

# Richard Taunton Sixth Form College

Sixth form college

**Inspection dates**

7–9 March 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>	16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>	Full-time provision for 14- to 16-year-olds	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>		
Outcomes for learners	<b>Requires improvement</b>		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		<b>Good</b>	

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Despite leaders' and managers' determination to bring about improvements, they have not been successful in ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains at least good.
- Too few teachers challenge students well enough and thoroughly check students' progress in lessons. As a result, students are often not working at a sufficiently high level to ensure that they achieve the grades that they are capable of.
- Students' achievements and progress in relation to their starting points have not improved sufficiently over the past three years.
- Not enough teachers ensure that students fully understand how to improve their work and are able to put this into practice.
- When monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, managers do not focus sufficiently on the progress that students are making in lessons and over time.
- Students' attendance has improved but is still too low, particularly in GCSE English and mathematics lessons.
- Too few students following level 2 courses benefit from significant external work experience to help them develop the skills that they need for future employment.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have taken decisive action to bring about improvements throughout the college that are beginning to raise standards in teaching, learning and assessment and improve progress monitoring.
- Students are very well behaved, courteous and respectful, and develop self-confidence and positive attitudes to learning during their time at college; they enjoy coming to college.
- Leaders, managers and college staff work well to provide an inclusive, caring and highly supportive environment for students. Students work well together, respecting the views of others.
- Students receive effective careers advice and support to help them with their next steps; progression to higher education, apprenticeships and full-time employment is very good.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Richard Taunton College is a small sixth form college in the north east of Southampton and is one of two sixth form colleges in the city. The college offers a wide range of academic and general vocational courses from level 1 to level 3 on one site with a new, small off-site subcontracted course for those studying sport. Most students are aged 16 to 18, with the large majority of the much smaller cohort of adults studying on the access to higher education course. The college has a small cohort of students with high needs and a very small number of 14- to 16-year-old students.
- The proportion of pupils in Southampton who gain five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is lower than the national average. Unemployment rates for those in the 18 to 24 age group are lower in Southampton than in the south east and nationally.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Governors, leaders and managers must ensure that the improvement actions already in place are accelerated to make sure that students' attainment and progress on all courses are consistently good or better.
- Managers should improve teaching, learning and assessment further, by:
  - ensuring that teachers set work in lessons that is suitably demanding and complex, in particular for students following level 3 programmes and for the most able
  - improving teachers' understanding of how to measure and improve students' progress by sharing good practice
  - ensuring that feedback to students is more consistently useful in helping them to improve their work, and that more teachers are checking that students carry out the actions that they recommend
  - developing further the range and effectiveness of strategies that teachers use in lessons to check students' learning
  - ensuring that the evaluation of teaching and learning focuses more on the progress that students make, both in the lesson and over time, and the standards of work that they produce
  - further improving students' attendance, particularly in English and mathematics lessons.
- Leaders and managers need to ensure that judgements within the college's self-assessment reports are suitably self-critical and more evidence-based, providing a sound basis on which to move forward.
- Ensure that level 2 students, particularly those who will not be progressing to further study in the college, benefit from meaningful work experience at a suitable point in their programme to enable them to make informed decisions about their next steps and career options, and prepare them for future employment.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Governors, leaders, managers and teachers recognise the urgent need to improve the progress that students make so that they achieve the grades of which they are capable. Despite this recognition and the ensuing improvements that have been put in place, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is still too variable to ensure that current students are making the best possible progress.
- Despite a more explicit emphasis on learning this year, managers do not focus strongly enough on the standards of students' work or the progress they make in lessons, or over time, when judging the quality of teaching. In the college self-assessment report, insufficient links are made between teaching, learning and assessment and students' outcomes and some of the judgements are more positive than the evidence allows. Curriculum leaders can identify aspects of teaching that have improved as a result of sharing good practice and regular staff development, but the rate of students' progress and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are not yet good enough or sufficiently well sustained.
- Students' achievement, progress and progression rates have remained well below college targets for the last three years and leaders have not been able to successfully improve these areas. Leaders and governors have rightly retained challenging targets for students' attendance. Managers have implemented a wide range of measures to improve students' attendance, which has increased slightly but still remains too low.
- Leaders have high expectations and have shared these well with staff. Learning area managers and deputy managers are enthusiastic about the improvement actions introduced or further developed this academic year. They regularly and frequently analyse college data on students' assignment grades and use their analyses to plan a good range of actions to support individual students to improve their in-year progress and attainment. Positive signs of impact are already evident.
- Managers have introduced intensive support activities at course and subject level in response to challenging reviews of the outcomes in each subject, which involve sharing and adopting good practice from across the college. These activities are beginning to lead to improvements in students' achievement.
- Leaders have improved the quality of initial advice and guidance which has reduced the number of students transferring to another programme part way through their studies or leaving college mid-year.
- Leaders and managers have successfully embedded an ethos of respect, support and tolerance within the college. Staff promote the value of diversity effectively and students act with maturity, feel supported and behave extremely well. The integration of students with high needs into college life is effective. Students' views of the college are highly positive, with most recommending their courses to others.
- Governors and leaders have steered the college through a strenuous and challenging period of restructuring to ensure the college's financial viability. This has culminated in the decision to seek academy status with a partner college. They have underpinned this decision with a thorough and accurate analysis of available local information to inform

their strategy and adapt the curriculum offer, taking into account the priorities of the local enterprise partnership. In subjects that are particularly relevant to the local identified needs, such as management training, employers have been involved in choosing or adapting relevant courses.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Governors are committed to the success of the college. They know the college well and fully understand the current challenges facing the college, and are well informed about the improvement actions being taken. They strongly support the college mission and values to challenge all students to achieve the best they can.
- Governors robustly debate achievement data, quality monitoring reports and targets that leaders set for student attendance, achievement and progression. They have modified a number of these targets to ensure that they are more realistic in view of past performance and to bring them more into line with national rates. However, their challenge of leaders has not been effective enough to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment remain good or better, and that students' outcomes and progress improve sufficiently rapidly.
- Governors validate information presented to them by senior leaders very effectively. They take part in college visits and learning walks and meet with students and learning area managers to improve their understanding of the college. Student governors have a strong role in informing the governing body about the college.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Students, including those attending off-site coaching activities through the newly-established academy, feel safe and know how to raise any concerns. Staff support and encourage all students, including the most vulnerable, very well.
- Students can explain their understanding of life in modern Britain and are clear about how to keep themselves safe from the risks of radicalisation and extremism in their many forms. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media and college computer systems are appropriately filtered and monitored.
- Leaders and managers take all aspects of their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Staff recruitment arrangements are well established and effective. All staff and governors have undertaken updated safeguarding training in line with the 'Prevent' duty. Policies and procedures have been updated accordingly.
- The safeguarding team has developed strong links with external agencies that are used well to support annual staff training and to refer students who are causing concern. They carefully record child protection or safeguarding concerns and respond appropriately with referrals to local authority or police services where relevant. Follow-up checks on any referrals are diligent.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- In the past two years, teachers and managers have worked hard to further improve teaching and learning in the classroom. Although this has resulted in an increased focus by teachers on improving students' outcomes, too many students across all levels and subjects are not making sufficiently quick progress towards achieving their qualifications. Teaching, learning and assessment are not yet consistently good.
- Teachers make insufficient use of their knowledge about students' starting points, the level at which they are working and target grades to plan sufficiently challenging learning for all students. Too many lessons are focused on activities which fail to take into account the differing abilities of students. As a result, progress is inhibited, and most-able students are not challenged to make the progress of which they are capable.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not use effective strategies to interest, enthuse and challenge students. The pace of learning is too slow and, because of this, students become bored and inattentive.
- Although the large majority of students know their current and target grades, too many teachers do not provide students with sufficient strategies to help them to improve their work in order to gain higher grades.
- Teachers do not routinely check students' understanding and learning carefully enough before moving on to the next topic. Not enough teachers use a broad enough range of strategies to check and confirm the extent of learning taking place, relying too often, for example, on questioning that focuses on just a small number of students. As a result, students are unclear about what they have learned and how it relates to the overall aims of the lesson.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge and use their experience and enthusiasm well to motivate students. Teachers receive regular 'bite-size' training to develop both their understanding of the use of data to improve target-setting and also specific teaching strategies, which are starting to have a positive impact. For example, the introduction of 'walking, talking' mock examinations helped more students to achieve a high grade in GCSE English in November 2016 than in previous years.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers plan very carefully, considering what students need to learn, how they will learn it, how this learning will be assessed and what progress they will make. These lessons also provide further activities to extend students' critical thinking and analysis skills. For example, in a GCSE mathematics class a 14- to 16-year-old student made good progress in calculating the area of shapes and in basic algebraic questions.
- Students value the help that teachers give them and the additional sessions and initiatives that support them out of class. Teachers set frequent homework and written assessments that are marked well and returned promptly to students. Students who miss lessons or fall behind target attend compulsory workshops to help them catch up with work and the most able students attend higher-level sessions to challenge them more. In addition, students can access sessions to improve their study skills and to help them manage stress in examinations.
- Learning support in class is almost always effectively used, supporting, for example, students with high needs to overcome barriers to learning and helping them to progress.

Comprehensive, detailed and helpful information is provided for all students with specific learning support needs and this is updated as students make progress.

- In vocational subjects, teachers develop students' English skills well, giving them the subject-specific vocabulary required for assessments. For example, level 2 sports students are able to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts such as 'venous return' and level 3 music technology students discuss recording techniques confidently, using appropriate technical terms. However, teachers do not always ensure that students have sufficient opportunities to develop and extend their skills in and knowledge of mathematics.
- Teachers ensure that they keep parents up to date with students' progress. Teachers contact parents when students miss lessons and recent changes to the online mark book have ensured that parents can view students' progress online.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

- Student behaviour is very good, both in and out of lessons. Students are polite, courteous and mature, and respectful of their peers and teachers. They respond well to teachers' high expectations and show good levels of mutual support when working with each other.
- College staff provide very high levels of care and support for students throughout their time at the college. Students appreciate and value this support and, as a result, students who would have left college early are able to complete their studies and achieve their qualifications.
- Students feel safe, have a good understanding of personal safety, including digital and online safety, and know how to raise concerns. For example, they understand how to set strong passwords, what personal information not to share online and how to keep financial information safe. They are positive about the recent introduction of new security arrangements for accessing the college, which have helped them to feel more secure.
- Students understand how to protect themselves from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. The effective tutorial programme helps them to develop their understanding of British values, equality and e-safety. Students talk confidently about these subjects and value the opinions of others.
- Students participate in a wide-ranging programme of enrichment which interests and enthuses them, supports them with their academic studies and helps to retain them at college. For example, as part of Black History Month, students considered the use of appropriate and offensive language sensitively and maturely in a challenging and well-attended debate.
- The vast majority of students develop their confidence during their time at college and become more self-assured, enjoying their learning. Students with high needs take part in regular opportunities to develop their independence, improve their communication skills and participate fully in wider activities within the college.
- Students attend a wide range of college events, visits and trips which help them to widen their understanding of the world of work and to decide on their next steps after college. The appointment of a new work experience coordinator has ensured that almost all students on level 1 and level 3 vocational study programmes have external work

experience placements built into their programmes. However, no formal opportunities for work experience are currently in place for the small number of level 2 students.

- Teachers and managers provide effective information, advice and guidance to students that help them to make informed decisions about which courses to take at college. As a result, the number of students deciding to change their subjects after the beginning of the year has declined. High-quality, impartial and effective careers information supports students well when making their choices about progression after college.
- Most students develop good personal, social and employability skills, taking some pride in their work.
- Although staff use a variety of different methods well to encourage students to improve their attendance, it is too low in a minority of subjects, and notably in GCSE English and mathematics.

### Outcomes for learners

### Requires improvement

- Despite a rise in overall pass rates over the last two years, not enough level 3 students achieve their qualifications. The proportion of level 2 students who are successful is slightly below the rate of similar colleges nationally.
- Not enough students following level 3 programmes make the expected level of progress when compared to their starting points. However, as a result of a wide range of improvement actions implemented by leaders and managers over the last two years, more students are now staying on their courses, and college monitoring data indicates that current level 3 students on academic study programmes are making better progress than those at a similar point last year.
- Students' achievements in different subjects are too variable. Those studying, for example, A-level economics, religious studies and classical civilisation achieve well and make good progress. However, in too many other subjects, achievement rates are low and students do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Although most students successfully achieve their vocational qualifications and achievement rates are improving, students' progress in different vocational subject areas and by level is too variable to be good. Data supplied by managers indicates that the majority of students on level 3 vocational courses are now making better progress than in the previous year and are on target to achieve their expected grades.
- Although managers monitor the performance of different groups well, they have not been able to close all performance gaps successfully. For example, White British students and students who were looked after achieve less well than their peers.
- The proportion of students who gained a GCSE A\* to C grade in English and mathematics in 2015/16 was above the national rate, but the majority of those taking these subjects do not gain these important qualifications. Early indications suggest that a greater proportion of students will achieve high grades in GCSE English this year. The proportion of students who have already successfully completed their functional skills qualification in English at level 1 is very high.
- Teachers and tutors prepare students well for their next steps in education, training and employment. Almost all students progress to positive destinations. The majority of

students taking level 2 programmes progress to level 3.

- The proportion of students accepted into higher education has increased substantially over the last three years and is now high, and well above the average for the local area. A small but increasing proportion of students attend prestigious universities.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### Requires improvement

- The college has around 1,385 students enrolled on study programmes, with students studying from level 1 to level 3. The majority of students take academic qualifications at level 3. The most popular subject areas are science, mathematics, arts and media, and languages, literature and culture.
- The proportion of students aged 16 to 19 who achieve their qualifications is too low, and below the national rate for similar colleges. Managers have put in place a number of strategies to improve students' performance but these have not had a sufficiently positive impact.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across different subjects and levels. Too often, teachers set students work that is too easy and as a result, they do not make the progress of which they are capable. When teachers give feedback to students, they do not always ensure that students act on this feedback so that they can improve their work.
- All students without GCSE grades A\* to C study mathematics and English. Teachers accurately identify these students' starting points to ensure that they access the right level of study. Students studying at level 1 move swiftly to higher levels of English and mathematics once they have gained their initial qualifications.
- Students participate fully in a wide range of work-related activities that prepare them well for progression to the world of work by effectively developing their employability skills. For example, in performing arts students are involved in performances both within the college and externally at events and national competitions. In sport, students are involved in wide range of activities outside their scheduled classes with some students participating in regional and national leagues. Almost all students studying vocational subjects at levels 1 and 3 attend external work experience placements, but, currently, opportunities are more limited for level 2 vocational and level 3 academic students.
- Students receive effective careers advice and guidance. A bespoke team of well-trained careers advisers help students with their progression after college. They support those who decide to apply to university with their applications and students progressing to apprenticeships or employment receive effective and impartial advice which helps them to make informed decisions about their next steps. As a result, almost all students progress either to higher education, apprenticeships or employment.



## Full-time provision for 14- to 16-year-olds

Good

- Numbers of fully funded 14- to 16-year-old students who study full time at the college are very small. One student enrolled at the college in 2015/16 and three overseas full-time 14- to 16-year-old students joined the college in 2016/17. None of the current students receive pupil premium funding.
- Provision for 14- to 16-year-olds is effectively organised and led. The senior leader who manages this area understands the needs of the students, ensures that they are safe in college and is clear about how well they are progressing. Although students have sole access to a specific area which they can use during the college day, they usually prefer to work and socialise with their peers.
- Students follow appropriate and highly individualised learning programmes that are well tailored to their needs. Programmes are carefully devised to ensure that students study the subjects that they need to, including English and mathematics.
- Students who start at the college as 14- to 16-year olds progress successfully to higher levels of study. They receive clear and impartial information about progression opportunities and usually choose to continue their learning at the college because of their positive experiences.
- Students follow a varied curriculum that caters effectively for their interests and prepares them well for future study. They enjoy their learning and participate fully in lessons, making good progress and achieving their qualifications. Students behave well in and out of lessons and well-qualified staff care for them and support them.
- Students feel safe and learn about keeping themselves safe during their time at college. They develop their understanding of moral and social issues well, learning about, for example, life in modern Britain, tolerance and respect for others. They benefit from their interaction with older students, which helps them to develop improved attitudes to study and learning.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	130707
Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	14+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,385
Principal/CEO	Alice Wrighton
Telephone number	02380 511811
Website	<a href="http://www.richardtaunton.ac.uk">www.richardtaunton.ac.uk</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	12	0	189	59	984	55	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 to 16	4							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	26							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency/Skills Funding Agency/Local Authorities							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Saints Foundation							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, as nominee. 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, telephone calls 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.

## Inspection team

Andy Fitt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lyn Bourne	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Gunn	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Gadfield	Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Learner View**

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to [www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Employer View**

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to [www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2017