

REVIEW REPORT FOR  
THE CITY OF LEICESTER  
COLLEGE

<b>Name of School:</b>	The City of Leicester College
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Ken Vernon
<b>Hub:</b>	The Jubilee Trust
<b>School phase:</b>	Secondary with sixth form
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	Aspire Learning Partnership

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	The school opted not to have estimates
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	05/11/2025
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review:</b>	Effective
<b>Date of last QA Review:</b>	06/11/2024
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Requires Improvement
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	26/11/2019

**Quality Assurance Review**

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers, agrees that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

**Leadership at all levels** Not applicable

**Quality of provision and outcomes** Not applicable

**AND**

**Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and/or pupils with additional needs** Not applicable

**Area of excellence** None submitted for this review

**Previously accredited valid areas of excellence** Not applicable

**Overall peer evaluation estimate** The school opted not to have estimates

**Important information**

- The QA Review provides a peer evaluation of a school's practice in curriculum, teaching and learning, and leadership. It is a voluntary and developmental process, and the peer review team can evaluate and offer 'peer evaluation estimates' based only on what the school chooses to share with them.
- The QA Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.
- The QA Review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. If you choose to share this report, or extracts thereof, externally (e.g. on your website or with parents), please ensure that it is accompanied with the following text:

*Challenge Partners is a charity working to advance education for the public benefit. We are not a statutory accountability body. The QA Review does not audit schools' safeguarding or behaviour policies and practices. However, Lead Reviewers and visiting reviewers are expected to follow Challenge Partners' safeguarding policy and report any concerns as set out in the procedures.*

## **1. Context and character of the school**

The City of Leicester College is a well above average sized, mixed secondary school with a sixth form. It is located within Leicester local authority and is an academy converter within the Aspire Learning Partnership. The number on roll in the sixth form is above the national average. The purpose-built school buildings and grounds provide students with plenty of space. The school is popular and is now oversubscribed.

The proportion of disadvantaged students is above the national average. The majority of students are Asian or Asian British Indian. The proportion of students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is well above the national average and there is a great deal of religious diversity.

The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is close to the national average, while the proportion of students with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is below the national average.

The headteacher has been in post since 2020 and has an experienced leadership team. The school's vision of 'ambition for all' aims to challenge every member of the school community to be the best they can be and is underpinned by the four character pillars which are 'intellectual, moral, community and performance'.

### **2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well**

- The school's vision of 'ambition for all' permeates the school and leaders at all levels share a deep commitment to inclusion, personal development and academic success. Leaders are relentless in ensuring that every student is supported and challenged to achieve their best.
- Senior and middle leaders are experienced, collaborative and deeply invested in the school's success. Clear systems of accountability ensure consistency and shared responsibility. Middle leaders are empowered to confidently lead their areas. They articulate assessment systems fluently and align their practice with the school's four character pillars and six learning principles. Heads of department value the three-year Key Stage 3 provision as this allows students time to secure knowledge and skills.

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- The school development plan drives continuing professional themes and there is a renewed focus on adaptive teaching, assessment and curriculum intent. Each teacher undertakes a professional enquiry question linked to appraisal, with eight structured training sessions per year, including four led by senior leaders. Regular staff training ensures a further focus on the zones of regulation and inclusive classroom strategies.
- Professional learning is outward-facing and research-informed. Over the past three years this has evolved from an Education Endowment Foundation evidence base to a more contextual, enquiry-driven model focusing on 'lifting the lid' on learning. Twenty five staff either have or are completing National Professional Qualifications, and there are sixteen GCSE and four A-level exam markers, developing assessment expertise across departments. The early careers teacher (ECT) programme is rigorous and personalised and an 'ECT community' ensures the early identification of needs.
- Literacy provision is carefully planned. The NGRT reading tests in Years 7 and 12 diagnose reading needs, with targeted higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) intervention and phonics provision given where appropriate. Key Stage 4 students engage in disciplinary reading, for example academic sociology articles, and form tutors receive training in reciprocal reading strategies. As a result, reading ages and library engagement are both improving.
- Leaders use data to inform pastoral and academic interventions. Performance labels encourage ambition and reflection, while rewards link with the character programme and include commendation emails, pin badges, trips and prom tickets. Weekly staff bulletins share rewards data and celebrate achievement, ensuring consistency across all year groups.
- Enrichment is broad and inclusive, with nearly one hundred trips last year. Nearly all Key Stage 3 students are involved in a school club and sport has always been a strength. The school celebrates diversity through its community and culture day, where students wear cultural dress and share traditions. Religious and global awareness is woven through the curriculum and assemblies. Students feel empowered to discuss current issues such as global conflicts and humanitarian causes, reflecting the school's culture of mutual respect.

## **2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...**

- ... the best teaching methods were shared more widely.
- ... leaders linked the curriculum even more closely with the school's strong moral purpose.

## **3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well**

- There is a very positive climate for learning and students' behaviour is exemplary. They are respectful, considerate and proud of their school.
- The highly effective pastoral system creates a calm and positive start to each day. Attendance officers, line ups and tutor routines ensure consistency and high expectations. Form tutors typically remain with their groups from Years 7 to 11 and know their students well. The form tutor programme and daily assemblies place character at the heart of the school day and refer to current events. A recent assembly by a visiting poet had a transformative impact on a Year 11 student with SEND, who discovered confidence through sharing his own poetry.
- Reciprocal reading during tutor time follows a structured approach centred around culturally diverse texts. Students are encouraged to predict, clarify and question. In a Year 7 form tutor lesson, there was a very warm learning atmosphere and students felt confident enough to correct their teacher's pronunciation of 'meemaw'.
- Students describe their experience as 'perfect' and say 'teachers really care about us'. Support for EAL students includes specialist language lessons, bilingual teaching assistants (TAs) and translation apps. Frequent teacher check-ins promote confidence and inclusion. One student said that 'the teacher often goes through the first question with me first, so I know what I'm doing', showing the impact of personalised scaffolding. All students can articulate how their English and vocabulary has improved.
- Strong routines and ambitious vocabulary teaching were evident in many lessons, for example in a Year 7 English lesson on myths and legends, where pupils tackled sophisticated words such as 'tentative' and 'grievance'. In a Year 9 English lesson studying *The Crucible*, teacher exposition was a strength, using etymology to explore the meaning of the word 'hysteria'. This

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focus on the deeper understanding of language demonstrates the school's literacy-rich curriculum.

- In a Year 13 sociology lesson, the teacher skilfully challenged misconceptions and asked probing questions, while in Year 10 sociology, students applied their theoretical knowledge of Marxism to current issues, articulating complex ideas with confidence.
- The five phases of learning were embedded in Year 9 and 10 physical education lessons, with all students actively engaged. Girls learning about Fartlek training explored the etymology of the word, linking literacy to sport, while a new student from Kenya was sensitively supported by a peer. In boys' basketball lessons every student was motivated and responded very well to the teachers' questions.
- Practical sessions were well organised, and students were confident in explaining their learning. In a Year 7 art design and technology lesson, the teacher modelled and scaffolded typography and design principles. Year 9 geography students were asked to 'rag rate' policies on carbon capture and this developed their vocabulary and critical thinking.
- Student leadership is flourishing. Students hold ambassador roles in literacy, sport and numeracy. College captains are appointed through interviews and democratic elections, linking to the student council. A student manifesto is under development, and post-16 students receive leadership training through external programmes such as 'Just Like Us'.
- Sixth form students say that 'independence is heavily focussed on' and 'the school is friendly and encompassing'. The targeted academic and pastoral interventions, alongside enrichment and university preparation programmes, have led to improved Key Stage 5 outcomes.
- This is a successful school. Outcomes are consistently above the national average, and nearly all students move into education, employment or training.

### 3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

- ... opportunities to develop oracy were maximised, for example paired discussion being used to enable students to scaffold discussions and rehearse their ideas before giving their responses.
- ... teachers used a wider range of questioning techniques to check and develop students' understanding.

#### **4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and/or pupils with additional needs - What went well**

- All students are supported to achieve ambitious outcomes. This approach is 'learning-led', not 'label-led', and staff know students very well. The recent appointment of a Director of SEN with a background in social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and primary education has further strengthened provision and emphasised the importance of a graduated response.
- The school has an outward facing approach and works closely with partners both in the local authority and other trusts, to ensure that there is the best possible support for students. The vulnerable students panel meets fortnightly to review needs, triage support and ensure early intervention. Provision maps, team around the child meetings and pastoral support plans include work with external agencies.
- Teachers use Class Charts to record and share adaptive strategies for individual students. Intervention trackers enable real time monitoring and personalised mentoring. When adaptations are personalised in lessons, students thrive. For example, in a Year 10 music lesson, well established routines meant a prompt start and students were immediately engaged and focused. There was a high level of SEND need in the class and the teacher understood how to overcome any barriers so that all students could make progress.
- The Hidden Middle mentoring programme pairs passive or underachieving disadvantaged students with senior leaders for two years, and bespoke coaching enables those students who may otherwise have been 'hidden' to gain confidence.
- The school's Wyvern designated specialist provision (DSP) is for Year 7 and 8 students who have an EHCP with communication and interaction as their primary need. Inclusion spaces are purposeful, structured and promote independence. In one DSP lesson, the teacher made links between the Olympic games and the four character pillars, as well as activities the students had engaged with previously, giving them the confidence to participate. One student called himself 'dumb' for giving away an answer and his peer showed kindness saying, 'don't call yourself that', demonstrating how students support each other so well.
- Nearly nine-tenths of all disadvantaged students participate in at least two extra-curricular activities. The Year 10 Hackathon and Connect work experience group ensure that all students are fully represented. The Connect

pathway provides bespoke timetables, including work experience, ensuring students are prepared for college study or apprenticeships.

- Outcomes are positive. Nearly all students achieve English and mathematics qualifications. Attainment for disadvantaged students is above the national average, and they continue to close the gap with non-disadvantaged students at the school.

#### **4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and/or pupils with additional needs - Even better if...**

- ... there was more consistent use of suitable adaptations in lessons for students.
- ... teachers adapted resources such as word banks and visual instructions which students could use independently in their own learning.

#### **5. Area of Excellence**

None submitted for this review.



**Following the QA Review**

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse content reports from across the partnership of schools and trusts including using AI tools to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector (sharing these with the partnership) each year. The QA Review reports remain confidential to Challenge Partners and the host school. This ensures that schools embrace the review as a development process, acting as a catalyst for their ongoing improvement. This is the primary purpose of the QA review. However, our aim is that the thematic analysis will demonstrate the additional value of a sector wide overview, illustrated with real-life examples.

For further support following your QA Review, schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national partnership of schools. The School Support Directory can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website. (<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)