

BSix (Brooke House)

Sixth form college

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| Inspection dates | | 19–22 March 2013 |
| Overall effectiveness | This inspection: | Good-2 |
| | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory-3 |
| Outcomes for learners | | Requires improvement-3 |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | | Good-2 |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | | Good-2 |

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection. Students who follow GCE AS-level and vocational courses make particularly good progress.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. In most lessons, teachers provide a good range of interesting activities to help students learn and make good progress.
- The college provides a harmonious and stimulating learning environment in which students feel safe and happy. The cultural diversity of the students gives the college its distinctive character and is celebrated widely.
- Students receive excellent support for their learning through tutorials and a wide range of workshops. Students who have particular learning difficulties receive extremely effective additional support.
- The Principal, governors and partners in other educational institutions have worked together successfully to raise the aspirations of local young people and encourage them to take control of their future careers in higher education (HE) and work.
- Procedures to assess and monitor the college's performance, including the use made of the opinions of students, are very good.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Despite the improvements to teaching and learning, outcomes require improvement. Success rates are slightly below the national average, and students on a significant minority of GCE A-level subjects do not make sufficient progress.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding, and some requires improvement.
- Punctuality and attendance require improvement.
- The quality of teaching and support varies within and between subject areas, so some students have a better experience of the college than others.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that lesson activities are always planned at the right level of difficulty to challenge students of all abilities, and give students more opportunities to develop their mathematical skills.
- Develop the college's virtual learning environment (VLE) to a consistently high standard so that all students are able to work independently through this medium to improve their work.
- Ensure that all teachers insist on students completing an appropriately large amount of work beyond lessons.
- Ensure that teachers capitalise on, and celebrate, the excellent opportunities provided by the college's distinctive multicultural character when promoting equality and diversity within lessons.
- Sharpen the systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, including the use of targets set for teachers' performance, so that teachers in all subject areas make a strong contribution to improving outcomes for students, including their attendance and punctuality.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the proportion of students who complete their course successfully has increased at a faster rate than in other similar colleges, and the most recent examination results indicate that this improvement has been maintained. Success rates are now close to the national average, although as yet not enough students achieve the highest grades.
- The improvement in success rates is consistent between courses at different levels but conceals some significant differences in the performance of students in different GCE A-level subjects. The college has identified the areas of weaker performance accurately and has implemented well-considered plans to promote improvement.
- Students enter the college with qualifications which are appropriate for their chosen course, but do not always have an appropriate level of personal and study skills. Nevertheless, they make good progress in GCE AS-level subjects and on vocational courses, developing a mature and constructive approach to learning. The progress that students make at GCE A level is dependent on the subjects they choose to study and is sometimes too slow.
- Students achieve good success rates in GCSE English and mathematics, although the proportion who were successful in GCSE English in 2011/12 was very low. Students who follow functional skills courses in English and mathematics at foundation level achieve good outcomes, but their subsequent progress in mathematics is not always quick enough.
- Students value the harmonious and supportive college environment and make very good use of the opportunities provided for them to develop new knowledge and skills. The 'BSeven' initiative, which promotes learning beyond the classroom, broadens students' life experiences and helps them to develop into sympathetic, enquiring and reflective young people. However, despite students' obvious enjoyment of college, their attendance and punctuality require improvement.
- The college has been successful in ensuring that there are no persistent differences in the success rates of learners of different ethnic heritages. The progress made by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved at a fast rate, and these learners now achieve better than their peers thanks to effective support.
- The college's aim to raise learners' aspirations is reflected in the increasing proportion of students who progress to higher education on completion of their course, including some to the most prestigious universities. Progression between vocational courses at intermediate and advanced levels is satisfactory.

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| The quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
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- Teaching, learning and assessment, has improved since the last inspection, and the lessons observed were consistently good. However, this improvement has not yet had a full impact on students' outcomes. Students' low attendance in some subjects means that the students do not always gain as much from these good lessons as they should.
- Teachers and support staff are well qualified and experienced, and have consistently high expectations for students' behaviour and achievement. Accommodation and resources to support learning are mostly good; students benefit from a well-stocked library and easy access to computers when they need them. Students enjoy using the college's VLE, but it remains underdeveloped as too few subject areas provide materials on it to extend learning.
- Teaching and learning are planned well. Teachers identify clear learning objectives for every lesson and in the best examples identify specific learning goals for individuals or groups. Students benefit from the wide range of stimulating activities that are provided for them. They respond particularly well to activities that are thought provoking or constrained by time because they enjoy being challenged by their work.
- Teachers ask probing questions to check students' understanding and support their good progress in lessons. In some of the best lessons students make effective use of assessment criteria to assess their own progress. In this way, students gain confidence, take an increasingly active part in lessons and assume more responsibility for their own learning. However, in some subjects, teachers do not set sufficient homework or monitor its completion carefully enough.
- In the minority of lessons that require improvement, teachers are less confident in managing learning activities such as peer or group assessment. These lessons become dominated by the teacher and are less suited to the needs of individual students. Teachers generally provide opportunities in lessons for students to develop their written and spoken English but do not provide sufficient opportunities to help them improve their mathematical skills.
- Assessment is good. In the best lessons teachers use the information from assessment well to plan further learning activities. Most teachers provide constructive and detailed feedback on written work, but a minority does not show clearly enough how students can improve their written English.
- Students benefit from excellent initial advice and guidance which ensure that they enrol on an appropriate course at the correct level. Good induction enables students to understand the personal and study skills needed to achieve their desired outcomes. The college introduces students to the possibility of progressing to higher education at a very early stage, and this helps raise their aspirations and provides strong motivation for them to achieve.
- Tutorials are very effective and enable tutors to monitor students' progress well. Students know the standard they are currently working at and what they need to do to improve it. Challenging targets to improve the quality of their academic work are helping to raise success rates, but students make slower progress in meeting their targets for attendance and punctuality.
- Students who experience difficulties with their learning have good access to specialist additional learning support and an extensive range of workshop activities that teachers provide at the end of the college day, at weekends and during holidays. Students who follow courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) receive excellent support and make very good progress.
- Teachers use their detailed knowledge of individual students well to provide equality of opportunity when managing their learning. However, they do not always capitalise on the rich variety of different cultures represented in their classes to promote equality and diversity more extensively in lessons.

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| Health, social care and early years Learning programmes for 16–18 | Requires improvement |
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- Success rates vary, but are below average on the majority of courses because the quality of teaching is inconsistent and requires improvement. However, inspectors did observe lessons where students were making good progress, and the quality of completed work and improved retention in the current year indicate that a greater proportion of students will complete their courses successfully.
- Teachers are experienced care practitioners and use their knowledge well to make sure that students make effective links between theory and practical placement experience. Students develop good employability skills and communicate well in written and spoken English, but have insufficient opportunities to improve their standards of numeracy.
- The majority of lessons are planned well to provide a range of activities which match the needs of students of all abilities, and it is in these lessons that students make most progress. In less successful lessons, teachers dominate activities and provide insufficient opportunities for learners to develop their own learning.
- Students enjoy lessons most when they are actively involved. They contribute enthusiastically and knowledgeably to discussions and, on occasions, challenge each other to ensure that the content of their discussion is accurate. Feedback sessions are lively and demonstrate students' developing knowledge of the care sector. However, in some lessons learners are too keen to express their own opinions and do not listen carefully to those of others.
- Teachers use praise and encouragement to motivate students and ask searching questions to make sure students understand what they are doing. In some lessons teachers use a range of interesting activities such as self-assessment and quizzes to check on learning, but do not always follow up the responses to their questions in sufficient detail.
- Teachers assess students' work thoroughly and accurately. The majority of written feedback indicates how and where improvement is needed and provides clear guidance on how higher grades could be achieved. Assessment outcomes are used well by tutors to monitor students' progress and identify if additional help is needed.
- Students receive excellent support which enables an increasing number of them to make good progress and complete their course successfully. Teachers provide an extensive range of very helpful workshops to provide additional opportunities for students to extend their learning. Students also have access to a wide range of specialist staff, including student achievement officers and mentors, who complement well the support provided by teachers.
- The promotion of equality and diversity has a high priority and is very effective. Students learn about the care needs of different client groups and demonstrate appropriate respect for, and understanding of, individual rights.

Science Learning programmes for 16–18

Requires improvement

- Students' outcomes vary considerably across subjects and qualification types because of the variable quality of teaching. Success rates on diploma courses are high but on GCE AS levels they are low. On most other courses success rates are close to the national average. Teachers provide students with challenging theory assignments that aid learning, but do not provide sufficient experimental work to help students develop their practical skills.
- Students develop good oral communication skills and discuss their work openly with their peers. In a lesson on enthalpy, students had been using alcohol to heat water and then discussed the significance of energy loss in great detail. However, teachers do not give sufficient priority to developing students' expertise in written English or take advantage of the many opportunities to help develop their mathematical skills.

- In lessons where students' progress is good, teachers provide a good range of absorbing learning activities that are appropriately demanding and require students to work accurately. These lessons are planned well and often include good use of information and learning technology (ILT). In the significant minority of lessons that require improvement, the pace of learning is too slow and the work is not hard enough to maintain students' full interest.
- Teachers regularly ask questions to assess students' understanding, and use the responses well to plan further learning. In the most effective lessons teachers relate their questions carefully to the requirements of examination boards so that students can see the relevance of what they are studying. Feedback on written work is variable. Students on diploma courses receive detailed feedback which supports their improvement, but GCE A-level marking is sometimes superficial.
- Teachers monitor students' progress very well. Students are aware of their current standard of work and are set clear targets to help them improve it. Students who are not making the progress expected of them are encouraged to attend additional workshop sessions during lunch breaks or at the end of the college day. These additional sessions are highly valued by students and help them gain a better understanding of their work.
- Students benefit from good advice and guidance when considering their higher education options. Tutors are well informed about the courses available and give students impartial advice on which courses they should realistically apply for. Teachers are well informed about careers in science and give students much valuable information about the options available to them.
- Students are courteous and well behaved towards their teachers and each other. Although lessons are inclusive, lesson plans and schemes of work do not highlight the promotion of equality and diversity and some naturally occurring opportunities to do so are missed.

Social sciences and psychology Learning programmes for 16–18

Good

- Students make good progress and success rates are high in most subjects. The vast majority of students are highly motivated, behave well and work hard; but, attendance requires improvement.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge and set high standards. Lessons are challenging for students of all abilities because they provide a good range of stimulating activities which are matched well to students' needs and interests. Teachers make clear what they expect students to achieve in their lessons, and make sure that learning proceeds at a good pace.
- In the best lessons students control their own learning and often work with their peers to research topics and evaluate the results. Students develop higher-level thinking skills in the majority of lessons. In a GCE A-level sociology lesson, students examined how data relating to victimisation and offending could be interpreted to support different theories. Students further extend their learning by making good use of the helpful resources on the VLE.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on helping students develop the knowledge and techniques to answer examination questions successfully. In most lessons, learning is consolidated with an examination-style writing task. In the best examples, students assess and evaluate these tasks independently or with their peers. Students in all subjects develop a good knowledge of specialist vocabulary and technical language skills.
- A minority of lessons require improvement because teachers talk too much, plan too many activities or use a narrow range of assessment methods. In these lessons students sometimes lose focus and do not progress as quickly as they should.
- Teachers make good use of assessment in lessons to identify students' starting points and monitor their subsequent progress. The standard of marking is mostly good. Teachers set and assess homework regularly and students value the feedback they receive. The best examples provide students with suggestions about how spelling and grammar could be improved as well as subject content.

- Students receive good support. They complete initial assessments to ensure that they are enrolled on an appropriate course and settle quickly to college life. Tutorials are good. They provide a highly effective way of monitoring students’ progress towards achieving their targets. Students value the extra workshop sessions that they can attend if they need extra help.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well in lessons. In a GCE AS-level anthropology lesson, students were given the opportunity to explore the sensitive issues around studying unfamiliar cultures. In a GCSE sociology lesson on crime, students explored issues around class and how it relates to upbringing and education.

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| Business Learning programmes for 16–18 | Good |
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- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment reflects accurately students’ good, and improving, outcomes. Teachers have high aspirations and encourage students to make good progress, but attendance and punctuality require improvement. Students successfully develop skills relevant to business such as teamwork, communication and self-reliance, and the majority participate in work experience that gives them the opportunity to put their developing skills into practice.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully and in the best examples match learning tasks well to the different ability levels of students. This helps students to become actively involved in their own learning and enjoy their lessons. However, sometimes teachers spend too much time asking questions to develop learning, and so move through the lesson material too slowly.
- Teachers use a good range of different techniques to check that good learning is taking place, and in the best lessons use this knowledge to plan further learning activities. Students are successful in developing their skills in written and spoken English and the use of appropriate, technical business vocabulary. The college provides a very successful programme to help students who do not already possess a qualification in mathematics or English to achieve one.
- Teachers make good use of technology to support students’ learning in the classroom, including the use of video clips to illustrate real business issues. The use of technology to support learning beyond the classroom is more variable. Students appreciate the efforts of the minority of teachers who use technology to let students submit their work for marking electronically, and inspectors agree with students that this practice could helpfully be extended.
- The quality of students’ written work is good. Teachers mark work accurately, identifying errors in students’ spelling, punctuation and grammar. The feedback they provide helps students understand how to improve their work.
- Support for students is good. Accurate initial advice and guidance ensure that they are placed on an appropriate course. Tutorials are effective and help students to be sure that they are meeting their academic and personal targets. Teachers provide additional workshops beyond lessons so that any students who are at risk of falling behind with their work can catch up.
- Teachers are committed to maintaining an inclusive learning environment. However, they do not always capitalise on the opportunities provided by the diverse community in which their students live to promote equality and diversity positively through their teaching and learning activities.

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
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- The Principal, governors and managers share an ambitious vision for the college and communicate it very effectively to staff and students. Their actions have tackled successfully the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and led to improvements in outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers at all levels share high expectations and seek to further improve students’ outcomes and increase the proportion of outstanding lessons.

- The governors have a wide range of appropriate experience and a very clear idea of what the college needs to do to improve. They provide a good level of challenge to the Principal and senior managers. Governors set demanding performance targets and monitor the college's progress towards achieving them rigorously.
- The quality of curriculum management has improved and is now good. Managers have intervened where the pace of improvement has been too slow, and have produced some impressive results in some subject areas. For example, they have recently made considerable improvements to the quality of teaching and support for students following ESOL courses.
- The college uses thorough and effective procedures to assess the quality of lessons. During this inspection there were no significant differences between inspectors' assessments of the quality of lessons and those of the college's own observers. Managers use lesson observations well to identify development points for individual teachers as well as to highlight areas for development for the whole college. Action plans resulting from observations are clear, but are not always monitored effectively.
- Annual staff appraisals and target setting contribute to improvements to teaching and learning. The procedures help to identify individual staff development needs, but in some cases the targets agreed are not sufficiently specific to help bring about improvements at a fast enough pace and some areas of underperformance persist.
- The college's self-assessment is accurate and provides a thorough and self-critical commentary from which to plan further improvements. The resulting action plans are detailed but the targets they contain do not always specify the anticipated outcomes of intended actions clearly enough. The college recognises that there continues to be too much variability in the rate of improvement within and between subject areas.
- Engagement with learners is excellent. Managers employ a wide range of strategies to obtain the views of learners and incorporate those views into their decision making. For example, some students are trained to observe lessons and conduct college inspection activities. Students are very positive about all aspects of college provision.
- The curriculum is broad for a college of its type and, in line with its mission, meets the needs of the local community and its students very well. The wide range of GCE AS- and A-level subjects enables students to make sensible choices. Partnership arrangements are good, and are used very effectively to help students broaden their knowledge of what they might achieve in higher education, employment or voluntary work.
- The college provides an inclusive environment for learning and celebrates its students' cultural diversity through a broad range of activities in the college and the local community. Students say, and inspectors agree, that all individuals and groups of students are treated with equal respect. Managers monitor equality and diversity well, and have ensured that there are no persistent differences in outcomes or college experiences between students from different heritages.
- The college complies fully with statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. It makes appropriate recruitment checks and gives staff regular training. The college safeguarding policy is comprehensive and well understood by staff and students. Students benefit from a broad range of information and guidance to maintain their personal safety. The college has close links with external agencies which provide a good range of specialist support, guidance and welfare services.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

BSix (Brooke House Sixth Form College)

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| <p>Inspection grades are based on a provider’s performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p> | Overall | 16-18 Learning programmes | 19+ Learning programmes |
| Overall effectiveness | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Outcomes for learners | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| The quality of teaching, learning and assessment | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management | 2 | 2 | 2 |

| Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Grade |
|---|----------|
| Health and social care | 3 |
| Early years and playwork | 3 |
| Science | 3 |
| Social Sciences | 2 |
| Psychology | 2 |
| Business | 2 |

Provider details

| BSix (Brooke House Sixth Form College) | |
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| Type of provider | Sixth form college |
| Age range of learners | 16+ |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year | Full-time: 1,463 |
| | Part-time: 76 |
| Principal/CEO | Ken Warman |
| Date of previous inspection | March 2009 |
| Website address | www.brookehouse.ac.uk |

| Provider information at the time of the inspection | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| Main course or learning programme level | Level 1 or below | | Level 2 | | Level 3 | | Level 4 and above | |
| | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ |
| Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships) | | | | | | | | |
| Full-time | 134 | 10 | 217 | 5 | 927 | 157 | 7 | 6 |
| Part-time | 15 | 0 | 41 | 0 | 17 | 3 | N/A | N/A |
| Number of learners aged 14-16 | | | | | | | | |
| | 15 | | | | | | | |
| Funding received from | | | | | | | | |
| | Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency | | | | | | | |

Additional socio-economic information

BSix (Brooke House Sixth Form College) is a large college situated in the London Borough of Hackney. The area has one of the highest levels of social deprivation in the country, and the unemployment rate is well above the national average. However, the proportion of adults who are well qualified has increased and more than half now hold a higher level qualification. The proportion of pupils in Hackney schools attaining five GCSEs at A* to C including English and mathematics has also increased and is slightly above average. Around 80% of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds, a proportion similar to that in the local population.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Lindsay Hebditch HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the deputy principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement |
|---------|----------------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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