

Inspection of Cheshire College – South & West

Inspection dates: 12–15 November 2019

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

Information about this provider

Cheshire College – South & West is a general further education college based in the north-west of England. The college was formed following a merger between South Cheshire College and West Cheshire College in March 2017. The college consists of three campuses. The largest campus is Crewe, where approximately 60% of provision, including A levels, is delivered. At the Ellesmere Port campus, approximately 28% of provision is delivered, and the remaining 12% at the Chester campus.

There are 3,800 learners aged 16 to 18 years, of which 485 are on A-level study programmes and the remainder follow vocational programmes from entry level to level 4. The college has 5,500 adult learners, of whom approximately 900 are full time. The remainder are on part-time or short courses. There are currently 876 apprentices in learning across a range of sector subject areas. The college receives funding for 246 learners with high needs. The college works with four subcontractors. The largest subcontractor, Petty Pool Vocational College, delivers courses for approximately 45% of learners for whom the college receives high-needs funding. The provision is delivered at the subcontractor's bespoke training centre.

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

Leaders and staff set high expectations for learners' behaviour. Senior managers personally meet and greet learners each morning on entering the college campuses. Consequently, learners model these behaviours, which creates a friendly and courteous environment across all campuses. Learners tell us that they feel safe.

Learners on education programmes for young people feel that they are treated like adults. They particularly like the freedom to choose how to plan their time between lessons. They feel that this is helping them to prepare for university and employment. However, A-level learners at the Crewe campus are often frustrated by extended gaps in their timetable between lessons.

Learners and apprentices tell us that they learn in a fun and diverse college, where they make new friends. Adult learners rediscover a love of learning and make friends for life. Learners and apprentices enjoy the wide range of trips and activities they take part in. For example, learners in art and design visit countries abroad to learn about the history of art. Beauty therapy learners visit beauty exhibitions to learn about the latest fashion trends and products.

Learners and apprentices receive highly effective pastoral support, including for mental health concerns. Support helps increase their resilience so that they can continue with their studies and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to become successful in achieving their next steps.

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

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of what learners, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), can achieve on education programmes for young people. For example, teachers encourage learners on level 1 information technology programmes to be ambitious to work in areas such as cyber-security. Teachers support learners on A-level programmes with additional workshops to help them address any knowledge gaps and achieve higher grades to be able to apply to elite universities. For example, learners studying A-level mathematics who are struggling with the progression from GCSE mathematics are provided with additional workshops.

Teachers plan the content of programmes logically so that learners acquire and practise skills as they progress through their programmes. For example, at the beginning of their programme, learners on level 3 art and design learn basic skills in how to use a sewing machine to draw on fabric and paper. As they progress, they develop more advanced skills in appliqué, dying fabrics and using an overlocker. This provides them with the knowledge and skills to design and create garments to a high standard for shows.

Learners on level 1 beauty therapy programmes learn the function of nails before carrying out basic manicure processes. They can explain about nail beds and nail

growth and correctly label areas of the nail. This prepares them with the knowledge they need for their next level of study.

The curriculum at the Crewe campus for learners who aspire to work in childcare does not meet their aspirations. In a few programmes, teachers do not plan or link activities to help learners understand key concepts. For example, in level 2 health and social care, teachers do not use activities that check learners' understanding or consolidate the learning of new topics. In level 2 plumbing programmes, learners do not understand how the tasks they are completing lead to more complex tasks or how they relate to activities in the workplace.

Leaders and managers plan a highly effective range of adult learning programmes to meet the varying range of aspirations of adults. Teachers carefully consider the content and delivery of programmes so that adult learners build their knowledge and skills in a meaningful order. For example, in ESOL programmes, adults learn important speaking and listening skills first, then move on to simple and complex writing tasks. Adult learners in hairdressing vocational programmes learn how to carry out basic cuts before they learn more complex tasks, such as hair colouring and colour correction skills. Teachers use a range of activities that inspire and motivate learners. For example, in access to higher education, teachers help learners secure their knowledge through frequent quizzes to check what learners have learned and identify any gaps in their knowledge. Consequently, more adults achieve their qualifications and progress to employment or further learning.

Assessors use their vocational and technical knowledge and experience to plan programmes that meet the specific needs of apprentices and employers. For example, in engineering, assessors frequently visit the workplace of a large motor vehicle manufacturer to observe the work that teams undertake. This ensures that they have a detailed understanding of the requirements of the job role within the company to plan well-designed programmes. As a result, apprentices undertake additional qualifications in paint technology and finishing so that they gain the knowledge and skills to carry out their job roles to the high standards required when working on luxury cars.

Assessors and employers use a range of practical activities to help apprentices gain substantial new knowledge and skills. For example, employers in hospitality and catering take apprentices on visits to artisan and bespoke cheese producers and butchers. Apprentices learn the provenance of the ingredients they use so that they can confidently discuss with customers the source of the food products they use in their restaurants. Assessors in engineering plan and deliver topics cohesively. For example, apprentices study braking systems, which they can then link to subsequent topics of traction and steering. This helps them build the necessary components to underpin complex skills. Employers value the contribution apprentices' new knowledge, skills and behaviours make to their businesses.

Planning of the subcontracted curriculum for learners with high needs is weak. Teachers focus too much on the achievement of accredited qualifications and not enough on providing a curriculum that caters for their individual needs. Teachers do

not use the detailed support information from learners' education, health and care plans or the assessment of their individual requirements to plan and deliver an accessible, supportive and inclusive curriculum. For example, learners who cannot read fluently are given written recipe activities taken directly from the internet. Teachers do not plan useful activities or use aids such as pictures and symbols to help learners learn in a way that is accessible to them. Therefore, the pace at which learners progress is too slow.

In contrast, learners with high needs on vocational catering and hospitality programmes at the Crewe campus develop high-level technical skills. Teachers plan activities that help them build their knowledge and skills and remember more. For example, learners use quick response (QR) codes so that they can access videos of 'how to ...' for catering tasks, such as how to fillet fish. This helps learners build sustainable knowledge and skills.

Leaders and teachers provide learners and apprentices with a curriculum that extends beyond the knowledge and skills they need to complete their qualifications. For example, the content of the tutorial programme helps learners gain a wider understanding of political and social issues, such as the impact of domestic abuse on society, and current topics such as the general election. Learners and apprentices demonstrate their understanding of fundamental British values.

Learners and apprentices are provided with highly effective careers guidance, which they value greatly. Learners and apprentices know what they want to do next and what they need to do to get there.

Governors fully understand their role. They ensure that the college fulfils its legal duties and responsibilities. They provide effective financial management oversight and have continued to secure improvements to the quality of education that learners and apprentices receive during the merger process.

Leaders and managers use labour market information to provide programmes that meet regional and local needs of the communities in which campuses are located. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Consequently, staff feel valued and enjoy working at the college.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have created a safe learning environment which promotes respect and tolerance. There is a highly effective trained safeguarding team who understand their role and responsibilities in keeping learners safe. Governors ensure that the college fulfils its legal duties and responsibilities in relation to the 'Prevent' duty. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place, including the safe recruitment of staff. Staff receive regular training and updates, so they are aware of local safeguarding issues. They use this knowledge to raise learners' awareness of potential local safeguarding risks, such as knife crime.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders need to review urgently the quality of education that learners with high needs receive through their subcontractor partner. They need to put in place actions to bring about rapid improvement so that learners with high needs achieve to the best of their abilities.
- Leaders and managers need to review the level 2 health and social care curriculum at the Crewe campus to ensure that it meets the needs of learners who aspire to a career in childcare.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130619
Address	Dane Bank Avenue Crewe Cheshire CW2 8AB
Contact number	01270654654
Website	www.ccsw.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Mr Jasbir Dhesi
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Petty Pool Vocational College Total People Ltd Risual Ltd Cheshire Constabulary and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service

Information about this inspection

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

Inspection team

Elaine Price, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Maura Cummins	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jackie Moores	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Bruce	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Keenan	Ofsted Inspector
Gail Yeadon	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Gray	Ofsted Inspector
Ruth Szolkowska	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Young	Ofsted Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019