

Cadbury Sixth Form College

Sixth-form college

Inspection dates

4–6 October 2016

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Good	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Most students do not make the progress they are capable of, given their entry qualifications.
- Not enough students have access to work placements or appropriate work-related activities as part of their study programme.
- Targets set in students' individual learning plans and feedback on students' work are too often not detailed enough to help students to make rapid progress in their learning.
- Weak target-setting in performance management at every level of the college has slowed the pace of improvement in teaching and learning and in outcomes across the college.
- Action plans for teachers following observations of teaching and learning do not focus sufficiently on evaluating students' progress.
- Governors' improving levels of challenge have failed to secure sufficiently rapid improvement in the quality of provision across the college.

The provider has the following strengths

- Managers have created a safe, secure and inclusive environment where students feel supported and cared for.
- The recent and effective restructure of the senior leadership team is beginning to tackle many of the weaknesses in provision and drive improvements forward.
- Students have a good understanding of the wider issues of living in modern Britain, including the dangers of extremism and radicalisation as a result of managers' relentless and successful implementation of the 'Prevent' duty agenda.
- Very good support for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to achieve well.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Cadbury Sixth Form College is a small college on a single site in Kings Norton, which is approximately six miles to the south-west of Birmingham city centre. Almost all of its students are aged 16 to 18. The student population contains a greater proportion of minority ethnic students than is the case in the local population.
- Nearly two thirds of students come from low-income households. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, in Birmingham is lower than the national average. Students' prior attainment on entry to the college is slightly below the average for sixth-form colleges.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - developing a whole-college approach to target-setting; share it with all staff and students so that targets are developed consistently well and with sufficient depth to help students to progress according to their potential
 - ensuring that the good practice that exists in some subjects of providing effective written feedback is shared across all subjects
 - ensuring that observations of teaching, learning and assessment focus on the effectiveness of teachers' planning to meet the different needs of students and that they highlight the progress students make in relation to their learning goals.
- Ensure that managers develop links with local businesses and industries, so that students benefit from access to work placements or work experience.
- Set clear targets within the quality improvement plans so that managers can monitor progress regularly to bring about rapid improvement.
- Introduce rigorous performance management processes and an effective appraisal system so that all members of staff have clearly defined targets. Ensure that staff have access to appropriate training and development to help them improve their practice.
- Ensure that governors have access to detailed information on the quality of teaching and on the progress that learners are making so that they are able to support and challenge leaders and managers to make rapid improvements in the performance of the college.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Governors', senior leaders' and managers' actions have not led to high standards across the college. Most students do not make the progress they are capable of and teaching, learning and assessment are not yet consistently good.
- The principal and governors have implemented significant changes to the structure of the senior management team, following a decline in performance in the previous academic year. The principal and his senior management team have very recently revised strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning and improve outcomes for learners. However, it is too early to gauge the impact of many of these changes.
- Managers have not addressed fully many of the recommendations from the previous inspection, such as targeted action to improve underperforming courses, the development of a high-quality programme of work experience and the careful monitoring of students' destinations.
- Performance management requires improvement. The majority of targets set in annual appraisals are superficial, very brief and fail to identify clearly what aspects of staff performance require further development. Additionally, managers do not routinely set specific or challenging targets following observations of teaching and learning. Consequently, managers do not record areas of improvement identified through observations in performance management documents and do not link them to a programme of continuing professional development. As a result, many teachers are unaware of how to improve their teaching practice.
- While managers have devised a process of internal review and quality assurance of underperforming courses that is fit for purpose, it does not engage staff sufficiently in purposeful discussions to bring about all the necessary developments required to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Weak target-setting in departmental improvement plans contributes to the lack of prompt improvement.
- Managers' implementation of the English and mathematics strategy has been too slow. Managers' desire to improve the support for English and mathematics through the 'study plus' initiative is not yet resulting in students extending their skills sufficiently in these subjects.
- Leaders have developed very effective working relationships with local community groups, employers and advisory bodies. These bodies advise college managers to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to regional priorities and that support services are appropriate and up to date. To better respond to the needs of students enrolling at the college, managers are expanding the vocational programme offer at both level 2 and level 3.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that the self-assessment process involves all staff; however, the report is not always accurate. For example, the report did not give sufficient weighting to areas for improvement such as weak target-setting in both quality improvement documents and in students' individual learning plans (ILPs). Managers' evaluations in too many instances are overly descriptive and fail to make clear judgements that can form the basis of action plans to improve students' progress.

- For example, the report acknowledges the weak value-added data, but makes no connection between the slow progress that students make and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which the report judged as good. As a result, improving aspects of teaching, learning and assessment do not feature strongly enough in college action plans.
- Leaders and managers promote the importance of understanding the diversity of modern Britain and the values of respect and tolerance successfully. Managers are effective in ensuring that all students have good access to resources and equipment so that they do not experience any disadvantage.

The governance of the provider

- The governing body is well qualified and experienced and governors have the skills to oversee the performance of the college. Their oversight of finances and resources is effective.
- Governors receive regular reports on the performance of the college and have become more effective in providing suitable challenge to senior managers. However, this challenge has not brought about sufficient improvement in students' achievements or progress.
- Governors have a very good understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and they have received good training in relation to their child protection duties and the prevention of extremism and radicalisation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers give safeguarding a high priority. They have effective policies and procedures in place to ensure that students are safe. Managers have particularly strong systems in place to ensure that children who are looked after and recent care leavers have effective support in their transition into the college environment.
- Designated safeguarding and welfare support staff receive the appropriate level of training on a regular basis. They work very effectively with a range of external partners to respond swiftly to individual cases as they arise. The extensive range of partners provides awareness-raising of issues prevalent in local communities on a regular basis.
- Managers have implemented a very effective programme of development for staff and students on the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism through a very effective working relationship with the West Midlands 'Prevent' duty coordinator, which has resulted in a good awareness and understanding of these issues throughout the college.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Most students at the college are studying programmes at level 3. The majority are taking academic qualifications at AS level or A level, with a few taking vocational qualifications, and a quarter of students taking a mixture of both. Seventy-four students are currently taking GCSEs in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently good across all subjects. In too many subjects, students do not make the progress of which they are capable. The process of target-setting for students lacks sufficient detail and challenge to have a significant and positive impact on the quality of learning. While most teachers set target grades and improvement actions with their students, these frequently lack precision. Only in a few instances do teachers refer to specific skills or knowledge development and agree on expected outcomes and timescales. Targets in individual learning plans do not make sufficient reference to the development of numeracy and literacy skills.
- In the previous academic year, the information, advice and guidance students received lacked rigour and managers allowed too many students to enrol onto unsuitable courses. As a result, too many students, particularly those studying AS levels, BTEC certificates and the level 2 programmes, did not successfully complete their qualifications. In the current year, managers have addressed this by setting more demanding entry criteria. However, it is too early to see an impact on the progress students are making.
- The shape and content of the study programmes require further improvement. Only a minority of students progress from level 2 courses to level 3 courses and the progression of students from AS level to A level is low. Students undertaking vocational courses do not have access to meaningful work experience or work placements. Managers are aware of this and are devising level 2 vocational programmes, and have plans to increase the volume of work placements in the current year.
- The feedback observers give after internal teaching and learning observations lacks sufficient focus on the detailed development points that teachers need to address in order to have a more positive impact on learning. Teachers' planning does not address the different learning needs of their students and they do not challenge the most able students to meet their aspirational targets.
- Teachers' written feedback to students is positive, timely and regular but it often lacks the detail that is required to ensure that students know how to improve and deepen their understanding. In the majority of cases, teachers do not follow up on how students have responded to their comments for improvement. However, there are examples of good assessment practice in politics and sociology.
- Students benefit from good academic and personal support provided by well-qualified teachers, academic mentors and learning support staff. Teachers produce appropriate and well-crafted learning resources to support students' independent learning. Specialist additional support is effective and most students identified through initial screening stay on the course and achieve better than their target grade. Staff keep parents, carers and guardians informed of students' progress through reports and consultation evenings.
- Staff challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory language; they promote equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity in teaching and learning. For example, in English, student coursework includes investigations into language and gender, and the language of the film 'Coloured Girls', and the language of women in politics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- The majority of students feel safe and enjoy studying at the college. Students' behaviour around the college is good. Students have excellent working relationships with their teachers and each other. Despite this, student attendance, on all pathways, requires improvement. Managers are aware of this, and in the current year are working to improve attendance in line with their high expectations.
- Staff conscientiously set aspirational targets for students and monitor them throughout the academic year. However, too many students do not attain their minimum target grades, especially in A-level studies. Too many students come unprepared to target-setting meetings and their attitudes to the process are not consistently positive.
- Only a very few students obtain valuable and relevant work experience. This particularly affects students taking vocational pathways and it hinders their preparedness for future employment. College managers are currently planning to address this in the current academic year.
- Enrichment is not compulsory for all students and a significant minority do not benefit from participating in enrichment activities, which limits the extent of their personal development and their readiness for the world of work. Students who do participate have access to a range of enrichment activities, which enhances their learning and development.
- The development of students' English and mathematical skills in vocational and academic lessons continues to require improvement. Although teachers integrate English skills in all subject plans, students' work still contains many spelling and grammatical errors. Teachers do not integrate mathematics across subjects well enough. Two members of staff are now in charge of ensuring that teachers incorporate these core skills in lessons.
- Tutorial sessions provide students with information, and opportunity, to discuss a wide range of topics relating to living healthy lifestyles and British values. Students understand clearly how to keep themselves safe when working online or when using social media. They are able to articulate well the potential dangers of radicalisation and are provided with taught sessions from external experts to raise their awareness of the 'Prevent' duty.
- Staff ensure that students develop a good range of employment-related skills through the tutorial system. For example, students understand the personal qualities that employers are looking for, the importance of an up-to-date CV and how to impress in an interview. The additional learning support that students receive benefits their progress and transition to further education and employment. Learning support is effective in keeping students on courses so that they succeed. These students achieve slightly better outcomes in their studies than others in the college because of personalised support and intervention. Students receive good, impartial careers advice within the college to inform their next steps.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Most students on courses do not make the progress expected, given their entry qualifications. In 2015/16, college data indicates that the proportion of students making at least the expected progress declined and is low for both A levels and AS levels.

- In 2015/16, after a steady increase, the proportion of students successfully completing their AS-level programme declined and is well below national rates. Students taking A levels are also not achieving in line with national rates.
- The proportion of students attaining high grades on both AS- and A-level courses has declined over the last three years and is low. In 2015/16, the proportion of students achieving grades A* to C in both GCSE English and mathematics declined, with those taking English achieving above the low national rate and those taking mathematics achieving well below the national rate.
- The proportion of students who progress within the college is low. Only one in four students taking level 2 programmes progress to level 3, and just over a quarter of students on the first year of a level 3 programme do not progress to the second year.
- Managers monitor the performance of different groups well. Over the last two years, female students have achieved better than males and the gap widened in 2015/16. The achievements of different ethnic groups show no consistent pattern of underperformance. Students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve slightly better than other students, as do those students in receipt of free school meals and children looked after.
- Students taking courses in health and social care, sport and arts have high achievement rates; those taking vocational courses in art and design, music and performing arts make very good progress in relation to their starting points. Most level 3 students progress to higher education. However, too many of the destinations of level 3 students who do not go on to university are still unknown.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130469
Type of provider	Sixth-form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	902
Principal	Jeremy Rogers
Telephone number	0121 4583898
Website	www.cadcol.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 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	–	–	74	–	719	3	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	–	–	–	–	–	–		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	–		–		–			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	N/A							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, curriculum, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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Martin Ward	Her Majesty's Inspector
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