

St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College

Sixth form college

Inspection dates

5–7 December 2017

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	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Outstanding	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Too few students on A-level courses achieve the grades expected of them relative to their prior attainment, and achievement rates recently declined on the majority of courses.
- Governors do not use the information they receive from managers well enough to support and challenge the senior leaders effectively. As a result, improvements in teaching, learning and assessment are not made quickly enough.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently good across subjects to ensure that students make the progress of which they are capable.
- Managers do not use the main findings from their observations of teaching, learning and assessment well enough to secure improvements in teachers' practice.
- Teachers do not consistently use the information they have on students' prior attainment to plan and teach effective lessons that are demanding for all students. Learning is not always at the appropriate pace and as a result the most able students make slow progress.
- Too few students achieve their GCSEs in mathematics or achieve a higher grade than their starting point in this subject.
- Although improving, attendance is not consistently good across all subject areas.

The provider has the following strengths

- Teachers and staff support students who need additional help and those in receipt of high-needs funding very well. As a result, these students make good progress, achieve their qualifications and move on to higher levels of study.
- Students' behaviour is excellent. Students are polite, respectful and demonstrate very well the values and ethos of the college.
- Students benefit from very good and effective careers advice and guidance. Students understand well what they need to do to progress to their next steps. The majority of students move on to higher education, further education, apprenticeships or employment.
- Staff and students are proud of the college and have successfully created a positive, safe and inclusive learning environment, defined by Catholic values.

Full report

Information about the provider

- St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College is on a single site located in North Kensington within the borough of Kensington and Chelsea. This area of London is characterised by extremes of wealth and poverty. The college recruits students from across all 33 boroughs of London and has a Catholic ethos at the centre of college life. The college has a diverse range of students, of whom around a third are Roman Catholic. A very high proportion of students come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The college offers a broad A-level and vocational curriculum, mostly in business, science, English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, sport, arts, media, travel and tourism, languages and humanities. At the time of the inspection, the college had approximately 1,195 students completing 16 to 19 study programmes, including a very small number of students over 19 years old.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that a higher proportion of students achieve their qualifications and the grades expected of them by supporting teachers to plan carefully and teach lessons that:
 - take into account the needs and abilities of all students within the class
 - have a pace of learning which is appropriate for all students so that they make good progress
 - challenge the most able students to achieve their full potential and achieve high grades.
- Ensure that governors use the information they receive from managers to support and challenge leaders more fully, to improve the outcomes for students and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Strengthen the arrangements for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that actions identified support teachers to improve their practice by:
 - linking the outcomes of observations to teachers' appraisals and staff development activities
 - focusing the observation of lessons on learning and students' development to identify good practice and improve weak teaching.
- Increase the proportion of students who achieve their mathematics GCSE qualifications, and achieve high grades.
- Continue to implement the recent and effective actions to improve further students' attendance at lessons.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and governors have not maintained high outcomes for students and ensured that teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good. Although the proportion of students who achieve high grades has recently improved, this is too low. Achievement rates in the majority of courses declined over the previous years, and teaching, learning and assessment require improvement.
- Leaders' and managers' evaluation of the college's performance is not accurate enough. Although they identify the majority of weaknesses in the outcomes for students, they are overly positive about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Targets set in the quality improvement plan lack specific detail about how leaders will improve the outcomes, and do not focus well enough on improving teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders and managers do not effectively link the outcomes of observations of learning to teachers' appraisals and staff development activities. Targets set in appraisals do not relate to the required improvements identified in observations. Staff development activities do not focus enough on teaching practice to support teachers to improve.
- Leaders and managers recently introduced a new performance management process to improve students' progress. At regular review boards with curriculum managers, they evaluate students' attendance, progress and achievement. The full impact of this cannot yet be seen; however, early indications show that they are effective. As a result of actions taken in biology and sociology, the proportion of students who gained high grades improved.
- Leaders' detailed strategy to develop students' English skills and improve the achievement of qualifications is effective. Staff carry out focused activities such as the literacy week and reading club to promote English to students, and achievement rates in GCSE English are good. However, the strategy for mathematics is less effective and although students develop skills in numeracy in a minority of lessons, too few achieve qualifications.
- Students enjoy the good partnerships that managers and staff have with local universities, employers and sports specialists. Leaders plan the curriculum well to meet the needs of students to ensure that they work towards the appropriate qualifications to support them into the university of their choice, further education, apprenticeship or employment. For example, following advice from a local university, managers introduced a vocational qualification in sport, to help students move on to higher education in that subject.
- Leaders, managers and all staff promote equality and celebrate diversity well in and outside of lessons. The tutorial programme focuses closely on social, health and welfare issues. As a result, students deepen their understanding about their rights and responsibilities in society. Staff and students are proud of the college and have successfully created a positive, safe and inclusive learning environment, defined by Catholic values.

The governance of the provider

- Governors do not use the information they receive from managers sufficiently to enable them to successfully challenge and support senior leaders. As a result, governors and

leaders are slow to make the necessary improvements to students' outcomes and ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good.

- Governors have appropriate skills, experience and knowledge of the college. Governors and the principal work closely together to manage the budgets and secure a good financial position for the college.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and managers have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of their students.
- Leaders and managers ensure that all staff complete the required safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training. Staff inform students effectively of the issues they may face in their communities, including around the dangers associated with extremism, radicalisation, and knife and gun crime, through the regular tutorial sessions. As a result, students understand very well how to keep themselves safe and whom to inform if they have concerns.
- Leaders, managers and staff responded very positively and sympathetically to the recent tragedy at Grenfell Tower. They took great care of students' well-being, as well as contributing very proactively to the community's response to help local people. They continue to keep a close watch on their students and staff as they come to terms with the events of last summer.
- The security at the campus is good. Managers work closely with the local police to ensure that students are safe in and around the college. Managers identify vulnerable students quickly and put in place appropriate support to ensure that they can attend the college regularly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across all subject areas and course types. As a result, students do not make sufficiently rapid progress from their starting points, especially in the majority of A-level subjects, GCSE mathematics, and vocational courses in sport and information communication technology (ICT).
- Teachers do not teach and set work that challenges all students to make the best progress. In the majority of lessons, teachers do not consistently plan or teach lessons in which they take sufficient account of the different ability levels of individual students. As a result, the most able students work at a level that is too easy for them, which limits their ability to reach their target grades.
- Too often, when teachers ask learners to work in groups or pairs, they do not do this effectively enough. In too many lessons teachers do not facilitate group and paired work well. In these lessons teachers do not ensure that students follow instructions. As a result, students continue to work alone and do not benefit from working with their peers to deepen their understanding of the topic being taught.
- Teachers do not regularly check and mark students' homework and classwork. As a result, students' work often contains errors and inaccurate information, which they subsequently

use to revise for exams and to complete assessments.

- Teachers and staff support students who need extra help and those in receipt of high-needs funding very well. Staff quickly identify the support required, which results in a clear plan of action. Students receive effective help in class and dedicated one-to-one support outside of lessons. Support staff are well qualified. Students take part fully in lessons and make good progress.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers use peer-marking techniques effectively to enable students to consolidate their learning. For example, in performing arts, students assess each other and in doing so extend their understanding of factors which influence a good performance. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations and challenge students. Teachers' questions target and probe students for detailed responses. For example, in physical education, teachers challenge students to apply specialist theory to their chosen sport.
- Teachers support students to develop their independent learning skills well. Students regularly use the college's good online resources and information outside of the classroom and for homework. Teachers and staff ensure that students work in dedicated spaces, such as the well-resourced library and chaplaincy. Students enjoy their learning and take pride in their work, which is of a good standard. They develop good practical skills and knowledge which are relevant to their subject of study. For example, dance and drama students improve contemporary dance techniques to support them to take part in performances. Health and social care students understand well the legislation relating to adult care, and as a result, gain part-time employment in the care sector. In A-level physics, students solve problems relating to projectiles through rearranging formulas with missing variables.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Students show very good attitudes to learning. Students develop good study and independent learning skills, they regularly set and review their own targets to track their progress. They are positive about their courses and the college, have high aspirations, and are keen to achieve their qualifications and move on to the next level of study or into employment.
- Students' behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the college. Students are polite and highly respectful to staff and visitors. Students understand well the college Catholic ethos and British values. They are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Students benefit from highly effective advice before they start their course and during their time at college to support them to make decisions about their future. The experienced careers advisor has developed excellent links with universities to support students with their applications. Students attend the regular 'choices' days, careers fairs and talks by employers. They receive daily information through the college's online system informing them of job, apprenticeship and work experience opportunities. As a result, students understand the options available to them and are prepared well for their next steps.
- Students take part in a wide range of relevant work-related activities, including external trips, employer talks and external work experience. Students develop the necessary skills

to support them into work or further study. For example, students on sports courses work in local schools and fitness centres and develop skills in coaching children. A-level English literature students attend trips to theatres to deepen their knowledge about the plays they study.

- Students feel very safe, know how to raise concerns and have a good understanding of personal safety, including the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. They feel safe from bullying and many identify how their confidence has grown since attending the college.
- A large majority of students take part in the good range of sporting opportunities available at the college. Students regularly succeed in winning team competitions and are proud to represent the college. The college football team reached the national English schools semi-final trophy. The male basketball team won the final of the national English basketball league cup. The female basketball team recently won the Association of Colleges regional competition. Staff regularly celebrate students' achievements.
- Students develop their vocational mathematical skills well in relation to their level of learning and subject area. For example, students on level 3 business use formulas associated with budgeting to create accurate datasets for graphical representation.
- Students develop good English skills. In classes, students use subject-specific technical language appropriately. Students completing A levels show good levels of literacy in their written work and are confident in presentation skills. In A-level government and politics, students use good levels of communication in class debates.
- Students' attendance is not consistently good in all lessons. Managers have taken effective actions to improve attendance, and although in the vast majority of classes attendance rates have improved since 2016/17, they are still too low in many lessons.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Managers' own data shows that in 2016/17, although the proportion of students who achieved their AS legacy qualifications improved, on the majority of other courses the proportion of students who successfully completed their qualifications declined and is too low.
- The proportion of students who achieve A-level qualifications is low and in the majority of subjects too few students achieve the grades expected of them relative to their starting points. The subject areas with the lowest achievement include economics, religious education and ICT. However, achievement rates are high in science and performing arts. Current learners on A-level courses do not make the progress expected of them relative to their prior attainment.
- The proportion of students who achieve their level 1 and level 2 vocational qualifications, in ICT, travel and tourism and sport is very low.
- Too few students aged 19 years and older achieve their functional skills qualifications in mathematics and English. While a high proportion achieve these qualifications at entry level, the majority do not succeed in completing the next level before they leave the college or progress to their next course.
- The proportion of students who achieve a GCSE in mathematics is too low and has

declined over previous years. Not enough students move up a grade from their original starting point.

- The majority of students who complete level 3 vocational courses achieve their qualifications. In 2016/17 a high proportion of students on art and design, travel and tourism and sport achieved high grades. However, in business and health and social care too many students were not challenged enough to reach their full potential. Current students are making good progress.
- The proportion of students who achieve their GCSE in English and gain A* to C (9 to 4) grades has improved and is high.
- Students for whom the college receives high-needs funding, those with learning difficulties and those that need extra support make very good progress and achieve well.
- Leaders and managers track and evaluate where students progress to well. The vast majority of learners either progress within the college to higher-level courses or go on to higher education, employment or an apprenticeship.
- Managers monitor closely and effectively the achievement rates of different groups of students. The majority of students achieve at similar rates and there are no significant trends in achievement rates between students, for example from different ethnic backgrounds or between males and females.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130411
Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,200
Principal/CEO	Elaine Taylor
Telephone number	020 8968 7755
Website	www.stcharles.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+
	38	0	144	2	969	42		
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for whom the provider receives high-needs funding	25							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	0							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, curriculum and quality, 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 and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners; 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

Jane Hughes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kate Hill	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Perry	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Hucker	Ofsted Inspector

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