

Huddersfield New College

Sixth form college



12–15 April 2016

Inspection dates**Overall effectiveness****Outstanding**

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

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Under the exemplary leadership of the principal, the excellent management team has worked assiduously to develop and improve the quality of education the college provides, resulting in an outstanding experience for learners.
- Leaders and managers, together with teachers and support staff, have improved and accelerated learners' progress very effectively, so that the great majority achieve much better outcomes than prior attainment would suggest.
- The progress from their starting points of learners known to have been eligible for free school meals has improved very significantly in recent years. These learners achieve exceptionally well on vocational courses.
- Leaders and managers have successfully addressed all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. They have developed a broad curriculum of academic and vocational courses that meets their learners' needs as well as meeting local, regional and national priorities.
- Learners' outcomes are outstanding with very high success rates and excellent progression to higher education, employment and training.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are of consistently high quality, ensuring that learners learn very effectively, and develop a wide range of skills, including employability skills.
- Support arrangements for all learners, including those with high needs and other vulnerable groups, are exceptionally effective, enabling learners on different courses and from different backgrounds to achieve very well.
- The college's inclusive ethos, excellent teaching and enrichment and high-quality support promote personal development, excellent behaviour and learners' welfare exceptionally well; learners develop into confident, articulate, respectful young adults who are very well prepared for their next steps.
- Equality of opportunity is central to the college's mission. Learners are valued for who they are and this in turn results in a respectful and harmonious learner community, in which all members accept each other's differences.
- Governors take an effective lead in planning, and provide strong support and challenge to senior leaders to ensure that they maintain the drive for improvement.
- Leaders and managers have maintained the strong financial position of the college, to ensure that the quality of provision is sustained and improved further.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Huddersfield New College is a sixth form college on a single site located to the north of the town. The proportion of school leavers in Kirklees achieving five GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is similar to the national average. The vast majority of the college's learners are aged 16 to 18 and taking advanced-level courses. The college offers a wide range of AS-level, A-level and vocational courses, with a smaller number of courses at lower levels. The college has approximately 2,275 learners. The largest areas of provision are health and social care, science and mathematics, and sport. Other areas include arts and media, languages and literature, business, travel and tourism, social sciences, humanities and information and communications technology.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- The college has no significant weaknesses.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- With an unrelenting focus on a high-quality learning experience for young people, the principal has developed a highly skilled leadership team, and established a culture in which staff and learners flourish and grow. There is a pervasive appetite for teaching and learning at Huddersfield New College within a vibrant culture of high expectations for academic, vocational, personal and sporting excellence. Consequently, the principal, college leaders and governors make a genuine investment in transforming the lives of the young people who attend. They oversee a college in which learners develop a love of learning and make rapid progress.
- The rich and varied curriculum ensures that learners can take subjects that prepare them very well for their future learning and employment. College leaders understand the nature of the local and regional economy and analyse the results of each course that learners take. Consequently, the curriculum provides many opportunities for learners to take courses that suit their interests and aspirations for higher education and future careers. A clear sense of enterprise exists throughout the college. As a result, staff are creative and thoughtful about their teaching. Recent innovations include a growing sporting excellence programme; college-wide promotion of the idea of the 'growth mind-set' to encourage skills improvement; and the introduction of a well-regarded religious studies course.
- Learners' progress is exceptional in English and strong in mathematics because the leadership team has provided the challenge, resources and commitment that enable teachers to teach well, and learners to succeed.
- Leaders and governors have worked tirelessly to ensure that the college is financially sound. They have maintained a budget surplus under very tight financial constraints and much reduced funding. Despite these difficulties, they fund staff bursaries, enable learners to participate in life-enhancing visits and experiences, and have extended, developed and improved the college estate.
- Through accurate, rigorous and ongoing self-assessment, teachers, subject managers, governors and senior leaders know the college's strengths and areas for improvement. They use this knowledge well to set challenging targets for staff supported by extensive professional development, mentoring and coaching. Consequently, teachers think deeply about their teaching and appreciate the opportunities that the leadership team provides to improve teaching practice further.
- Leaders and managers provide many opportunities, through work with local secondary schools and the Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Service, for thorough and impartial careers and academic guidance to help learners applying to come to the college, and those who are completing their studies, to make the right decision for their future.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and understanding of diversity are exemplary; learners celebrate and welcome their differences and feel extremely comfortable at college. They appreciate a culture in which they are valued for who they are. For example, gender-neutral toilets exist throughout the college. Because leaders have developed a highly inclusive college ethos, learners exemplify the very best of British values. For example, the large majority of learners participated in recent elections to the student union.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Governors of the corporation provide highly effective support and challenge to the principal. To ensure they have the knowledge, skills and expertise to carry out their roles, governors go through an extensive and rigorous application and interview process before appointment, and benefit from wide-ranging professional development.
 - Governors analyse achievement data rigorously to determine the effectiveness of leaders' actions to maintain improvement throughout the college. They are advocates for the college and strive to ensure that learners receive the very best education in a well-managed, well-resourced learning environment
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Through a carefully structured, well-resourced and detailed focus on safeguarding, learners feel safe and are safe. They understand the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation in all its forms.
 - Safeguarding is rigorous and effective, because leaders and managers have evaluated risks appropriately and developed a culture in which all learners and staff know how to raise concerns in the knowledge that managers will act upon those concerns.
 - Governors and college leaders have ensured that, following staff training in the 'Prevent' duty and British values, these themes are reflected well in the college mission and values statements, and in planning for teaching and learning. Staff and learners understand and report risks, which managers record diligently; they then develop a very clear audit trail of all actions and interventions taken to refer, support and protect learners.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is outstanding

- Skilled and enthusiastic teachers consistently set high expectations for their learners. They know their learners very well and use detailed assessment information effectively to plan and deliver engaging lessons that motivate and challenge learners. As a result, the large majority of learners on most courses make excellent progress from their starting points.
- In AS- and A-level classes, learners work diligently and collaboratively to discuss and debate key concepts and frameworks. They are able to contribute respectfully to critical discussions and make secure links between theory and practice. Teachers facilitate learning very effectively, empowering learners to develop their independence and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers take a forensic approach to the monitoring of learners' progress and achievement. Teachers use ongoing assessments and checking of learning very effectively to pinpoint priorities for development. They set homework regularly and mark it promptly, and the majority provide detailed and timely written feedback to learners. They encourage learners to evaluate their own performance, and set their own clear and challenging targets for further improvement. As a result, in the current year a large majority of learners are making sustained progress, with many exceeding their target grades based on their prior achievement.
- Specialist teachers in English and mathematics support learners very well to develop their skills in these subjects. Learners benefit from a range of appropriate courses, well matched to learners' skills, goals and prior achievements. Learners receive support to work towards GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. As a result, the number of learners achieving these qualifications at grades A* to C has improved significantly. Teachers of other subjects reinforce the importance of applied literacy and numeracy very well in subject lessons. Teachers consistently focus on developing learners' use and understanding of key terminology and subject-specific terms. Most learners use this terminology with confidence in their explanations.
- Learners benefit from high-quality resources that support their learning inside and outside the classroom. Regular subject support sessions, good information technology (IT) facilities, and trips, visits and guest speakers all help learners to develop their subject knowledge and understanding. Many learners develop their employability skills by undertaking a range of enrichment activities, work placements and additional short courses. For example, in travel and tourism, learners benefit from additional qualifications in resort representative skills, cabin crew skills and event management, to enhance communication, team working and interpersonal skills.
- Support for learners with high needs, for example learners who have disability and those with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, and for others who need extra help, is very effective and ensures they achieve as well as their peers. Staff identify learners' support needs effectively using systematic and well-understood arrangements. Managers have also put in place very effective arrangements to help learners make the move from school to college. They provide additional support for learners quickly where needed. Staff use highly effective and flexible ways to support learners, ensuring that the college is a very inclusive and welcoming place where all learners can flourish and succeed. For example, the New College Diversity Club provides a safe and welcoming space where learners can build friendships.
- Specialist technology effectively supports all learners to develop their literacy skills. For example, text to speech software, promoted through the 'Plug in and Proofread' initiative, empowers learners to check the accuracy of their own written work and make corrections where needed.
- Learners of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) benefit from a resource area which provides specialist support and learning resources. This helps ESOL learners to make excellent progress in their English language skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

are outstanding

- A central and highly successful feature of the college ethos is that all learners, irrespective of background or barriers to learning, should have the very best opportunities to achieve and develop into confident young adults. Strategies to promote personal development are exemplary and the impact on learners' development is hugely beneficial.
- Learners' behaviour is excellent as a result of the highly effective teaching and support they receive. Learners settle in lessons very well, participate effectively, concentrate well and keep well-organised files. They make excellent use of study facilities outside lessons. Around college they are polite, respectful and well disciplined. They open doors, wait for others, and offer to assist visitors.
- Progress tutors work extremely effectively to develop learners' self-confidence, aided by the clear, thorough and accessible progress monitoring systems which enhance learners' understanding of their own progress and potential.

- The college's comprehensive 'Open Door' service supports learners' health and well-being effectively. Events throughout the year include self-esteem month, 'tea and chat' to help learners cope with exam anxiety and a well-being fair.
- Learners acquire excellent employability skills in lessons and from enrichment and other activities. Work experience overseas, additional qualifications, and community performances all help to broaden their horizons. Teachers encourage team working, peer assessment, and effective communication. Learners' attendance and punctuality are very good.
- Learners with high needs receive excellent support and develop good independence skills; staff enable them to overcome any difficulties so that they achieve as well as other learners. Arrangements for young carers include a mutually supportive lunch group. There are numerous examples of staff going beyond normal expectations to enable individual learners to succeed. Learner testimonials show how much they value the support and the positive impact on their studies. Several commented that getting good grades helped them to feel good about themselves, clearly illustrating the positive impact on self-esteem.
- Staff plan careers advice and guidance extremely well, so that learners understand their choices and are clear about their next steps in education or employment. A wide variety of progression events and activities enable learners to broaden their awareness of the range of possibilities. Specialist events include those centred on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) providing workshops in dentistry, podiatry, pathology, engineering, food science, software design and manufacturing.
- Learners participating in sports at high levels are offered specialist enrichment activities and are well supported to enable them to train and compete without hindrance to their studies. A sports champion helps them to pursue their aspirations to become professionals, for example through advice on international scholarships.
- Tutorials and a range of other activities enable learners to understand British values very well. Teachers and tutors use activities focused on events such as the European Union referendum to support learners' understanding of democracy and to encourage those old enough to vote to do so. Learners value opportunities to participate in democratic processes within the college, for example electing learner council representatives. Learners understand the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They recognise what should be reported and to who.
- Within the college different groups of learners accept each other's differences and learn to co-exist harmoniously. Events such as Black History month, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) activities and anti-bullying week promote understanding effectively. Learners feel very safe and have the confidence and knowledge to tell adults of any safeguarding concerns. Teachers promote health and safety well in lessons.

Outcomes for learners

are outstanding

- Learners make excellent progress from below average starting points. As a result of highly effective teaching, support and guidance, learners improve their confidence and self-esteem, achieve their qualifications and are well motivated to progress to higher levels of study, training or employment.
- Overall success rates are high, well above those nationally and those for similar providers. Outcomes for vocational courses are exceptionally good; success rates are extremely high and learners make excellent progress, with a very high proportion successfully progressing to higher education.
- Teachers and managers have succeeded in rapidly improving the rate of learners' progress in recent years, through high-quality teaching and by developing and refining progress monitoring and support systems. This has ensured that learners achieve better grades than might be expected from their prior achievements. Improved outcomes are particularly notable for learners who are known to have been eligible for free school meals: a group who make up almost one fifth of the college cohort.
- A very high proportion of learners enrolling with a grade D in GCSE English succeed in gaining grades A* to C. In mathematics, an above average proportion achieve a higher grade after starting the course with a prior grade D. Learners who start college with GCSE grades below D in English or mathematics also do very well in the qualifications they study as stepping stones to GCSE.
- Very well-planned care and support arrangements have a strong beneficial impact on learners' progress and achievements. Learners in receipt of high-needs funding on mainstream courses make excellent progress and achieve their qualification aims. Care leavers, those in the care of the local authority and young carers achieve well because of the highly specialised support arrangements.
- Teachers and other adults act as excellent role models and promote high expectations and aspirations, helping learners to develop a wide range of skills suitable for employment and higher levels of study. Learners communicate well, work independently or collaboratively, follow instructions carefully and readily take on responsibilities. Work experience placements, the varied enrichment programme and additional qualifications all make valuable contributions to the range of skills developed. A high proportion of

learners progress to university and almost all others progress to positive destinations including employment and apprenticeships.

- The culture of the college ensures that learners are proud of their work and have high expectations of themselves. They produce work of a high standard and develop good independent learning and study skills.

Provider details

Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,398
Principal/CEO	Angela Williams
Website address	www.huddnewcoll.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 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	23	0	197	0	2,035	21	0	0
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 14-16	0							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							

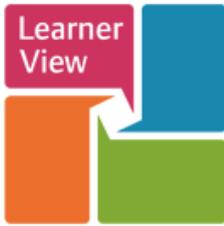
Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Ruth James	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jill Gray	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Ingle	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the deputy 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, and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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