

# Inspection of The Henley College

Inspection dates:

22–25 October 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Inadequate</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## **Information about this provider**

The Henley College is a sixth-form college on two adjacent sites in Henley, Oxfordshire. At the time of the inspection, 1,640 students were on education programmes for young people and 31 students were in receipt of high-needs funding. These students follow mainly A-level courses and level 3 vocational programmes, with a small number following programmes at levels 1 and 2. Leaders offer courses in most subject areas at level 3, the largest being sciences, mathematics, languages and literature, and business. Leaders reduced substantially the numbers of apprentices on programme in 2019/20. At the time of the inspection, 38 apprentices were following framework programmes at levels 2, 3 and 4. Almost all study health and social care or business administration apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Students and most apprentices enjoy their learning. Students form strong positive relationships with college staff and each other that help them learn and develop their confidence. They appreciate the wide range of courses that meet their needs and interests well.

Most students benefit from experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers who plan learning carefully. This helps students develop the skills and knowledge they need to complete their qualifications successfully. Students progressing to university and apprenticeships benefit from high-quality advice and support from staff about their next steps. They value the visits from and to employers and universities that help them plan their futures.

Students and apprentices behave well. They show visitors, teachers and each other high levels of respect. Students attend lessons and very few are late. Students and apprentices know how to keep themselves safe.

Apprentices do not have the same opportunities as college students. Although most employers support them effectively, apprentices do not have enough occasions to develop fully their subject knowledge and practise this in the workplace. Very few apprentices benefit from carefully planned college-taught lessons. As a result, they struggle to develop their subject skills and knowledge, and improve their personal and social expertise.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and managers have designed and shaped the curriculum effectively. They provide a wide range of courses that enables most students to develop and improve their knowledge and skills. They make sure that the courses they provide align carefully with current and emerging local and regional needs. For example, employers, managers and staff teaching information technology identified the need to develop students' knowledge of cyber security. Consequently, they added an extra unit on this subject to their level 3 courses. Engineering staff plan an ambitious and challenging curriculum which enables students to develop the skills they need for industry work. Substantial numbers of engineering students progress to apprenticeships with prestigious and well-respected companies. Apprentices study in areas identified by leaders as meeting local and regional needs, such as health and social care, and business.

Most curriculum leaders and teachers have planned and structured their courses effectively. For example, teachers of creative media production design their courses to ensure that students learn, develop and improve the practical and theoretical knowledge that they need to be skilful and creative industry workers. Economics teachers revisit topics frequently to develop and strengthen students' learning. Teachers plan learning for students with high needs sensibly to meet their individual

needs, improve their literacy and numeracy and develop their independence. Leaders have not designed and structured their apprenticeship courses in as much detail. Apprentices do not benefit from well-planned and coherent learning programmes. Staff do not assess apprentices' prior knowledge in enough detail. This inhibits apprentices' learning and hampers their development of knowledge and skills.

Teachers use their expert subject knowledge and industry experience to enable most students to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. They use a wide range of assessment techniques to improve students' long-term memories. They prepare them thoroughly for their examinations. For example, psychology teachers ask skilful questions to tease out and develop students' knowledge. They successfully encourage most students to read and research beyond the examination specification. This gives students the breadth of knowledge that they need to be successful in their next steps. Teachers of students with high needs keep activities short to match students' attention spans. Information technology teachers use very effective resources to stimulate and engage students. This improves their theoretical and practical subject knowledge.

Most students know how to improve their work. Business studies teachers give students clear feedback, which helps them to understand how they can make quicker progress. Mathematics students practise mathematical work repeatedly to improve their skills. Staff do not give apprentices useful feedback about how they can improve their written work. Although apprentices produce written work which satisfies the demands of their qualifications, they are unclear about what they need to do to develop their skills further.

Staff assess students' prior knowledge carefully to make sure that they place them on appropriate programmes of study. Most teachers use this information to plan challenging and interesting learning.

Students receive high-quality careers advice and guidance from subject staff as well as from impartial careers advisers. This prepares most students well for their next steps. Throughout their time at the college, staff help students develop their confidence. They learn about staying safe and become more prepared to be citizens in modern Britain. Most complete useful and appropriate external work experience placements which raise their awareness of the world of work. Staff from local and national companies visit classes to talk to students about employment. Students visit employers and universities to raise their aspirations about life after college. As a result, the number of students who progress to universities of their choice or apprenticeships is high.

A few teachers and tutors lack the necessary classroom skills to engage students successfully and help them improve their knowledge and skills over time. They do not check in enough detail students' developing knowledge or make sure that they are able to connect the topics they learn and then build on this information. This is particularly prevalent for the small number of students studying on level 2 courses, where too few pass their qualifications. Consequently, too few of those on level 2 courses achieve their qualifications. Although most students studying at level 3 pass their qualifications, a small minority do not achieve the grades of which they are capable.

Too few apprentices benefit from taught lessons. Although apprentices develop skills as a result of their work with their employers, too few achieve their apprenticeships.

Leaders and governors have an effective strategy to improve the quality of education programmes for young people. They have high expectations for their students and staff. They make sure that managers and teachers continue to develop their classroom skills so that they can enthuse and inspire students. Staff morale is high and almost all teachers are proud to work at the college. As leaders do not track the number of students who complete work experience, they cannot fully assess the impact of these placements. They do not analyse in enough detail the destinations of the small numbers of students who progress into employment. Consequently, leaders cannot fully assess how their education helped them.

Leaders have not ensured that their apprenticeship programme is of a similar high quality to their provision for students in the college. They are not fully aware of the substantial weaknesses in the programme. Governors do not know enough about the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship programme to enable them to challenge leaders and hold them to account.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Students and apprentices feel safe at the college and in their workplaces. They know who to contact if they have safeguarding concerns. All staff receive appropriate and frequent training to ensure that they understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Safeguarding staff use their effective relationships with local organisations across three local authorities to support students and apprentices who make safeguarding disclosures. Leaders make sure that they appoint staff and governors safely. Leaders and managers talk with students frequently to address their concerns about keeping safe. Although most students and apprentices learn about the 'Prevent' duty, they do not know enough about the local risks of extremism and radicalisation.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders and managers should plan their apprenticeship courses to ensure that all apprentices benefit from well taught and frequent lessons to help them build their skills and knowledge and complete their programmes.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that staff assess apprentices' prior knowledge carefully, use this information to plan learning and provide apprentices with clear feedback to enable them to make progress.
- Leaders should provide governors with more information about the quality of their apprenticeship courses to enable them to judge the progress of improvements.
- Leaders should improve their tracking of students' external work experience and their analysis of students' destinations to enable them to more fully measure the impact of their learning.

- Leaders and managers should quicken the pace of improvements so that students' achievements are consistently high and more achieve the grades of which they are capable.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130789
<b>Address</b>	Deanfield Avenue Henley-on-Thames Oxfordshire RG9 1UH
<b>Contact number</b>	01491 579 988
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.henleycol.ac.uk">www.henleycol.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Satwant Deol
<b>Provider type</b>	Sixth-form college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11–12 May 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

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