



**EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FURTHER
EDUCATION COLLEGES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS**

MONITORING VISIT

ALBEMARLE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE

(Company Registration No. – 3387138)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 6 March 2018, the college was found to exceed expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been maintained.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. Course provision is well designed to meet the needs of all students. Students follow individually tailored programmes, which include high levels of support to meet their academic targets and prepare them for progression into university. Courses on offer to Tier 4 visa students meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in Home Office guidance. Teaching is excellent. Teachers are knowledgeable and demonstrate very good teaching skills, which engage all students and promote rapid progress. Planning is thorough and includes strategies to support note-taking, consolidation and checking of learning. All students are challenged according to their ability. Assessment is well structured and leads to timely support when students are not making expected progress. Attainment is excellent with results in public examinations consistently exceeding national averages.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Arrangements to promote health and safety are highly effective. Premises are of good quality, fit for purpose and well maintained. Admissions and attendance recording are accurate. Arrangements for reporting on Tier 4 visa holders meet Home Office requirements. Pastoral support is excellent. The welfare of all students is closely monitored and the college responds promptly to any concerns. Appropriate procedures are in place to deal with the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Managers are suitably trained; further awareness training for staff is yet to be completed. The college provides students with excellent opportunities for enrichment and socialising outside of the classroom. Safeguarding of students aged under 18 is excellent. Staff at all levels are suitably trained and demonstrate good awareness of the college's comprehensive safeguarding procedures.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The proprietors are closely involved in the management of the college and provide highly effective oversight, resulting in fulfilment of the college's aims. The management structure is clear and there are effective channels of communication throughout the college. Self-assessment is thorough and accurately identifies the strengths of the college. It now includes realistic areas for development for most areas of provision. Quality assurance is excellent and makes good use of a wide range of feedback. Analysis of student achievement now includes comparison with national average for all subjects and levels. The college is continuing to develop suitable strategies to share good practice amongst teachers, leading to further improvements in teaching. Staff recruitment procedures are excellent, with all required checks made prior to the appointment of new staff.

3. THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2 Course provision is excellent. The college offers a wide range of subjects and flexibility in combining subjects to meet the goals and preferences of all students. It also provides a very effective programme of enrichment activities, which support students in applying and preparing for university. Classes are small. This enables teachers to tailor courses to meet the needs of their students. Close monitoring by personal tutors and curriculum managers results in timely provision of additional support or additional classes for those students who require them. Consequently, most make excellent progress and successfully complete their course. Courses on offer to Tier 4 entrant international students meet the definition of an approved qualification for Home Office purposes.
- 3.3 Teaching is excellent. Lessons are well planned with regard to the individual needs and prior attainments of the class. They include a variety of activities designed to engage all learners. Lessons are student focused, well-paced, and result in high levels of student participation. Knowledgeable teachers make excellent use of eliciting and questioning to challenge all students, extend learning and check understanding. Most provide high quality handouts that effectively structure students' note-taking to consolidate learning and provide suitable resources for revision. Homework is well planned and includes extension activities for the more able. Students are motivated, confident and enjoy their learning. Where specific needs are identified on entry, a manager with specialist training ensures that suitable arrangements are made for them. Assessment is well structured and accurately informs students and their parents of progress made towards their targets. Marking of students' written work includes helpful comments that support improvement.
- 3.4 Attainment is excellent. Most students make outstanding progress against their starting point and enter their first or second choice of university. Overall achievement is consistently above national averages. Those students who resit A levels improve their grades in line with their goals.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 Arrangements for health and safety are highly effective. The college has all relevant policies in place and implements them consistently. The premises are checked daily for potential hazards and fire safety equipment is tested regularly. All staff have received fire warden training. Fire evacuation drills are conducted at suitable intervals and are well logged. There are appropriate arrangements for first aid and the identity and location of first aiders are well publicised. Activities outside the college are suitably risk assessed.
- 4.3 The premises are of good quality, fit for purpose, safe and well maintained. Classrooms provide suitable environments for teaching and learning. Students have access to a comfortable common room in which to relax and socialise and a spacious room for self-study. The student council communicates any issues regarding premises to managers and the college responds promptly to make any appropriate improvements. Consequently, the vast majority of students and most staff are happy with the college facilities.
- 4.4 Registration and attendance monitoring are excellent. Admissions and attendance records are accurate and up to date. Student files are well maintained and include evidence of all required checks. Procedures for addressing poor attendance or punctuality are consistently implemented and highly effective. As a result, overall attendance rates are excellent. Procedures for reporting on Tier 4 students meet Home Office requirements.
- 4.5 Pastoral care is excellent. Students benefit from regular one-to-one meetings with the designated welfare officer that elicit personal concerns and support their wellbeing. All staff have received training to raise their awareness of mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and self-harm. Consequently, they are proactive in communicating any concerns. Welfare issues are well recorded and result in effective responses, including referral to external specialist agencies where necessary. Academic concerns are suitably addressed by personal tutors in regular, recorded meetings. Students confirm that they feel safe and well cared for by the college.
- 4.6 The college has good arrangements in place to deal with suspected radicalisation and extremism. The Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) and deputies have completed suitable anti-radicalisation training and the key issues have been communicated to all staff. The college is intending to provide further in-depth training to all staff as part of a project to raise awareness among the students of the potential risks to them.
- 4.7 The social programme is excellent. It includes a wide range of suitable activities, including weekly team sports and fitness activities at a local sports centre. The student council is actively involved in gathering ideas for activities and the college is very responsive to their suggestions. All students have the opportunity to

participate in an annual enrichment trip abroad and international students have access to an additional programme of cultural activities, designed to enhance their experience of life in the United Kingdom.

- 4.8 Safeguarding of students aged under 18 is excellent. Comprehensive safeguarding policies are in place and reviewed on an annual basis in line with the latest official guidance. Staff at all levels are suitably trained and demonstrate very good awareness of their responsibilities. Safeguarding has a high priority with college leaders, who are thorough in identifying possible risks to students. Comprehensive arrangements are in place to keep students safe whilst at college and in external settings.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
- Ensure that the self-evaluation process results in a report which includes a realistic set of areas for development as well as its strengths.
 - Strengthen the analysis of student achievement data by comparing college examination results to national averages.
 - Continue to develop opportunities for sharing good practice amongst teachers.
- 5.3 Progress against the first recommendation is excellent. The self-evaluation process is thorough and draws upon all relevant sources of information. The college accurately identifies its strengths and now includes realistic areas of development for most areas of provision.
- 5.4 Progress against the second recommendation is excellent. Managers have strengthened the analysis of student achievement and now compare results to national rates. Thorough and rigorous analysis is made by subject area. All grades and higher grades in GCSE and A level are now compared to national benchmarks and to results of sixth form colleges. This data supports accurate evaluation of the success of the college.
- 5.5 Progress against the third recommendation is good. The college has facilitated peer observations between teachers, enabling them to identify techniques to enhance their own practice. Peer observation has been used appropriately to provide support to teachers following formal observations that have identified specific areas for development. Peer observation has not yet been extended to all staff. Teachers also share resources and lesson ideas in team meetings to further raise the quality of teaching.
- 5.6 The leadership of the college provides clear educational direction as reflected in the high quality of education and the care of students. The proprietors are the principals and have excellent insight into the working of the college as they are actively involved in management and delivery of the provision, ensuring that the aims of the college are met. The management structure is clear and communication throughout the college is highly effective. This is achieved partly through regular informal contact with staff, but also through regular staff meetings, which are used both for information giving and for consultation with staff on aspects of college development. The principals make very effective use of staff training as a means of meeting whole college development targets.

- 5.7 Quality assurance is excellent and results in effective development planning with challenging targets that are regularly met. The college makes good use of data and feedback to evaluate course provision. All teachers undergo regular formal classroom observations and receive clear reports on their performance, including targets for development. Targets are reviewed at subsequent observations leading to ongoing improvements in delivery. Student feedback is taken through a range of suitable means, including the well-established and active student council. Analysed feedback demonstrates consistently high levels of student satisfaction. The complaints procedure is appropriate and complaints are suitably logged. The mechanism for dealing with complaints is currently being enhanced by the appointment of a board of governors to expand the existing panel of adjudicators.
- 5.8 Staff recruitment procedures are excellent. All required checks, including proof of identity and enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are made prior to confirmation of appointment and recorded on a suitable single central register. Staff files are well maintained and contain evidence of the checks.