachers do not provide all students with sufficient challenge to improve their work and achieve their full potential.
- The performance of different groups of students varies significantly. Considerably fewer male students perform as well as female students, both in the number achieving their qualifications and the progress they make. Students who receive additional support with their learning and the small number with disabilities do not achieve as well as other students.
- Students develop very good personal and social skills in their lessons, tutorials and through a wide variety of enrichment activities. Many become student ambassadors and provide effective communications between students and college managers as well as support and guidance for their peers. A programme of voluntary work benefits students, including, work at a local hospice or day-care centre. Tutors support students well in preparing them for their next step after college. A rigorous induction programme ensures that all students begin to develop their independent learning and research skills.

- Managers have developed good partnerships with external organisations that benefit students in a variety of ways. For example, staff encourage students not previously considering higher education to do so by visiting a local university. Employers come to college to promote careers in areas such as accountancy and law and to explain to students looking for employment or an apprenticeship what to expect of the workplace.
- Managers have been very effective in collecting and analysing the destinations of students when they leave college. A large majority progress into higher education, many at universities within the Midlands. Students opt for a wide range of disciplines, the most popular being business, the biological sciences, law and nursing. Of the remaining students, most progress successfully into employment or onto an apprenticeship.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the college. Teachers do provide good and better lessons, but too many require improvement. Teachers are supportive of their students and in the better lessons have high expectations of the students, setting challenging targets to develop their higher thinking and analytical skills. For example, in a philosophy of religion lesson, students discussed complex ideas and made very good progress with conceptually challenging material.
- Planning for learning is of a variable standard and in a large minority of cases, fails to take account of all students to develop their potential fully. In the better lessons, teachers capture students' interest with a variety of interactive activities to help them begin learning independently. For example, in a lively art class for AS-level students they presented and discussed their work and artistic influences with considerable confidence and creativity, while accepting constructive criticism from their peers on how to improve their work further. In too many weaker lessons however, teachers limit students' interest and learning by talking too much.
- Most resources to support learning are good. The majority of students and teachers use the virtual learning environment (VLE) and blogs to enhance and support learning. For example in media, students take greater pride in the standard of their English and presentation knowing their work is to be published. Teachers often use internet video clips as powerful imagery to gain students' attention and develop discussion. In most subjects, students use the VLE and internet well to develop assignment work and personal study through research. In a few areas however, resources on the VLE remain underdeveloped. Students make good use of the study centre and library, and its staff provide highly effective support to learning.
- The quality and application of assessment practice is variable. Assessment is effective in better lessons with teachers directing questioning to test progress and understanding and challenging students to develop their analytical skills. Within these lessons, teachers annotate written assessment well and give guidance that enables students to make progress. In weaker lessons, assessment is often insufficiently robust to support learning, with teachers asking open questions that do not identify the progress individual students are making, or directed questions that fail to press students for more analytical answers. In these lessons, teachers do not sufficiently check learning and their feedback on written assessments lacks detail.
- In most lessons, teachers develop students' use of English well through discussion and debate, ensuring they use the correct subject terminology and pronunciation. The correction of grammar, spelling and punctuation in students' written work is, however, inconsistent. Teachers do not widely promote the use and development of mathematics outside of subjects where it naturally occurs.
- Students benefit from early information, advice and guidance, which are effective in placing the majority of them on a suitable programme of study. The recently improved initial assessment

process provides detailed information about students and helps to ensure all receive the correct level of support and guidance.

- Students receive good support for their learning. Personal tutors are highly effective in supporting students and this reflects in improving retention, attendance and punctuality. Students, tutors and teachers are adept at using the newly introduced electronic system to provide comprehensive details of individual students and to monitor progress. Teachers identify early students at risk of underperformance and provide them with clear actions on how to improve. Targets and actions however, set by a minority of subject teachers, are less helpful in supporting students to achieve and develop. Students with physical and educational needs receive very high levels of tailored support to enable them to progress and study.
- Opportunities for students to enrich their studies are good across the college and within most subject areas. Students participate well in a wide variety of activities such as trips to the Edinburgh Film Festival and Covent Garden, classes with guest speakers, a range of sporting and volunteering opportunities and visits to local and national employers.
- Planning covers the promotion of equality and diversity and teachers develop the topic well in better lessons. For example, in an AS-level photography class students engaged in a passionate debate on the ethical use of imagery to represent women in advertising. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not always explore fully opportunities to promote and develop equality and diversity.

Mathematics and statistics

16-19 study programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Managers have recruited all of the teaching staff recently and these teachers bring fresh impetus to increasing the number of students who successfully achieve their qualifications where historically achievement rates have been low.
- Teachers have high expectations of all students and they support and challenge them well to do their best. Students enjoy learning mathematics. In most lessons, teachers motivate students to work hard and persist in achieving their goals. For example, in a GCSE class where students were repeating work that had caused them difficulty at school, teachers skilfully ensured that students developed the confidence to succeed.
- In the majority of better lessons teachers plan well, using a range of imaginative activities that capture students’ interest. Teachers’ planning builds upon prior learning and challenges all students to develop their mathematical skills. For example, in an A-level class students worked on a range of stimulating problems on the number of permutations of a four-character password depending on whether they were very confident, confident or unsure of the concept. In a very few lessons, teachers do not plan a suitable range of activities to ensure that all students are able to make sufficient progress.
- Teachers use resources confidently, including the digital whiteboard, graphical calculators, video clips and practical activities, to illustrate difficult concepts very well for students. For example, teachers used mini whiteboards to help students with their understanding and use of mathematical calculations and to demonstrate their individual progress. Students consolidate and enhance their learning independently, both at college and at home, using the good range of resources available on the VLE which includes the teachers’ presentations, graph-drawing software and a comprehensive bank of examination papers and worksheets.
- Teachers encourage students to work together to develop their independent learning skills. Students that are more able often support their peers effectively. Students benefit from developing their mathematical thinking and then sharing their ideas with others. For example, in

an A-level lesson students wrote a simplified explanation, for another less able group, of how they would know if an iterative function converged.

- Teachers use questioning well to deepen students' understanding and to assess their progress. They mark students' work carefully, linking feedback to examination criteria and giving helpful advice to students on how they can improve. Teachers do not always follow up on the targets that they set, although students who attend workshops do develop their understanding of concepts that they have previously misunderstood.
- Teachers give students good opportunities to develop their technical language. For example, in a GCSE lesson, students understood the significance of the word 'of' in multiplying fractions. In advanced-level classes, they used appropriate language confidently, including independent when dealing with variables or anomaly and arbitrary when working with data. Teachers reinforce the requirement to spell mathematical terms correctly.
- Students receive good and timely information, advice and guidance that help them to choose the correct course, and to prepare for university or further training. They have a good variety of opportunities to take part in enrichment activities, such as mathematics inspiration talks, the National Mathematics Challenge, where many achieved gold, silver or bronze awards, and an inter-college mathematics tournament.
- Teachers ensure equality of opportunity by monitoring the progress of all individuals and ensuring they each receive the support they need to succeed. The promotion of diversity within lessons requires further development and teachers do not give enough consideration on how to embed diversity into their teaching.

English

16-19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Although achievement rates are broadly in line with similar colleges, too many students do not make the progress expected given their prior attainment. The number of students gaining their qualifications is inconsistent across the different courses. For example, the number of students achieving grade A*-C in GCSE English is high, but the number passing AS English language is too low.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers use their knowledge and enthusiasm to inspire students. Teachers skilfully use questioning to ensure that students deepen their understanding and that they participate fully, challenging and supporting each other. Students work well collaboratively and are able to express themselves, both orally and in writing, with fluency and subtlety. For example, in a session on *The Ancient Mariner*, students argued passionately for different interpretations of the poem and were able to justify their readings with coherent and credible arguments.
- In less effective lessons, teachers plan activities that are either too rushed, so that students are not fully benefitting from the tasks set, or too slow, so that students do not maintain their interest. Students work on the same task resulting in them receiving insufficient challenge. Teachers do not direct their questions often enough to individuals. Consequently, the less confident do not respond and discussions are too dependent on the teachers' contributions. Teachers do not routinely check students' learning within lessons.
- Teachers use a wide range of useful resources well to stimulate students' interest, including visual imagery such as video clips. In one lesson, students watched a short extract from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* to compare with their study text *Frankenstein* and this stimulated a lively discussion on the language used to describe monsters. Teachers use the VLE and blogs to

provide valuable additional resources to support students, but they do not always ensure that students gain maximum benefit from them.

- The quality of teachers' feedback is variable. Teachers carefully mark most advanced-level work and include useful advice on how to improve, but occasionally the advice is not sufficient to help students achieve the higher grades. Teachers are less thorough in their marking at GCSE level. They do not always identify students' spelling and punctuation errors, which limits the students' opportunities to improve in these areas.
- Teachers support most students well with their learning and students improve their understanding and confidence by attending workshops. Teachers however, do not ensure that less motivated students take full advantage of this offer. Students receive good guidance from teachers at enrolment to help them to make an appropriate choice between the different English courses. Teachers provide effective advice to support those students applying to study English at university.
- Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities including a creative writing club and visits to develop their understanding of the contextual background to texts. For example, students studying Macbeth had the play brought to life by a visit to the Globe theatre and others had a successful visit to Birmingham University for a study day on the Gothic in literature.
- Students develop a good understanding of equality and diversity issues through the choice of texts such as *The Kite Runner* which enabled them to discuss the difficulties faced by refugees. In an A-level English language lesson, an exploration of the social influences on language enabled the teacher to include a discussion of Polari, the language of gay men in the nineteen sixties, and the way that attitudes to homosexuality have changed over the past fifty years.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors are firmly committed to providing a high standard of education and have an ambitious vision for the college. They have made substantial progress on ensuring all staff share this vision. Since the last inspection, the principal and senior management team have changed the college's culture to ensure a much sharper focus on all students having a positive experience and succeeding with their courses. The pace of change has been such that evidence of sustained impact is insufficient and key aspects of the provision still require improvement.
- Governors provide a good range of experience and skills. They know the college well and challenge the senior team by carefully evaluating the strategies to improve the performance of students and the quality of teaching. Senior managers have restructured curriculum management and the approach to ensuring that all staff are accountable for their work is now much more consistent. The introduction of new software this year enables managers to identify causes of concern more easily. Curriculum managers receive good support from senior managers.
- Managers make good use of professional development to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. They have created advanced practitioner posts to support a well-planned programme of staff development. Newly qualified staff benefit from a well-structured induction and support programme. It is too early to judge the impact of these changes. Inspectors found that too few lessons were outstanding and too many require improvement.
- A rigorous approach to management of staff performance uses a comprehensive appraisal system to identify specific development targets for staff. The strong emphasis on achieving these targets is leading to improvements. Teachers are well qualified in their subject area and all are qualified teachers or working towards a teaching qualification. Resources are good although the effectiveness with which teachers use technology to support learning is not consistent across the college.

- Quality improvement processes are now more rigorous including self-assessment reports which make use of increasingly accurate assessment of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors were in broad agreement with the grades of college observers during inspection. Most self-assessment is accurate although in mathematics, managers do not give sufficient attention to low value-added scores or differences in achievement by male and female students. Self-assessment of the English provision was mostly accurate. Inspectors agreed with the college's overall grades for main aspects of provision.
- All teachers receive an observation as part of a comprehensive annual check on quality within each curriculum area and the subsequent reports lead to well-targeted plans to improve their performance. Managers identify underperforming courses and analyse the contributory factors thoroughly. Actions to resolve shortcomings in some curriculum areas have been effective, for example in mathematics.
- Within the context of its mission, which focuses on advanced level education with a strong emphasis upon the academic curriculum, the college offers a good range of provision, including a very wide choice of GCE AS-level and A-level subjects. Since the last inspection, managers have successfully introduced a range of advanced vocational courses enabling prospective students to follow different programmes, including one that combines academic and vocational elements. The range of vocational provision however, is not broad enough. Good working relationships with local universities help students move to higher-education courses.
- The college is inclusive and its managers and staff promote equality and diversity well. They are well aware of any achievement gaps and have been successful in closing some in previous years. Managers and staff make good use of student ambassadors to promote equality and diversity. For example, the ambassadors have promoted respect for different cultural and faith views and they organise events including one for the better understanding of different sexual outlooks. Most staff have received recent equality and diversity training.
- The college meets its statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding. Managers and staff provide a safe environment for students and the completion of a new building in 2014 will enable access to the whole college to be in one location. Students feel safe and managers deal promptly and effectively with the very few incidents of bullying. Very effective liaison with external agencies enables students to receive good support when their safety outside college is threatened. All staff and governors have received training on safeguarding and good arrangements are in place to ensure that all attend refresher courses.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

King Edward VI College, Nuneaton

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	16-19 study programmes
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
Mathematics and Statistics	2
English	3

Provider details

Type of provider	Sixth form college							
Age range of learners	16-18							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1,067							
	Part-time: 27							
Principal/CEO	Dr Esther Maughan							
Date of previous inspection	October 2010							
Website address	www.kecnuneaton.ac.uk							
Provider 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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1085	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	26	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		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		
Number of learners aged 14-16	3							
Full-time	3							
Part-time	0							
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							

Contextual information

Nuneaton is a large town in north Warwickshire. Many of the town's residents commute to the surrounding cities for work including Coventry and Birmingham. The town has large electronics and distribution industries. Unemployment in the area is around the United Kingdom average although lower than the nearby West Midlands. The number of young people in north Warwickshire gaining five or more A*-C grades in GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, is slightly lower than the England average and the number of adults educated to at least advanced-level is well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Stewart Jackson HMI
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Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Vice Principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with 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, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the college. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

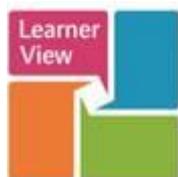
What inspection judgements mean

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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