

Inspection of New College Doncaster

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Education programmes for young people	Outstanding
Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

New College Doncaster is a 16 to 19 academy and is part of the New Collaborative Learning Trust, which also includes New College Pontefract, New College Bradford and Wingfield Academy. It began providing education programmes for young people in 2017. At the time of the inspection, 473 students were enrolled on A-level programmes, 316 were enrolled on level 3 applied general programmes, and 529 were enrolled on programmes with a combination of the two. There were seven students with high needs.

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

Students at New College Doncaster experience a culture of very high expectations, which supports them to maximise their potential and achieve their aspirations. Teachers challenge students to be the best that they can be, to have very high levels of attendance and punctuality, and to develop strong, independent learning skills. This culture prepares students exceptionally well to progress to their next steps.

Students benefit from very high-quality teaching. Teachers demonstrate a very comprehensive knowledge of their subjects and communicate this well to students. They successfully develop students' understanding of the technical terminology used in their subject areas. As a result, students quickly develop the new knowledge that they need when they leave college.

The learning environment at the college is highly conducive to successful working, quiet when necessary for research and thinking time, but also open and welcoming to allow students to feel confident enough to ask and answer questions. Students value this environment and participate actively in their lessons. They concentrate well, work hard and demonstrate a disciplined approach when working independently.

Leaders and staff successfully support students to become highly respectful and active citizens. Students have an excellent understanding of British values such as mutual respect and tolerance, and endeavour to emulate these values. They are very respectful and courteous to each other, to staff and to visitors to the college. They feel safe at college and are confident that, if they have any concerns, these will be addressed quickly.

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

Leaders have a very clear intent to provide a curriculum that includes a wide range of high-quality A-level and level 3 general applied programmes for young people living in Doncaster and the surrounding area. They aim to raise the aspirations of young people, provide high-quality provision and increase the number of students progressing to higher education, apprenticeships and employment. Leaders successfully achieve this aim. Most students progress to higher education, including to prestigious universities. The number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds who progress to higher education is particularly high.

Leaders have carefully analysed skills needs in the region to identify gaps in the labour market in sectors such as creative and digital media, finance, professional services, and health and social care. They have responded to local needs by including in the curriculum subjects that link to these sector areas. For students whose aspiration is not to go on to higher education, this curriculum content prepares them well to progress into training and employment locally.

Leaders work very successfully with key partners and stakeholders to maintain and enhance further the quality of the student experience and to raise students' aspirations. They are actively involved in the Doncaster Opportunities Area partnership, which works to improve the quality of education in Doncaster. They also participate fully in the Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire, which provides support to raise the aspirations of disadvantaged students. Their involvement in this partnership contributes to the very high number of disadvantaged students at the college who progress to higher education.

Governance is highly effective. The board of directors and a college advisory group comprise members who have high levels of expertise and who successfully ensure that teaching and learning, support for students and safeguarding are always prioritised. Directors provide very effective support, scrutiny and challenge to leaders to ensure continuous improvement.

Teachers plan and deliver the curriculum in a logical order to build on students' prior learning and to develop their knowledge and skills quickly. Students rapidly apply what they know and move on to more difficult concepts. For example, Year 12 students in psychology learn about different psychological perspectives and then apply this knowledge in Year 13 to help them to understand the different treatments for schizophrenia.

Teachers benefit from a wide range of relevant training that helps them to improve their teaching and the support that they provide for students. Leaders ensure that teachers are well informed about retrieval practice, through training events delivered across the trust. Teachers use extensively the retrieval strategies that they learn about to support students to recall knowledge in the long term.

Support for students with high needs is very strong. This support enables students with high needs to settle into college life, contribute to lessons well, and make significant progress in achieving their planned outcomes. Students with high needs attend lunchtime enrichment sessions, which help them to improve their social and communication skills, and they benefit from a bespoke curriculum, where appropriate, which includes independent travel and life skills.

Students make rapid progress in developing the skills and knowledge that they need to progress to their intended destinations. They are able to recall previous learning, and they use revision activities well to reinforce their knowledge. Teachers implement effective strategies, such as the use of mnemonics to help students remember difficult concepts.

Students produce a very good standard of written work that demonstrates the new knowledge that they have gained. They take pride in the work that they produce, talk confidently about their learning, and are able to recall clearly their learning from the past year. For example, students in A-level business can explain different ways of improving productivity through financial incentives, democratic leadership and better working conditions.

Students benefit from excellent pastoral and academic support. This includes targeted interventions to ensure that any students who are behind target very quickly catch up. For example, 'teacher access periods' are added to all curriculum plans. Teachers use this time well to support individual students to improve specific aspects of their learning.

Teachers use assessment effectively to check students' understanding and address misconceptions. They provide clear and helpful feedback to students following assessment. Students also benefit from very effective peer assessment through which they provide support and feedback to each other to develop their understanding. Teachers intervene quickly to help students to address any gaps in their learning following assessment. Students are fully aware of what they need to do to improve their work and reflect carefully on this in their online diaries. They can confidently articulate what they know and understand.

The very small number of students who need to retake GCSE English and mathematics qualifications benefit from very effective teaching in these subjects. As a result, the vast majority achieve at least a grade 4 in their examinations. All students at the college benefit from effective support to develop their English and mathematical skills further. Teachers prioritise the promotion of key subject terminology on a regular basis. For example, on the level 3 games design course, teachers explain the term 'retopologizing'. Students understand that this term refers to a process of cleaning up a digital model so that it transfers to other programmes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Students have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe from all risks. They understand the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism at college and in their personal lives. They have a strong understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment and are fully aware of the importance of demonstrating appropriate behaviour towards other students.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputy have participated in appropriate training to be effective in their roles. They are very knowledgeable about safeguarding issues that are relevant to the local area, such as child sexual exploitation, knife crime and illegal drug use. They use this knowledge to help keep students safe from these risks.

The DSL works effectively with a range of external partners and agencies to keep up to date with relevant information and to ensure that students receive appropriate support. For example, she attends meetings with the Doncaster Children and Young People's Safeguarding Service and liaises with the regional 'Prevent' duty coordinator. She refers students who need mental health support to children and adolescent mental health services and other relevant external agencies.

Provider details

Unique reference number	144714
Address	Hurst Lane Auckley Doncaster DN9 3HG
Contact number	01302 976777
Website	https://ncdoncaster.ac.uk
Principal	Brendon Fletcher
Provider type	16 to 19 academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, 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 learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

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