

New College Leicester

Glenfield Road, Leicester LE3 6RN

Inspection dates

3–4 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Not enough pupils have made the progress they should in mathematics in previous years. However, there are sharp improvements in the progress of current pupils albeit recent.
- Pupils' basic mathematical skills are not well developed; this holds them back.
- Not all pupils who studied humanities and French achieved the grades they should, although current progress in these subjects is improving, especially in the lower years.
- Teachers do not always provide the right level of challenge or support for pupils. Consequently, some pupils struggle to keep up, especially those with special educational needs.
- Some teachers do not always provide meaningful and effective feedback to pupils.
- Pupils newly arrived to the country and for whom English is not their first language are not always supported well in class.
- Some subject leaders do not rigorously check that standards and expectations in their area are as high as they should be.
- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching is sometimes overgenerous.

The school has the following strengths

- The Principal and Associate Principal have ensured that the strong values of respect, responsibility, resourcefulness and resilience permeate the school. Pupils, staff and parents are loyal and extremely supportive of the school.
- Pupils' career guidance and support are of a high quality and effective.
- Pupils are supported and cared for very well by staff. They conduct themselves in a sensible and respectful way most of the time, and so behaviour is good.
- The sixth form is good, and more effective than the rest of the school. Pupils are successful because their course choices are matched well to their interests and abilities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in mathematics, humanities and French by:
 - providing clear guidance, direction and support for subject leaders, so that they can drive improvements and strengthen teaching in their areas effectively
 - ensuring that all teachers, especially those who are new and recently qualified, are confident with the GCSE course content and assessment requirements
 - rapidly improving pupils' basic mathematical skills and speaking and listening skills in French
 - preparing pupils well for examinations through regular testing and realistic practice.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is consistently good or better by:
 - having higher expectations of what pupils can and should achieve
 - carefully planning learning activities so that pupils of different abilities and needs can make sufficient progress
 - providing consistently high-quality feedback which makes a difference to pupils' learning because they act on the advice given.
- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - ensuring that all leaders have the skills to make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching; and ensuring that these judgements are always drawn from a range of evidence about learning, including the progress pupils make
 - making sure that subject leaders rigorously check that standards and expectations are as high as they should be
 - checking how well teachers use different strategies to improve outcomes for all pupils, especially for those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have implemented a range of systems to gather evidence about the quality of teaching across the school. However, they do not give sufficient weight to pupils' progress and outcomes when making overall judgements. As a result, leaders have an overpositive view of teaching.
- Subject leaders, especially those of key subjects, are conscientious and skilled. However, some do not rigorously check that teachers always adhere to school policies or ensure that they maintain high expectations and standards. Consequently, the quality of teaching is too variable.
- Recent plans to develop teachers' skills to support pupils with additional needs and new arrivals to the country, who are new to English, are showing early signs of effectiveness. However, not all teachers are confident or skilled enough to use these strategies effectively. Consequently, some pupils who need additional support in the classroom are not always able to fully access the work.
- The Principal and Associate Principal have worked well together to drive improvements in achievement, the quality of teaching and behaviour. They acknowledge there is more work to be done to ensure all pupils make the progress they should.
- Leaders' consistent messages and clear direction have led to an orderly and purposeful learning environment for staff and pupils. Strong values of respect, responsibility, resourcefulness and resilience, known as the '4 Rs', permeate the school.
- There is a comprehensive programme of training to develop teachers' expertise. Those teachers requiring more support are provided with coaching partners and a bespoke training plan. Teachers have opportunities to observe teaching in outstanding schools and learn from best practice.
- Pupils and staff are very supportive of the leadership of the school. Parents surveyed also express their confidence in the leadership. They believe their children are safe and well cared for.
- Pastoral leaders work well with learning mentors and other support staff to help pupils who are struggling at school. Work to engage parents is becoming more effective and has contributed to improving behaviour and attendance. Pastoral leaders monitor form time and ensure that well-planned and meaningful activities are carried out each day.
- The school's curriculum is well thought-out and improving to meet the needs of pupils' interests and aspirations. There is a wide range of additional classes for pupils after school such as photography and dissection. These are well attended.
- Leaders have ensured that spiritual, social, moral and cultural aspects of the curriculum are embedded in all lessons. Pupils have a good appreciation of these issues because they are given opportunities in lessons and assemblies to consider them.
- Pupils are given good advice and guidance to help them make informed choices about their future studies and employment. There are very few who leave the school not in employment or education; nearly all take up places at local colleges or in the school's sixth form.
- The local authority has provided targeted support to the school where weaknesses have been identified. It has brokered support from national leaders of education to assist the geography and mathematics departments. Support for the French department is being arranged this term. This support has brought about some improvements, especially to the leadership and management of these areas.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body consists of experienced and knowledgeable professionals. They have a sound understanding of educational matters and hold school leaders to account. They can interpret pupils' performance information well and they ask pertinent questions during governors' meetings.
 - Visits to the school by governors and the commissioned external support and reviews help governors to validate what leaders are saying. Governors carry out regular behaviour checks in the school to confirm the good conduct of pupils that leaders report.
 - Governors carry out stringent performance management practices to hold the Principal to account. Governors, with the support of the Principal, have ensured stable staffing. They have supported the school's effective performance management of staff to secure better teaching in the school.
 - The financial affairs of the school are overseen well by a very skilled governor. This has meant that government funding such as the pupil premium and catch-up allocation are spent wisely.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors ensure that safeguarding practices are embedded well in the school. Safer recruitment is practised well and governors check that policies are

updated and proper training of staff is carried out. Staff are very clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. Parents are issued with guidance about how to keep their child safe, especially in relation to radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the main school is too variable and requires improvement. Some teachers do not use the information they have about pupils' needs to devise effective strategies to support them. For example, in some lessons, pupils with special educational needs, who need additional support, are expected to complete the work in the same way as everyone else. Also, pupils newly arrived to the country and school, with little or no proficiency in English, are sometimes left with little or nothing to do in the lesson. Where there is better practice, teachers carefully tailor the learning tasks so that all pupils can access the work. They draw on recent training to effectively support these pupils.
- The feedback given to pupils is not always helpful or effective. Sometimes the teachers' comments are too cursory and do not help pupils to reflect on their work well. At times, when teachers' feedback is perhaps more helpful and constructive, teachers do not always insist that pupils act on the advice given. The 'yellow box' pupils' response school policy is not used by all teachers consistently enough. In addition, pupils' workbooks are not always presented well or work is sometimes left unfinished. Where this occurs, teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are too low. This issue has been identified by leaders as a key area for improvement.
- Mathematics teaching has not always emphasised a good grasp of basic numeracy skills. More recently, there has been a greater emphasis on mastering these skills in the lower years. Numeracy work booklets and support sessions in the morning, delivered by teaching assistants, are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' skills and confidence.
- Weaker teaching of French in the lower years previously has meant that pupils lacked the essential speaking and listening skills to make good progress at Key Stage 4. Improved teaching recently is beginning to making a difference to pupils' learning and understanding.
- Teaching in humanities is variable. Reviewed and improved schemes of work are making a difference to the quality of what is taught. The high number of new and recently qualified teachers are being supported well to ensure that their teaching becomes consistently good.
- The teaching of literacy skills is becoming more successful. Teachers' use of effective software programmes is helping to accelerate pupils' reading skills and chronological reading age. Where there is better teaching, literacy skills are emphasised throughout the lesson and there is regular practice of extended writing. In one religious education lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to write an effective response to the statement, 'There will always be wars', by modelling the good use of subject-specific vocabulary and paragraph structure.
- Teaching in English is consistently good. Teaching in science is improving rapidly and much is good.
- The reliability of teachers' assessment of pupils' work is improving. The local schools' network of subject teachers carries out moderation of teachers' assessments. In addition, it helps to develop effective schemes of work. Teachers set frequent tests to simulate the real examinations. This is helping to make teachers' predicted grades more accurate. New assessment systems in Key Stage 3 are well thought-out but in the early stages of implementation.
- The positive relationships teachers develop in the classroom are a real strength of teaching throughout the school. Teachers encourage good dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation. They use their calm and positive approach to motivate learners well.
- Homework is regularly set by teachers and a published timetable is on the school website. Pupils say that homework is helpful to them. They enjoy the new approaches teachers use to set homework, which make use of new technologies. For example, in some subjects, pupils are required to watch online lessons for homework and then complete learning tasks about what they have learnt in school. In history, the head of department has developed his own video lessons to support the GCSE course and encourages pupils to share their essays using social media.
- Teachers emphasise the social, moral, spiritual and cultural dimensions to their subjects well. Their lesson plans almost always identify opportunities to develop these. For example, in one drama lesson, the teacher used hot-seating to develop pupils' understanding of racism and its impact on individuals. In a geography lesson, the teacher took the opportunity to discuss the effects of global poverty because pupils asked why there are less plentiful water supplies in some parts of the world compared to others.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are supported well both in and out of the classroom. A well-coordinated support network of teachers and non-teaching staff, including university undergraduates, ensures that pupils are given the academic and emotional counselling support they need.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know how to keep safe online. A new programme of lessons to develop their understanding of the threats posed by radicalisation and extremism on the internet is being developed.
- Pupils understand the basic tenets of British values. Democracy is modelled through the school council elections. Pupils show good respect for others' views, cultures and differences.
- Pupils say, and records confirm, that bullying incidents are infrequent. Pupils are confident that teachers would take concerns about bullying very seriously. Racist and homophobic bullying is not tolerated because the strong values of mutual respect permeate the school.
- The school's culture of openness and trust encourages pupils to report concerns easily. They overwhelmingly feel supported and well cared for. Pupils newly arrived to the school from other countries are welcomed and inducted well to help them integrate into school life.
- Pupils' attendance to school is improving quickly. The small minority who are absent more regularly is monitored and supported well by staff. Parents of these pupils are becoming more engaged with the school and this is improving attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct in and around the school is mostly orderly and well mannered. There is very little disruption to learning.
- Teachers use the behaviour management systems consistently well. Pupils say the rewards and sanctions are issued fairly. Parents who were surveyed say that behaviour is good.
- Pupils come well prepared to school. Their punctuality to school and lessons is usually good. Sanctions for lateness are well understood by pupils; consequently, there are few offenders.
- The rates of fixed-term exclusions are reducing quickly. The school makes effective use of its internal exclusion provision such as the 2.30–4.30pm seclusion time. Leaders' records show that pupils who are referred to this provision rarely reoffend.
- Pupils using alternative provision mostly attend regularly and behave well. This is because courses are matched well to pupils' needs and aspirations. The school, in liaison with Leicester Partnership Schools, monitors the provision well.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- The 2015 examination results were disappointing. Inconsistent staffing in subjects like mathematics, and humanities in previous years, contributed to poorer outcomes in these subjects. More stable staffing and better-quality teaching now mean that current pupils are making much better progress in these subjects.
- Pupils do not always have a good grasp of basic mathematical skills, such as knowing their times tables. This hinders their progress. Work to improve these skills is under way across the main school, especially in the lower years.
- Due to previous weak teaching, French results declined in 2015. Improved teaching, especially in the lower years, is currently having a marked impact on progress but there is more work to be done to plug the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Progress in history and geography is improving quickly because new teachers and the head of department have reviewed the schemes of work and are addressing the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills skilfully.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is improving, but the rates of progress are variable across years and subjects. Their progress is better in English than mathematics due

to consistent and better-quality teaching.

- Pupils needing to catch up with their peers are making better progress in English than mathematics. In Years 7 and 8, these pupils are improving their reading and numeracy skills quickly due to regular small-group catch-up sessions most mornings.
- Pupils are currently making better progress than national averages in English and English literature. This is testament to the high-quality and consistently good teaching they receive.
- Pupils achieve well in many vocational subjects like health and social care, childcare and business studies. Pupils make good progress because the courses are well suited to their ability and interests.
- Ninety-two per cent of high-attaining pupils achieved five or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics, compared to 79% the previous year. Currently, the progress they are making in both English and mathematics means that many more pupils than previously are on track to meet or exceed their expected grade.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make similar rates of progress to their peers. The gap in attainment between these pupils and others in the school and nationally is narrowing.
- Pupils with English as an additional language made better progress than other pupils in 2015. Current pupils continue to make progress but it is more variable across departments and years; more recently, the numbers of these pupils joining the school has increased markedly.
- Work to improve boys' achievement has been effective. In 2015, boys' attainment improved; the gap in attainment between boys and girls continues to narrow for current pupils. They are making better progress because teachers manage their behaviour well and provide more engaging learning tasks than previously.
- Most pupils attending alternative provision make steady progress. They follow courses well suited to their ability and aspirations. Most are on track to achieve their targets.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The number of pupils in the sixth form is very small, but the sixth form provision is suited well to pupils' aspirations and ability. The course offer in the sixth form is narrow but successful. Pupils make mostly good progress in the vocational courses; they are on track to achieve their targets. Very few studied A level last year; the progress A-level pupils are making this year is improving compared to previously. Progress in the sixth form is better than in the rest of the school.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic and positive about their sixth form experience. Attendance is good and retention rates over two-year courses are high.
- The small cohort of pupils who did not pass their GCSE in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 are supported well by experienced teachers, resulting in good progress. Most are on track to achieve their expected grade.
- There is good leadership of the sixth form. The head of sixth form has ensured that the study programmes provide pupils with good opportunities to experience the world of work and how to manage risks when they leave school. Tutor sessions are used well to support pupils' personal and social development. The implementation of the National Citizen Service programme has been very effective for pupils. Pupils are regularly exposed to the wider community. Their social responsibilities are developed well through voluntary work and their involvement in charity projects.
- Careers guidance is effective. Almost all pupils continue with further studies or employment after the sixth form.

School details

Unique reference number	131945
Local authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	10000513

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	825
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	38
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Sue Billington
Principal	Jane Brown
Telephone number	0116 231 8500
Website	www.newcollege.leicester.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@newcollege.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 November 2012

Information about this school

- This school is a smaller than the average-sized secondary comprehensive. The number of pupils in the sixth form is small.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Nearly a tenth of the school is White European. Nearly one fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language; this is larger than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is more than double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled and have special educational needs is higher than the national average. Fewer than nationally are in receipt of Education Healthcare Plans.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is much higher than schools nationally.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- There are seven pupils who study courses off-site. The alternative provision is sourced through the Leicester Partnership Schools. Pupils access full-time and part-time courses from The Hospital School, The Waterfront Sports Education Academy and The Carisbrooke Specialist Learning Centre.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was originally carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. Inspectors converted the inspection to a section 5 in order to gather more secure evidence about the quality of education at the school.
- Inspectors carried out 31 lesson observations, a number of shorter visits to lessons and a visit to small group sessions. Many observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors visited tutorial sessions and one assembly. Pupils were formally interviewed across the main school and sixth form. They were also spoken with informally during lessons and during unstructured times. Pupils' behaviour was observed during break, lunchtimes and as they entered the school.
- Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised with a senior leader and during lesson observations.
- A number of school leaders were interviewed, including the Principal and other senior leaders, heads of department of key subjects and the sixth form, pastoral leaders, the designated safeguarding leader, and the Chair of the Governing Body. The local authority representative was interviewed by telephone.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation document, pupils' performance information, governors' minutes of meetings, behaviour logs, curriculum plans, and school policies in relation to safeguarding, behaviour, the curriculum, teaching and learning.
- Too few parents responded to the online Ofsted survey, Parent View, to register results. Inspectors considered the school's own parental surveys.
- One hundred and eleven responses to the staff questionnaire were considered.

Inspection team

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