

Waverley Studio College

311 Yardley Green Road, Bordesley Green, Birmingham, B9 5QA

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Inadequate 4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils	Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- A lack of stability in leadership and a high turnover of teachers have seriously impeded all aspects of the quality of education provided to students.
- Systems for tracking students' progress from their starting points on entry are not in place. Because of this, leaders and governors have not had an accurate picture of the strengths of the college and areas of weakness.
- The curriculum does not help to quicken the progress of those students who enter the college with low basic skills or extend the most able.
- Achievement is inadequate. Students do not make enough progress over time in English and mathematics and their attainment in a range of subjects is too low.
- Disadvantaged students underachieve and attend less well in relation to other students nationally. Leaders do not evaluate the impact of additional funding to support these students well enough.
- There are wide variations in the achievement of boys and girls across subjects and across year groups.
- A lack of permanent teachers has meant that teaching over time is inadequate. In some cases, changes of teachers have led to a lack of coverage of examination requirements.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough. Teachers do not use information about their students' abilities effectively to set tasks that challenge students to make the progress they are capable of. Students are not encouraged to take pride in their work.
- Students' attendance in all year groups is too low. As a result, leaders cannot be assured that all students are safe.
- Behaviour requires improvement. Despite improvements, students' attitudes to learning remain too variable across subjects.
- The sixth form is inadequate. Students do not attend well and poor teaching over time has disrupted students' progress in some courses.

The school has the following strengths

- The current Principal, who has only recently taken up post, has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the college.
- Students achieve well in some vocational courses, particularly health and social care.
- Support from Waverley School has provided some interim arrangements for teaching, including in core subjects, and this is beginning to have an impact.
- Students in the sixth form value their work experience placements. All are currently on-track to enter education, employment or training when they leave.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 24 lessons or parts of lessons. They carried out some joint observations with senior leaders. Observations of other aspects of the college’s work were also made, such as tutor time and an assembly.
- Inspectors also looked at students’ books and folders during lessons and as a separate activity.
- Meetings were held with groups of students and the college’s staff, including senior and middle leaders. Discussions were also held with members of the governing body.
- There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View questionnaire to view. Inspectors took into account surveys of parents’ views carried out by the college.
- The views of 16 members of staff were analysed in response to Ofsted’s questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the college’s self-evaluation and improvement plans, college policies and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Information about students’ progress, attainment, attendance and exclusions was also examined as were the college’s records of safeguarding, and of teachers’ performance linked to salary scales.

Inspection team

Chris Chapman, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Peter Nelson

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Annetta Minard

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Waverley Studio College is a studio school. It is a much smaller than average-sized secondary school which also offers sixth form provision. The age range of students is between 14-19. It has a capacity of 300 students and is currently operating at just over half of this.
- The studio college opened in September 2013 and is sponsored by the Waverley Education Foundation.
- The studio college currently occupies the sixth form centre at Waverley School. New, purpose-built facilities are currently under construction on a separate site and due to open in January 2016.
- The current Principal has been in post since April 2015. The school has had two previous Principals since opening and one interim Principal.
- The previous Chair of the Governing Body left post earlier this year.
- The studio college has experienced considerable changes in teaching staff and learning coaches since opening. A number of subjects are taught by supply teachers. Staff from Waverley School now teach a number of subjects.
- A number of students who joined the studio college have had a disrupted education in the past.
- The proportion of girls in the college is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, who are those eligible for support from the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for students known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after in public care), is above average.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average.
- Students are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. More than half of students are from Pakistani heritages. More than one tenth of students are from Black African heritages.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- A small number of students attend courses full-time at places away from the college site. These places include the Blue River Academy, The Lighthouse Group Centre, The Learnfit Academy and the City of Birmingham School.
- It is not possible to judge whether the college meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress, because students have yet to complete their Key Stage 4 programmes of study.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers use information about students' progress, prior knowledge and understanding, to match work to their needs
 - embedding high expectations of what students can achieve and how students should behave in all lessons
 - promoting the reading, writing and mathematical skills of students in subjects outside English and mathematics
 - ensuring that students improve their work and skills based on high quality guidance offered by their teachers
 - embedding recent systems to monitor and check the quality of teaching so that teachers are provided with regular feedback on how to improve their practice
 - securing the appointment of high-quality permanent teachers.
- Improve leadership and management by:

- ensuring that robust systems are in place to monitor and track the progress of students from an accurate baseline of their starting points on entry to the college, including for those students with disabilities or special educational needs
 - making sure that plans for improvement address key priorities that are identified through rigorous self-evaluation and that these plans are linked to measurable targets so that the intended impact of actions can be evaluated
 - developing the skills of all leaders so that they have the capacity to bring about essential improvements to the quality of teaching and achievement of students
 - ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of all students, including those students with weaker basic skills on entry and the most-able students
 - evaluating the impact of the spending of pupil premium funding more thoroughly so that leaders and governors know which strategies are working best
 - carefully checking the accuracy of teachers’ assessment of students’ work in all subjects
 - making more systematic checks on teachers’ planning and students’ work to ensure that examination requirements are fully met
 - providing governors with robust and accurate information about the progress of students.
- Increase attendance so that it is in line with or better than that of other schools nationally by strengthening the range of strategies used to engage with parents and other agencies.
 - Improve achievement at both Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 by:
 - rigorously tracking the progress of all students and groups of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, across subject areas so that underachievement can be quickly identified and tackled
 - implementing well-planned programmes to support students with weaker basic skills on entry so that they can catch-up with their peers.

An external review of governance, and of the college’s use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Since opening in September 2013, the studio college has experienced considerable instability in staffing. Changes to leadership, teaching staff and learning coaches, coupled with a failure to recruit substantive staff to some posts, have disrupted the education of students. The college has lacked the capacity to bring about sustained improvements. As a result, the quality of teaching and students' achievement and behaviour have been adversely affected.
- Leaders and governors have not been able to establish an accurate view of the college's performance. Systems to monitor and track the progress of students from their starting points on entry to the college are not yet embedded. Inaccuracies in teachers' assessments in some subjects mean that current records do not present a reliable picture of achievement. Self-evaluation has not focused sufficiently on students' progress.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are too vague. This is because self-evaluation has not been rigorous enough. Improvement plans do not have measurable targets so that the impact of leaders' work on students' achievement and behaviour can be monitored and evaluated. This means that leaders cannot be sure of the extent to which their actions are making a difference to students' achievement, behaviour and personal development.
- Many subject leaders are new to their positions and so it is too early to gauge any sustained impact of their work. Some have begun to make some positive changes to address the deficiencies of past provision, for example, to the quality of the curriculum and to teaching in their subject areas.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support to improve the attendance, behaviour and achievement of disadvantaged students. Low attendance and inadequate achievement mean that this funding has not been used successfully. The impact of this funding is not evaluated well enough. The intended impact on improving attendance, for example, was not evaluated in the report offered to inspectors. As a result, leaders cannot be sure which strategies that are funded provide best value for money.
- Not all teachers have performance management targets. This means that they lack a clear sense of what they need to focus on to support the college in bringing about improvements and cannot be held to account for ensuring that their teaching gets better and that their students achieve well. The high turnover of staff has meant that there is little evidence of the efficacy of performance management procedures at the college.
- The current curriculum offer does not reflect that which has been advertised in the prospectus or on the website, but is considerably narrower. Although some adaptations have taken place to meet students' needs better, the curriculum is not successful in doing this. Insufficient provision has been made to strengthen the literacy and numeracy skills of those students who enter the college with weaker skills on entry. More-able students are not able to sit courses that challenge them to achieve their potential.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted adequately through the study of religious education in Key Stage 4. Their awareness of other faiths and cultures is further developed through their participation in 'diversity days'. A well-planned assembly programme, and partnerships with a range of organisations, help to foster students' appreciation of values such as tolerance and respect and prepare them adequately for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is enriched by a range of activities that enable students to develop their personal and employability skills, including in the sixth form. However, there is currently no clear system or framework in place to capture students' progression in these skills.
- Students have access to suitable, independent careers advice, guidance and support. As a result, all

students have plans to enter employment, education or training when they leave the college.

- Leaders have a strong commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in both policy and practice. These values are positively promoted to students. However, variation between the achievement of different groups of students, such as between girls and boys, demonstrates that the college is not yet successful in realising leaders' aspirations to promote equal opportunities in the outcomes of students.
- The impact of leaders' work to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not evaluated well and leaders are not clear enough on the progress that this group of students has made.
- Leaders have failed to improve students' attendance which is well below the national average.
- The Principal, who is new to post, recognises the challenges that the college faces if it is to deliver an acceptable standard of education. Staff and students feel positive about her appointment. Already, new procedures have been adopted for checking the quality of teaching. This is helping leaders to identify weaker teaching and support is put in place to make improvements. Behaviour has improved and exclusions have reduced. Plans are also in place to re-develop the curriculum. However, it is too early to say whether these and subsequent actions will secure the sustainable, wide-ranging improvements that are needed.
- The support of the Waverley Education Foundation has not led to consistent or sustainable improvements. In some cases, such as the use of subject teachers from Waverley School, students are benefitting from much better teaching than they have had in the past. The studio college is heavily reliant upon this support.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements for the recruitment and vetting of staff. Procedures to keep children safe are clear and understood by all staff.
- Leaders have good procedures in place to identify suitable off-site provision for students. Effective relationships with providers ensure that students are safe and that an appropriate curriculum is followed. Regular reports enable leaders to monitor the attendance and behaviour of students. However, the reporting of students' progress was not clear enough in the records inspectors examined.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the college should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have acted appropriately to tackle weaknesses in leadership, including through the management of performance. However, they also acknowledge the impact that changes to leadership and the high turnover of teachers has had on their ambitions for the college. Governors have therefore not been successful in securing an acceptable standard of education for students.
 - Governors hold leaders to account by asking them challenging and probing questions. They have received detailed and regular reports that cover the quality of teaching and students' attendance. They express frustration at the lack of high quality information that they have received about the progress of students at the college. This has meant that they have not had an accurate and full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college's performance.
 - Governors are also unclear about the impact of pupil premium spending. This is because leaders' evaluation of how this funding is spent is not thorough enough.
 - Governors have fulfilled their statutory responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. Regular audits are undertaken so that governors can be sure that all requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of students

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.

- Although students' attitudes to learning are improving, they are still too variable across different subjects. Where teaching is weak, students lose interest and engage in low-level disruption such as talking amongst themselves when they should be working. This slows their progress in lessons and results in careless standards of presentation from some students.
- A small number of students are slow to get to their lessons and arrive late.
- A significant minority of staff who responded to the Ofsted staff questionnaire felt that behaviour was not good.
- Leaders have acted decisively in recent weeks to improve behaviour. This includes the implementation of a new behaviour policy with clear consequences to tackle negative behaviour, and more robust systems for monitoring students' behaviour. Students say that behaviour has improved considerably as a result of this.
- Students look smart and wear their uniform with pride. Students are respectful of their environment. No litter or graffiti was seen in the college buildings.
- Students generally circulate the site sensibly and in an orderly manner. Behaviour seen outside lessons was generally good.
- Fixed-term exclusions, which rose earlier this academic year under previous leaders, have reduced sharply. This is as a result of the college's improved systems for managing behaviour.

Safety

- The college's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate.
- Students' attendance is too low and in the bottom ten percent of all schools nationally. Leaders have been unable to arrest the decline on the previous year's figures. Because students are not at the college, leaders cannot be sure that they are safe.
- Students say that they feel safe when they are at the college. They say that incidents of bullying are rare and the records presented to inspectors confirm this. Students understand the dangers and impact of different types of bullying because this is given a high profile in the college through assemblies.
- As a result of the focus on e-safety through assemblies, posters and external visits, students are aware of the risks of working on the internet.
- Visitors and assemblies make students aware of a range of other risks including gang culture and crime, sexual exploitation and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- The behaviour and safety of students attending off-site provision is monitored effectively through regular checks made with providers.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because it has not enabled students to make the progress over time that they should have in a number of subject areas. The college's records confirm that students have experienced weak teaching, often as a result of non-permanent staff. There remains too much variability in the quality of teaching, and expectations are not consistently high enough to drive standards up with the urgency needed in all areas.
- In too many lessons teachers do not provide students with work that is sufficiently challenging or interesting enough to engage them in order to promote good learning. As a result, students can switch off, and engage in low-level disruption. This hinders their progress.

- Not enough account is taken of the abilities and needs of different groups of students when planning lessons. As a result, the less able struggle and the most able do not make the progress that they are capable of.
- Teachers do not use assessment well enough to promote progression in students' knowledge, skills and understanding over time. The college's marking policy is not applied consistently and comments in students' work are often too cursory to support improvements in learning. Students do not always act on the guidance offered by their teachers; therefore the feedback teachers provide has little impact. Students show little evidence of pride in their work and inspectors saw how students' presentation declined in some books.
- Too little is done to promote students' literacy and numeracy skills across subjects outside English and mathematics. This inhibits students' ability to develop and apply these skills in different contexts.
- Although students are experiencing better teaching in some subjects, inspectors found that there were considerable deficiencies in students' skills and knowledge. In some cases students had not covered parts of their examination syllabus because of poor planning and teaching in the past. Some teachers are working hard to help students to catch-up, but against a legacy of underachievement.
- Where learning is strong, it is characterised by positive relationships between teachers and students and teachers' excellent subject knowledge. This was particularly the case in some English lessons and health and social care lessons seen. In a Year 11 English lesson, the teacher's skilful use of questioning, thoughtful use of visual stimuli and dynamic delivery engaged students in their learning. Her expert knowledge of the assessment criteria for the examination enabled students to understand clearly what they needed to do to succeed. As a result, students were well motivated and tackled a sample examination task with confidence.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The progress of students from all backgrounds over time is poor in a number of subjects. This is linked directly to weaknesses in the quality of teaching and assessment. Improvements are too recent to have ensured that students reach their potential by the time they leave the college.
- Leaders have not tracked carefully enough how students progress from their individual starting points on entry to the college or taken into account how well students achieve in comparison to other schools nationally. At times, some of the information used by leaders has been inaccurate.
- The college's assessments for English and mathematics, which have been moderated by teachers from Waverley School, show that students' progress in these subjects is set to be below that of other schools nationally.
- Students achieve less well in mathematics than in English. This is the case for both year groups in Key Stage 4. In the current Year 10, students are making less progress in mathematics than in English and are, on average, attaining one grade lower. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between these subjects.
- Disadvantaged students make progress that is in line with, or in some cases, better than their peers in the college. However, they make considerably less progress than other students nationally. The college's records show that the in-school gap in students' attainment in English is around half a grade behind other students and in mathematics, there is no gap. However, in relation to other students nationally, students' attainment is low, with disadvantaged students attaining one grade less than other students nationally in English and a grade and a half less than other students nationally in mathematics.
- College records show some wide gaps and variations between the achievement of boys and girls. In the current Year 11, only one-fifth of girls are on-track to make expected progress in mathematics. However, in English, boys perform considerably less well than girls.

- Attainment across some other subjects such as science, graphics and religious education is too low and shows inadequate progress over time.
- Scrutiny of students' work shows that the most able are not being challenged to achieve as well as they should. In the case of some students, there was clear evidence of deterioration in effort and progress in their work over time.
- Students are expected to attain well in some vocational subjects, particularly in health and social care. They are also expected to achieve well in business studies in Key Stage 4. When inspectors checked students' learning and work in lessons they were able to confirm that this is the case.
- Records show that students who are currently in Year 10 are achieving better than the current Year 11.
- Leaders recently introduced a programme that offers additional support to improve students' reading skills. It is too early to gauge the impact of this programme.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make better progress than other students in the college.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is too variable. Students in Year 11 have made as much progress as their peers across a range of subjects. In Year 10, progress over time is slower and less consistent compared with other students. Leaders have not tracked the progress of this group of students well enough and teachers are not clear on how best to support these students in the classroom to ensure that they are achieving as well as they should.
- The progress of students who attend off-site provision is unclear because reports issued by providers do not comment adequately on students' achievement.
- The college does not enter students early for examinations.

The sixth form provision

is inadequate

- Leadership of the sixth form is inadequate. Across the limited range of vocational subjects offered, the quality of teaching and students' achievement are too variable and inadequate overall. In information technology, for example, students have made inadequate progress over time because staffing changes have disrupted programmes of study. Students expressed concerns about their lack of progress to inspectors.
- In a number of lessons visited, group sizes are so small that they may not be financially viable and a number of students are absent or late. In a Year 12 business studies lesson visited, for example, no students attended.
- The curriculum offers a narrow range of three vocational subjects that is not reflective of the much broader qualifications offer advertised on the website. Low admissions in Year 12 demonstrate that the current offer does not have the appeal to fulfil the needs and aspirations of the community.
- The college's records about students' achievement show that students are on track to perform well in health and social care. Students, particularly in Year 12 are not performing as well as they should in business studies and in Year 13 in information technology.
- Students have the opportunity to re-take GCSE English and GCSE mathematics. However, teaching of these subjects is not consistently good. Too little account is taken of students' prior learning so that the skills students are lacking are not being targeted directly by teachers to enable them to make good progress.

- In health and social care, teaching is good. The teacher's effective planning and close monitoring of students' progress ensure that students are clear about what they need to do to achieve well. Students engage enthusiastically with activities. The positive attitudes and high aspirations nurtured as a result of this good teaching are reflected in many students' ambitions to progress to pursue related qualifications and careers when they leave the college.
- Students have access to a suitable range of activities to develop their personal and employability skills, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Students enjoy relevant work experience placements on a weekly basis, enabled through strong partnerships with some employers. Staff visit students at their placement to assess aspects of their progress.
- The college provides suitable information, advice and guidance. As a result, all students are on-track to secure a place in education, employment or training when they leave the college. More than half of students have confirmed offers from universities.
- Students say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare. They are confident that they could report any issues to their form tutors and that they would be resolved. They also felt that behaviour had improved recently across the college. Inspectors found that attitudes to learning varied across subjects. This was reflected in students' low attendance, poor punctuality and lack of work ethic in some lessons.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139788
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	450294

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy studio school
Age range of pupils	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Giora Berman
Principal	Sofia Darr
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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