

Inspection of The City of Leicester College

Downing Drive, Evington, Leicester, Leicestershire LE5 6LN

Inspection dates: 26–27 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value the school's mantra, 'be happy, be ambitious, make a difference'. They know that it underpins much of what they do at school. Many pupils enjoy coming to school. They said that new pupils who join the school part-way through a year find it easy to settle in.

Pupils' attendance is not as good as it should be. Some pupils are regularly absent from school. This is particularly true for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils.

The school celebrates diversity. Pupils benefit from mixing with other pupils who may have a different heritage, religion or belief. One pupil told us, 'You can learn a lot about different cultures.' Pupils feel that the school is a welcoming, safe place to be.

Pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers. They say that teachers help them do well and be aspirational for what they can accomplish in the future. Some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils told us that behaviour has improved because leaders have simplified the rules. Pupils conduct themselves well. Bullying sometimes takes place. Most pupils told us that staff resolve issues quickly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders do not make sure that all pupils with SEND achieve as well as possible. In some subjects, teachers do not use the information they hold about pupils with SEND to make sure that they get the help they need. In other subjects, for example English, teachers plan more carefully to meet the needs of these pupils. Pupils with SEND who are taught in the 'connect centre' do well.

The range of topics is too narrow in some subjects. They do not meet the requirements of the key stage 3 national curriculum. In many subjects, new curriculum leaders have reviewed the curriculum plans to make sure that topics are taught in a logical order. For instance, in mathematics, teachers know what to teach, when and why they should teach it. Teachers revisit work frequently so that pupils can build on what they know already and remember more. However, over time, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

In some subjects, teachers provide pupils with chances to enhance their understanding of the topics they are studying. For instance, in geography, Year 7 pupils asked a local Montserratian what it was like living near an erupting volcano. In religious education (RE), Year 9 pupils were discussing what they knew about God. Pupils do not always receive work that challenges them to think more deeply.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Lessons run smoothly. Pupils know how to improve their work, using a system they call 'up-levelling'. In all year groups, pupils reflect on their work and think about how they can make it better. Pupils find this process helpful, since it makes them think about what they know from what they have already studied. This can help them apply their knowledge to new situations.

In the sixth form, teachers' subject knowledge is consistently strong. They use subject-specific vocabulary well to explain key ideas. This helps students to achieve well, particularly in academic subjects.

Leaders make sure that pupils who speak English as an additional language get the right help. Most of these pupils pick up the basics of the English language quickly.

The curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to become confident and independent. For instance, we saw Year 8 pupils lead an assembly on behalf of Amnesty International about the importance of democracies. 'No-hate ambassadors' teach their peers about tolerance. Pupils know the importance of looking after their mental health.

Leaders provide sixth-form students with a wide range of academic and vocational subject choices. They benefit from an enrichment programme, including learning British sign language, making ceramics and raising funds for the charity 'One Nepal'. All students have the chance to experience the world of work, although not all students gain a work placement. Most students complete their courses and achieve well.

Changes to leadership have brought a fresh impetus to bring about improvements. There are systems in place for leaders to check on the impact of their actions. However, some leaders are not clear on their responsibilities or confident in their roles. This limits how effective they are at improving the quality of education.

Governors know what needs to improve. They do not check that leaders are improving these aspects quickly enough, for example for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils know how to reduce any risks and stay safe. For example, they understand issues they may face in the local area related to drugs and knife crime. Pupils have adults they can talk to if they are worried about anything. They feel well supported.

Staff are well trained. They know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk. They are confident that leaders will take any action necessary. Leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Sometimes, the records they keep about pupils are not updated quickly enough or do not include enough detail.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the key stage 3 curriculum plans match the ambition of the national curriculum. Pupils do not study a broad range of topics in some subjects. This limits their knowledge and understanding. Leaders must make sure that the curriculum plans for each subject enable pupils to develop the knowledge that they should.
- Some teachers do not understand the particular needs of pupils with SEND and do not provide them with the support that they need in their lessons. This limits these pupils' achievements. Leaders must make sure that teachers know how to plan to meet the needs of these pupils so that they achieve well.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils with challenging work. As a result, pupils do not always deepen their learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers are ambitious in the work that they set pupils.
- Some leaders do not fully understand their responsibilities. They do not hold staff sufficiently to account for their work. Every leader, particularly those new to their role, should receive the necessary training to carry out their duties effectively.
- Governors do not have a close enough oversight of leaders' work. They do not check that leaders' actions are bringing about improvements quickly enough. Governors must make sure they have the skills and training necessary to carry out their roles well.
- Sometimes, leaders do not ensure that their actions to keep children safe are recorded quickly or thoroughly enough. They do not check that safeguarding information about a child is held securely in one place. Leaders must ensure that for any pupil for whom there is a safeguarding concern, there is a comprehensive, up-to-date record.
- The attendance of some pupils, including those in the sixth form, is not good enough. Too many disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are regularly absent from school. Leaders must work with parents and carers to make sure that all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, attend school well.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	120297
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10110041
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,729
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	346
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	John Andrews
Headteacher	Anne Gregory
Website	www.cityleicester.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	23–24 May 2017

Information about this school

- In September 2018, a new deputy headteacher was appointed.
- The headteacher now works on a part-time basis. She currently shares the responsibility for leading the school with the deputy headteacher, who is now the co-headteacher.
- Since January 2018, the school has been receiving external support from leaders at Soar Valley College.
- The school uses six alternative providers. These are the Leicester Partnership School, Gaz Auto School, Pedestrian Music, Axlr8, Brolay Farm and Mann Motors.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. We met with the coordinator for the provision for pupils with SEND, leaders with oversight of the pupil premium funding and the Year 7 catch-up funding, and leaders responsible for the sixth form.
- I met with four members of the governing body, including the chair. I also met with a representative of the local authority.
- We met with teachers and support staff.
- We met with groups of pupils from each year group.
- We did deep dives in five subjects: mathematics, English, science, including biology, modern foreign languages and geography. We met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' workbooks, met with pupils, and met with teachers of the lessons we visited.
- We observed the behaviour of pupils during social times and spoke with pupils informally.
- I met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss safeguarding. We also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. I looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's system for recruiting staff and the school's single central register.
- We spoke with two of the school's alternative providers.
- We took into account the 39 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We also considered the 92 responses to the staff survey and the 379 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including self-evaluation of the school's performance, curriculum plans and information concerning pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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