

Short inspection of Gateway Sixth Form College

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

Gateway Sixth Form College continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Gateway Sixth Form College is located in Leicester and provides a range of vocational, A-level and T-level courses. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,288 students at the college. Nearly all students were aged 16 to 18. Around 800 students were studying level 3 courses, with a third of these studying vocational course in subjects, such as business and health and social care, a quarter studying A-level courses in subjects, such as accounting and criminology and the remainder studying T-level subjects. There were 296 students on vocational courses at level 2 in subjects, such as art and design and creative media skills and 48 studying foundation programmes in preparation for T levels. In addition, 142 students were studying at entry level or level 1 on courses, such as entry to work and project search pathways. There were 72 students with high needs.

What is it like to be a learner at this provider?

Leaders and staff foster a highly inclusive culture, where a diverse group of students thrive. Students enjoy their time at college. They feel well supported and safe. They attend well, are motivated and feel that staff genuinely want them to succeed.

Students demonstrate exceptional respect and tolerance towards each other. They celebrate their diversity at an annual culture day. Students help plan and run this festival-style event, performing dances, playing music and dressing in cultural attire. They enjoy a variety of foods and educational displays about different cultures.

Most students benefit from valuable work experience opportunities. In T-level health, students undertake placements in the local NHS hospital. Students with high needs on supported internships build their skills and confidence in a supportive work environment. However, a small number of level 3 business diploma students do not feel that their work placements are relevant to their future career aspirations.

Most students achieve their qualifications and are well prepared for their next steps. Leaders provide advice to students about their future options that is tailored to their needs and aspirations. Most students progress to positive destinations, including higher education, employment or apprenticeships.

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

Leaders have a thorough understanding of the local area in which they operate. They have altered their curriculum offer following the closure of courses at other local providers. Leaders have a clear focus on offering opportunities to students who may not be ready for traditional A-level courses. They develop courses such as the supported internship in collaboration with employers to develop the skills that employers need.

Leaders and teachers carefully plan their courses so that students build their confidence swiftly. Students make good progress in their lessons and develop new knowledge and skills well. In GCSE mathematics, teachers adjust course plans based on students' existing knowledge to meet their individual needs. Staff provide good support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) by adjusting seating plans, arrival times and activities to ensure participation. Learning support assistants, briefed by teachers, identify and implement effective strategies to support students with SEND.

Teachers use suitable explanations, examples and interactive activities to help students understand concepts. For instance, T-level health teachers use illustrations, videos, diagrams and models to explain internal organ structures, which helps students to apply their knowledge. In a few instances, teachers do not use activities that are suited to their students' level of ability, setting tasks that are either too easy or overly supported, leaving a few students unchallenged.

Leaders oversee students' progress effectively, using common assessment points and review boards to identify and address any emerging concerns. They gather in-depth information through week-long quality reviews and frequent learning walks to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders use this information well to plan effective professional development opportunities and provide supportive actions to improve staff performance.

Leaders have planned an excellent tutorial programme that covers topics, such as knife crime, drugs and alcohol awareness, terrorism and sexual harm. Students demonstrate in-depth knowledge of these topics. They understand online risks and know how to recognise and report signs of abuse in their peers. Staff provide additional workshops to support mental health and well-being, such as stress management workshops run by qualified mental health practitioners.

Students benefit from a comprehensive careers programme. This starts at interview, when staff discuss students' career goals to help them make sure they enrol on the correct course. Helpful weekly tutorials with tutors cover employability activities, like

CV writing, mock interviews and apprenticeship and higher education applications. Students participate in informative one-to-one meetings with the central careers team for personalised career planning. They attend college-wide events, such as skills weeks, university talks and careers fairs. This helps them to make sensible choices about their next steps.

Leaders plan a range of relevant activities to raise students' understanding of potential career routes and their aspirations. For example, level 2 and 3 science students benefit from local university guest speakers on topics, such as chemistry in chocolate and sustainability, during their 'science in action' week.

Leaders work closely with students to involve them in all aspects of the college. They have an active student union, which organises events such as the college prom and culture day. Student governors represent the views of their peers on the college board. Leaders respond swiftly to student feedback on aspects, such as assessments and course structure.

Leaders consider carefully the skills and attributes that their staff need to support students and foster success. They have a clear strategy to train and promote internal staff, using coaching conversations to help staff feel safe to have open discussions with managers and to contribute to planning their own development. Staff feel well supported and motivated to work at the college.

Governors are truly invested in the college. They bring relevant skills and experience to challenge and support the leadership team effectively. They are actively involved in the local community, where they promote the work of the college and build helpful relationships with stakeholders. Governors use their skills to help students by holding mock interviews and career guidance sessions. They gain valuable insights about the college from the conversations that they have with students.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Provide activities that are suitably challenging for all students.
- Develop meaningful work experience opportunities for students studying level 3 business diplomas to support their individual goals and aspirations.

Provider details

Unique reference number	147756
Address	Colin Grundy Drive Leicester LE5 1GA
Contact number	0116 2744500
Website	www.gateway.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	James Bagley
Provider type	16 to 19 academy
Date of previous inspection	October 2019
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Gateway Sixth Form College was judged to be good in October 2019

The inspection team was assisted by the assistant principal for quality, curriculum & progression as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising students work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Sarah Houghton, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Angela Twelvetree	Ofsted Inspector
Russ Henry	His Majesty's Inspector
Michelle Patel	Ofsted Inspector
Vicki Locke	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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