

**Inspection dates**

20–23 October 2015

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Outcomes for learners

Good

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

**Summary of key findings****This is a good provider**

- The large majority of students make good progress and achieve well in their chosen subject areas.
- Students enjoy learning, are ambitious, and develop good learning and team working skills.
- An effective curriculum supports students to progress to higher education using a variety of academic and vocational routes.
- The college manages its finances very well and to the benefit of students.
- The proportion of students who progress from AS to A level, and on to higher education, is high.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good.
- Effective performance management has resulted in improvement in the quality of teaching at the college.
- Tutors provide very good support for those students who wish to secure university places.

**It is not yet an outstanding provider**

- Too few students achieve functional skills in mathematics and English, or mathematics GCSE at grade C or above.
- Teachers do not always use strategies for teaching, assessment and feedback that enable them to support the least-able students effectively.
- The most-able students on AS and A-level courses do not make the progress expected, given their starting points.
- A minority of students do not receive a broad enough education about life in the United Kingdom and British values.
- The teaching of mathematics during lessons in other subject areas is not good enough.
- Students are insufficiently involved in the promotion and implementation of the college's statutory duties under Prevent legislation.
- Links between governors and curriculum areas or subjects are not yet working effectively to improve the quality of teaching and students' achievements.

# Full report

## Information about the provider

- Newham Sixth Form College, situated in east London, is one of the largest sixth form colleges in London. The London Borough of Newham is characterised by the indices of multiple deprivation as one of the poorest parts of England. The very large majority of students at the college are from a minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in the borough is similar to that nationally.
- The college offers a wide range of courses from foundation programmes to A levels and vocational programmes at levels 2 and 3. However, the majority of students at the college are aged 16 to 19 and are on study programmes, with most aiming to progress to higher education. The proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and with low prior attainment is higher than for other similar colleges.

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

- Rapidly improve teachers' skills, confidence and abilities to develop their students' English and mathematics skills. Ensure that in all subject lessons teachers plan, and use, opportunities to develop these skills as part of study programmes at level 3.
- Focus staff development activities on guaranteeing that all teachers have strategies to ensure that the checking of learning, and feedback to support improvement meet the needs of the students who require the most help.
- Enable the most-able students to make good progress on AS and A-level courses by ensuring that teachers recognise these students' abilities and set them appropriately demanding tasks in lessons.
- Fully implement plans to link individual governors to curriculum areas so that their expertise is used more effectively to improve the quality of different subject areas so that all students progress and achieve well.
- Rapidly devise and implement plans to engage students fully in the government's Prevent agenda and implement the existing good practice in the promotion of British values, ensuring that all students explore personal, social and ethical topics in order to face the challenges of life in modern Britain confidently and safely.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Governors and the Principal have made an effective response to most areas for improvement from the previous inspection. As a result, the proportion of students who achieve their qualifications has improved. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved, with greater consistency in quality across subject areas. However, as was the case at the previous inspection, feedback to students is not always good enough and too few students pass their mathematics GCSE at grades A\* to C, or achieve functional skills in English or mathematics at level 2.
- Senior leaders have a clear vision for the improvements that still need to be made at the college. Managers and staff understand and share this vision. A trusting and forward-looking relationship exists between leaders, managers and staff across the college with a widely shared concern for students' success.
- Senior leaders and programme team managers are confident in their use of performance data, quality assurance and quality monitoring systems to bring about improvements in the provision. Managers successfully recalibrated the college's lesson observation processes following the previous inspection in order to focus more closely on students' experiences of lessons and their learning and progress. Observations now provide a more reliable gauge of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; managers use this effectively to target interventions and improvement strategies. However, a few measures are still in an early stage of development; for example, learning walks have only recently been introduced and as yet too few teachers and senior leaders carry these out.
- Performance management arrangements are effective in helping managers to raise standards of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers support new staff well during their probationary period, providing helpful and challenging training and assessing their suitability for their roles. For new and established staff whose performance does not meet required standards, managers put in place good levels of support and guidance for improvement. Where appropriate, managers take robust action to safeguard standards.
- Senior managers have re-vitalised and re-focused staff development activities since the previous inspection. They make good use of the five days of formal development activity each year and staff value these days and their focus on improving the student experience. The selection process for learning coach posts is now more robust. Coaches provide a good level of support for staff who have development needs and for managers in dissemination of improvement strategies. Such is the trust and value placed on the coaching team that individual teachers are now beginning to approach coaches for support without referral by their managers.
- Financial management is particularly strong and senior leaders apply and develop college resources very effectively to enhance students' experiences at the college. A major building and campus redevelopment project is underway with little or no disruption to teaching and learning or students' enjoyment of their college experience.
- Governors and leaders ensure that the college's curriculum meets the needs of students well and contributes to the economic growth of local communities. A wide range of work-related and enrichment activities, coupled with a strong focus on progression to higher education, provides a strong boost to students' economic prospects. Leaders and managers work closely with a broad range of educational, commercial and local government partners to review and revise the curriculum.
- Success rates for English and particularly for mathematics require improvement to ensure that all students have a useful set of qualifications at the end of their study programmes, as well as the skills they will need to follow academic courses in higher education. Managers have brought about improvements in English GCSE success rates, but too few students make the progress they should in developing effective English and mathematics skills.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - Governance is good. Governors bring a strong set of relevant skills to their positions, including skills in education, finance, policy, and project management. Student governors receive good support and make an informed and valuable contribution to business. Governors' grasp of key performance data has improved since the previous inspection and managers now receive good levels of challenge and support from governors.
  - Governors do not link sufficiently closely to individual subject areas and thus cannot support and challenge under-performing areas with sufficient rigour. This hinders the senior leaders' ability to make the best use of their skills, experience and commitment to increase the speed of improvement. Plans are in place to link a number of governors to curriculum areas or groups of subjects in the college in the near future.

## ■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- Leaders, teachers and other staff are aware of their responsibilities to students who may need their help or who might be at risk of harm.
- Managers carry out comprehensive employment and background checks on staff and keep clear and full records of these.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe in lessons, around the college and online. They are respectful of each other and of their teachers. College managers work hard to ensure that the college environment and student body reflects the culturally diverse nature of the locality.
- Managers have successfully raised the awareness of staff and governors to the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and the college's responsibilities under the Prevent agenda. Student union and student council representatives received briefings on the college's duties under Prevent legislation and the Principal informs all new students about the college's duties during a welcome address. However, leaders have been much too slow to involve students more widely in discussions of the ways that the college might best approach its legal duties and how students might contribute to the fulfilment of those duties.
- Despite clear management policies, a single faith group clearly dominates the multi-faith room; it does not provide a suitably comfortable and welcoming place for staff and students of all faiths and beliefs to use for prayer or quiet reflection.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Students enjoy their lessons and develop very good attitudes towards learning and study. Teachers promote equality and diversity in the classroom very well. As a result, students respect each other's views and develop very good attitudes towards working collaboratively and harmoniously. Students greatly improve their team-working and communication skills due to teachers' support and guidance when they work together on shared tasks or projects.
- Staff provide particularly effective personal and learning support for students. Additional learning support in and out of the classroom, including through the use of information learning technology, ensures that those students who need extra help are able to keep up with their work and are confident to catch up or continue their learning outside of the classroom. Staff provide good personal support which helps students to cope with difficulties such as homelessness, family crises or substance misuse and enables them to attend regularly and punctually.
- Staff prepare students well for the next steps toward their career aims and regularly review their long-term goals. Staff are aspirational about their further learning and careers. Specialist staff provide good-quality, well-informed impartial advice and guidance which helps students to make careful and well-researched choices.
- Tutors use tutorial time effectively to help students to reflect on their learning and progress. They help students to identify realistic and suitable higher education choices, complete their applications and write comprehensive and well-structured personal statements. Tutors monitor students' progress well and provide effective verbal feedback; students have a good understanding of their progress and what they need to do to achieve their career aims.
- On A- and AS-level courses, teachers do not consistently provide sufficiently demanding activities to ensure that the most-able students make good progress. Teachers are not always aware of the results of these students' initial assessments, or target grades. As a result, they do not plan well enough to meet students' needs for additional or more difficult tasks, or develop the potential of their academic skills. Students who are initially assessed as having high potential are enrolled on the college's 'honours programme'. However, this does not always result in teachers setting appropriate short-term targets for these talented students in lessons and they do not always make the progress expected.
- Teachers do not always use strategies for teaching, assessment and feedback that enable them to support the least-able students effectively. As a result, a minority of the least-able students become restless and confused when teachers' explanations are too rushed or too complex. Teachers do not always check these students' understanding sufficiently so that students can build on their learning and make the best progress.
- When students produce work that requires only a few corrections or improvement, teachers provide good and very helpful feedback. However, the quality of feedback is poor on work with a large number of errors, and often reduced to broad statements, such as 'include more detail'. This means that the students who would benefit most from feedback to improve their assignments do not always receive the help they need. A minority of students have to wait too long for marked work to be returned.
- Teaching staff are confident to improve student's literacy skills in lessons, but the same is not true for mathematics. Although some teachers do this well, for example in engineering, in other subjects teachers

avoid introducing mathematics and do not plan to include development of students' skills in their lessons. As a result, although students improve their use of English, the majority do not develop good mathematical skills or improve their existing knowledge and understanding of numeracy.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good**

- Students enjoy their learning, and teaching staff enable them to grow in self-confidence and to be aspirational by setting high expectations for their behaviour and attitude to learning. Students develop very good employment-related skills and learn the importance of being ready for work, punctual and attending regularly. Rates of attendance and punctuality are high.
- Students on vocational programmes at level 3 benefit from well-chosen work experience placements. Staff use their links with local employers very well to ensure that placements are relevant and allow students to test out the suitability of their career aims and to confirm their choices. However, work experience and work-related activities are less well developed for A-level students. Although these students can choose from a variety of work-related enrichment activities at the college, as yet planned work-related activities do not form an integral part of each student's A-level study programme.
- Students' behaviour in class and in social areas of the college is good. Students from different backgrounds and cultures work together harmoniously and show respect for each other's feelings and beliefs.
- Staff provide students with good advice and guidance on their next steps and on career opportunities throughout their time at college. They are particularly skilled at assisting students to achieve the entry requirements for higher education applications by promoting a mixture of academic and vocational pathways. If appropriate, they provide support and guidance for students to switch to a more vocational pathway in their second year of study, improving their chances of being offered a place at university. Students receive excellent help with applications to higher education and benefit greatly from the college's good relationship with its local higher education institute.
- Many staff take advantage of opportunities during teaching to allow students to explore and debate topics which relate directly to fundamental British values, but this good practice is not shared across all subject areas. In addition, not all subject areas offer the same opportunities for staff to raise these topics as a natural part of the curriculum. The college does not have a coherent planned approach to ensuring that students have a broad enough education about life in the United Kingdom and British values. Although a few relevant topics are included as part of the tutorial programme there is not enough focus on democracy, British law and information about such topics as women's rights, forced marriage and female genital mutilation to help students to make informed choices and to stay safe.

### **Outcomes for learners are good**

- The large majority of students on AS-level, A-level and vocational level 3 programmes achieve well and in-line with the high rates achieved nationally. The proportion of students who achieve at AS level has improved since 2013/14 and overall students on AS courses now make good progress. However, at individual subject level the progress students make is very mixed. While it is very good or excellent in a minority of subjects, students in subjects including science or social science continue to make poor progress. The majority of students take vocational level 3 programmes and they make very good progress from their starting points.
- On AS- and A-level courses the minority of students who start with good prior attainment at GCSE make poor progress and do not achieve the higher grades predicted, given their achievement at GCSE.
- Staff prepare students well for the next step towards their career goals and high numbers progress from AS to A level. Where AS level students achieve below the level expected or needed for progression to higher education, they are transferred to a vocational programme at level 3; these students do particularly well at securing places in higher education. Overall, high numbers of students gain offers of places in higher education institutes, including Russell group universities.
- About half of all students who start study programmes at the college do not have both English and mathematics GCSEs at grade C or above. Although the proportion of students who achieve a grade C or above in English is better than other similar colleges nationally, less than half of those students who take GCSE English achieve grades A\* to C. Functional skills achievements at level 2 are very poor for both English and mathematics, and the proportion of students who achieve a grade C or above in GCSE mathematics is low.
- There are no significant gaps between the achievements of different groups of students.

## Provider details

Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,548
Principal/CEO	Eddie Playfair
Website address	<a href="http://www.newvic.ac.uk">www.newvic.ac.uk</a>

## 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	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	78	0	407	1	1,905	71	0	0
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	8		1		9			
Number of learners aged 14–16	0							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Jo Parkman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Beynon	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Gadfield	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marinette Bazin	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the vice principal, as nominee, and carried out the inspection at short notice. 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.

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