

Redbridge College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130453

Name of lead inspector: Nigel Fletcher HMI

Last day of inspection: 8 October 2010

Type of provider: General Further Education College

Address: Little Heath
Barley Lane
Romford
Essex
RM6 4XT

Telephone number: 0208 548 7400

Information about the provider

1. Redbridge College is a medium-sized general further education (GFE) college based on a main site at Little Heath in the London Borough of Redbridge with a secondary site in Ilford town centre. Unemployment in Redbridge is just above the national average but the same as for Greater London. The borough includes several areas of economic deprivation. Redbridge's rate for staying on in education and training at age 16 is high compared to national rates. It operates a partly selective system of secondary schooling, and all local schools have their own sixth form.
2. The college offers provision in 12 of the 15 sector subject areas funded by the Skills Funding Agency. It has grown significantly in recent years and is now a wholly vocational college with the mission 'to unlock every individual's potential skills and support them to reach their goals in a culture which values diversity'. The college offers a small apprenticeship programme and programmes under Train to Gain. It provides vocational courses for pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools.
3. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is around 62% compared with the local average of around 43%. Around 40% of students speak English as a second, or additional, language. The largest group represented is of students of African heritage. The college draws over 54% of its students from neighbouring boroughs. Educational attainment in the local authority in 2008/09 was above the national average with 63% of pupils gaining 5 or more A* to C grades including mathematics and English at GCSE.
4. The provider/college provides training on behalf of the following provider:
 - University of East London.
5. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider/college:
 - Ellingham Employment Services
 - Young Peoples Project
 - Forward Thinking Training Solutions Ltd
 - Seedtime
 - J and K Training Ltd
 - NS Care Ltd
 - TDS Training Ltd.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16 Further education (16 to 18) Foundation learning, including Entry to Employment	302 part-time learners 1,233 full-time learners 256 part-time learners 604 full-time learners 128 part-time learners 89 learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	705 full-time learners 445 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	473 learners 79 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision		Grade 2
Capacity to improve		Grade 2
		Grade
Outcomes for learners		2
Quality of provision		2
Leadership and management		2
Safeguarding		2
Equality and diversity		2
Subject Areas		
Hairdressing and beauty		2
Sport, leisure and recreation		3
Preparation for life and work - ESOL		1
Business, administration and law		2

Overall effectiveness

- Redbridge is a good college and shows good capacity to improve further. Students feel very safe, reflecting the good promotion of safeguarding. Equality of opportunity is well integrated into college life and many teachers promote this well in lessons. Success rates have increased significantly since the previous inspection and are now above the most recent national averages. Outcomes for learners on Train to Gain programmes and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses are excellent. Students' retention and achievement are improving and are now good, although attendance rates remain low.
- Students benefit from a wide range of courses in most subject areas, and the college works well with partners to provide this. The college is particularly good at gathering and acting on students' views to continuously improve their experience at the college and students highlight the atmosphere of mutual respect with all staff.

8. Teaching and learning are good. The majority of lessons offer students a wide range of activities which challenge and motivate them. However, the planning of too many lessons is not effective in meeting students' literacy and numeracy support needs. Guidance and support for students are good. Students benefit from good initial assessment, pastoral and additional learning support and from a wide range of effective welfare services.
9. Leadership and management are good, and are outstanding for ESOL provision. Data are used effectively to identify areas for improvement. However, the resulting actions provide insufficient detail to determine how to improve the quality of provision further. Steps to improve success rates and raise the quality of teaching and learning have been effective. The self-assessment report is accurate, although it overestimates the quality of teaching and learning. Governance is satisfactory. The college provides good value for money.

Main findings

- Outcomes are good and have improved significantly for students of all ages and at all levels since the last inspection. This improvement results from increases in both achievement and retention rates in most subject areas. Students make good progress in lessons and develop good skills for their future economic well-being. Although retention rates are now high, attendance at lessons remains low, but improving.
- The achievement of qualifications by learners on Train to Gain is very high and nearly all qualifications are completed within the agreed time. Overall and timely success rates for the small number of advanced apprentices are high, although rates for the similar number of apprentices at level 2 are around average. Achievement and progression rates for students aged 14 to 16 are high.
- Students enjoy coming to college and feel safe. They appreciate the firm and friendly security staff and understand the importance of adopting safe working practices and healthy lifestyles.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students are engaged actively in interesting activities and make good progress in their studies. Standards of written work are good or better in most curriculum areas. However, a minority of lessons do not always develop fully the skills of the more able students.
- Too many schemes of work are not well written and pay insufficient attention to students' literacy and numeracy needs. Assessment is well managed and verification is now very good. In a few curriculum areas, students' learning plans are of a high standard. However, managers recognise that in other areas learning plans are much less well developed.
- The lesson observation system is well organised and managed. It is well supported by a comprehensive electronic recording system. The key strengths and weaknesses of lessons are identified clearly, but in a few curriculum areas observations are over graded. In addition, many judgements focus too much on teaching and do not always evaluate students' learning and progress.

- The range of provision is good and meets the needs and interests of students well. Courses offer good progression routes and students' progression between levels is high. Participation by students in the growing range of interesting enrichment activities is high. Most students now benefit from relevant work experience. The college has strong links with community groups, schools and employers which benefit students.
- Care, guidance and support for students are good. The college provides a very good range of support services and welfare provision. Additional learning support helps students make good progress. Group tutorials contribute well to students' personal and social education.
- Leadership and management are good. Strong and effective leadership has transformed the culture of the college and brought about significant improvements in all aspects of the college's work over the last three years. Provision is now good or better in most subject areas.
- Quality assurance procedures are rigorous and are increasingly effective in identifying and tackling pockets of underperformance. The collection, analysis and use of data to improve provision are embedded firmly across the college, although commentary on what needs to be done to improve does not demonstrate sufficient insight. Self-assessment is accurate and incisive.
- Governors are enthusiastic and highly committed to the college. However, they recognise that attendance at meetings, and the transparency with which their discussions are reported, need to be improved.
- Arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults are good. The college is assiduous in ensuring that appropriate checks are carried out on all relevant staff, and training is comprehensive. Good relations between all members of the college community promote a safe and harmonious atmosphere.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Data are used effectively to identify uneven performance between different groups. However, staff are not always clear about the causes of, or how to reduce, these variations. Every opportunity is taken to encourage students to respect one another and to celebrate the diversity of the college community.

What does Redbridge College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that staff at all levels work relentlessly to improve students' attendance by applying stringent procedures consistently throughout the college.
- Make sure that schemes of work inform planning more effectively to better meet students' literacy and numeracy support needs in lessons.
- Ensure that lesson observation judgements focus more strongly on learning to enable managers to have a better view of the quality of students' progress in lessons.
- Improve attendance at governors' meetings, and improve governors' communications to staff and stakeholders of their discussions on the key issues facing the college.

- Improve further the impact of quality assurance processes by supplementing data analysis with a more insightful commentary on exactly what needs to be done to tackle the remaining variations in the quality of provision.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the friendly and safe environment in which everyone is valued
- the way that students from diverse ethnic backgrounds mix well together
- how highly the college values learners' views and how well it acts on them
- how flexible and encouraging the college is for learners returning to education
- the recognition of learners' achievements and the awards ceremonies
- the extra activities and trips that enrich the learners' experience at college
- the good support received from teachers and assessors in enjoyable lessons which help learners make good progress
- the high quality and effectiveness of the security staff.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the availability of computers in classrooms to develop students' learning
- learning resource centres, which are too small and close too early.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good working relationship with the college
- the high quality of learners' work and their progress.

What employers would like to see improved:

- on occasion, the speed with which employers' queries are responded to.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

10. Effective leadership and teamwork throughout the college have brought about significant improvement in all aspects of the college's work since the previous inspection. Although it is only in the last year that students' success rates have been above average, the foundations upon which these improvements are built are secure and sustainable. The rigour of quality assurance and self-assessment, the increasingly sophisticated use of data to analyse performance and identify areas for further improvement and the emphasis placed on developing staff talents augur well for continuing improvement. Although the success rates for most curriculum areas have improved, some inconsistencies in the quality of provision between curriculum areas remain. The college is aware that it faces significant challenges in responding to a demanding financial environment in the future.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

11. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates have improved significantly since the last inspection, due to increases in both achievement and retention, and are now above the most recent national averages. Success rates for students of all ages are around five percentage points above 2008/09 national averages for both long and short courses. Long course success rates for students aged 16 to 18 improved significantly by around eight percentage points at each level in 2009/10, from below 2008/09 national averages to above. Success rates for adults on long courses remain high. However, although they improved to above average at intermediate and advanced levels, those at foundation level are around the national rate, due mainly to lower achievement rates. Success rates for short courses have improved significantly by about nine percentage points for both age groups and are now above average at 90%.
12. Success rates have improved across nearly all curriculum areas, some significantly, to above 2008/09 national averages. However, there has been little improvement in child care and sports. There is no significant difference in the progress made by students from different minority ethnic groups. For all long courses, the success rates of female adults are slightly higher than for males. However, those for females aged 16 to 18 are slightly below those of males, contrary to national averages. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make better progress than those without identified difficulties.
13. Achievement and progression to further training or employment are high for students aged 14 to 16. Overall and timely success rates for advanced apprenticeships are above average, although at the national averages for the small number of apprentices at level 2. Overall and timely success rates on most Train to Gain programmes have made significant improvement over the

last year and are now very high. Many Train to Gain learners make very good progress from low starting points.

14. Most students enjoy their studies, gain in confidence and improve their employability skills. Standards of their work have improved in the last year and are now good. Students' approach to health and safety is good. Students speak highly of the security arrangements in the college, and particularly of the security staff. They feel safe around the college and in their work.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

15. Inspectors judged the standard of teaching and learning to be good. This judgement agrees with the college's view in the self-assessment report. Most lessons are well planned and structured to include a good range of activities that promote learning and maintain students' interest. Students make the best progress in lessons where planning is thorough and they participate well in interesting activities. Most students develop increased levels of confidence and subject knowledge in their lessons and training. However, a minority of lessons fail to develop the skills of the more able students or to meet fully the needs of all the students. In addition, some schemes of work are not well written and do not always show the relation between students' literacy and numeracy needs and lesson plans. Consequently, students make less progress in developing these skills.
16. Standards of written work are good or better in most curriculum areas. Students' work and progress in ESOL and Train to Gain are outstanding. Managers and teachers recognise that some low attendance and poor punctuality by students can restrict learning. Teachers work hard to provide students with effective assessments, and marked work often contains helpful comments on how to improve. Assessment is well organised and managed, and verification of standards has recently improved to a high standard. In most curriculum areas students' learning plans are of high quality, containing relevant and quantitative targets. However, managers recognise that in other curriculum areas learning plans are underdeveloped. On Train to Gain programmes, assessors use a good variety of assessment strategies appropriate to the different occupational areas; however, insufficient use is made of technologies to support learning and assessment.
17. Initial and diagnostic assessments provide a reliable basis on which the college can provide functional skills and additional learning support for students who need them. The management of functional skills has recently improved. Despite low outcomes in 2009/10, evidence suggests that they will improve in 2010/11. Equality and diversity are well promoted in curriculum areas such as ESOL and hairdressing and beauty therapy, but less so in a few other curriculum areas.
18. The college lesson observation system is well organised and managed, and outcomes are related clearly to a wide range of relevant staff development opportunities. All staff are observed annually and the process is well supported by a comprehensive electronic recording system. Support for teachers following

observation is implemented sensitively and action plans are linked clearly to staff development and support. In the main, the system identifies the key strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning, but in a few curriculum areas over-generous grades are awarded. In addition, too many judgements focus on teaching and do not always evaluate students' learning and progress. Managers are aware that more work has to be carried out to remedy this.

19. The college's range of provision is good and meets the needs and interests of students well. Courses offer good progression routes from foundation to advanced level in most programmes. Progression rates within the college and to further study or employment are high. Planning is thorough and careful consideration is given to suitable alternatives for students where courses are discontinued, for example with construction for learners aged 14 to 16.
20. The college has extended the range of enrichment activities since the previous inspection and is currently offering around 30 different activities each week as well as trips and events such as World Aids Day. Participation by students is high. Most students take part in vocationally-related enrichment activities. For example, business students benefited from internships in major companies through the Career Academy UK. Opportunities for work experience have improved and students now benefit in all subject areas.
21. Since the previous inspection the college has extended its partnerships well and has strong links with community groups, schools and employers that lead to a variety of valuable opportunities for students. Productive links with partners in Train to Gain mutually support learners, employers and sub-contractors. New provision, developed through the improved partnerships, includes apprenticeships in public security. ESOL students take part in environmental conservation through links with the Epping Forest Conservation Trust. The Essex Business Network and employer fora help engage employers in the college's work.
22. Care, guidance and support for students are good. The college provides a very broad range of support services that help students complete their courses, for example through counselling, financial support and good use of welfare organisations such as 'Alone in London'. Student mentors provide effective support for peers identified at risk of leaving their programme early because of, for example, poor attendance or attitude.
23. Additional learning support is good. Students receiving support make good progress. They achieve as well or better than those who are not identified as requiring support. Education support workers are assigned to all foundation level courses to help students, for example, with literacy and numeracy.
24. Students receive good advice and guidance to help them choose the right course, particularly for learners on Train to Gain programmes. Strong links with schools and well-planned induction help students settle into their courses quickly. The tutorial programme focuses effectively on the Every Child Matters themes and on improving students' health and well-being. Tutorials contribute

well to students' personal and social education. However, in many subjects, and on Train to Gain programmes, target setting for learners has insufficient focus on specific actions to stretch individuals to develop their learning further.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

25. The principal and senior management team provide strong and decisive leadership that has contributed to a significant improvement in the college's performance over the last three years. Students' outcomes and the quality of provision have improved markedly since the previous inspection and are now good. Against a backdrop of significant financial challenges, the team spirit and high morale of staff are a testament to leaders' and managers' success in developing a culture in which improving provision for students is paramount. The culture of the college is now characterised by a strong collective desire to ensure that students succeed. This is supported by a judicious combination of seeking to develop staff and give them autonomy whilst maintaining effective lines of management accountability.
26. The principal sets a clear strategic direction for the college and communicates well, encouraging extensive consultation with staff and governors. Plans for the future of the college and changes to its curriculum have been well thought through. Governors are highly supportive of, and ambitious for, the college staff and students. They receive comprehensive reports on both strategic matters and academic performance from the principal, and have a good oversight of financial issues. However, attendance at governors' meetings has been low, and their deliberations on both strategic and operational matters are not well documented. As a consequence, the effectiveness with which governors discharge their responsibilities is, as they recognise, not fully transparent.
27. Quality assurance arrangements are rigorous and appropriately focused on the key priorities of improving teaching and learning and ensuring that all students achieve their qualifications. Highly effective systems for setting and monitoring targets for staff teams and individuals have led to much improved staff understanding of, and involvement in, quality assurance processes. As a consequence, teachers are clear about their goals and have felt empowered rather than constrained by the challenges they are set. Senior managers with responsibility for the curriculum are highly effective in motivating their teams. The ability of middle managers to identify precisely what needs to be done to secure the best performance from their teams is developing well but is more uneven. Regular reviews of the performance of each course are thorough and useful. Self-assessment at all levels is both accurate and perceptive. Data are used highly effectively to analyse all aspects of performance, although the articulation in words of precisely what needs to be done to improve is underdeveloped.
28. Arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults are good. All staff have received Criminal Records Bureau checks on their suitability to work with young people, record keeping is comprehensive and staff training is thorough. All aspects of health and safety have a very high profile throughout

the college. For example, the roles of staff responsible for safeguarding issues are particularly well publicised, and students are well informed about what they should do if they have any concerns about their welfare. Students report that the college is a harmonious and tolerant environment, a view supported by inspection evidence.

29. Staff throughout the college recognise their responsibility to secure the equal treatment of all students and to value diversity. Formal arrangements to meet statutory obligations are fully in place. Staff and students work hard to encourage all of the college community to celebrate diversity and respect difference, and these efforts are largely successful. It is a tolerant community characterised by thoughtfulness for others. The analysis of achievement by students from different groups is very thorough, although where data provide evidence of differential achievement staff are less confident about both the causes of, and the remedies for, such differences. Nevertheless, much success has been secured in reducing achievement gaps between different groups. The promotion of diversity through the curriculum is good overall; in ESOL, it is excellent. Although, in a minority of curriculum areas, understanding of the issues is still at an early stage.
30. Arrangements to gather and respond to students' views on all aspects of the college's work have improved significantly. Increasingly, students' views on aspects of their courses are being taken seriously and acted upon. Equally, students appreciate having more of a say in broader aspects of college life, and their greater involvement is contributing to the harmonious atmosphere that pervades the college. For example, students' comments about an absence of female security personnel have been responded to positively. The college's engagement with employers, although improving, is still underdeveloped.
31. Teachers are well qualified, and their professional development is a strength. Information from lesson observations is used well to tailor training for both individuals and teams. Accommodation and resources are largely fit for purpose. The college has succeeded in reducing significantly its energy consumption and raising awareness of environmental concerns. On the basis of students' outcomes, the college offers good value for money. However, the uncertain financial climate, combined with the size and location of the college, has led to a degree of uncertainty over the future of the college as an independent institution.

Subject areas

Hairdressing and beauty

Grade 2

Context

32. Currently, 500 students attend a range of courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy, holistic therapies and barbering from entry level to advanced level. Almost all of the 220 students aged 16 to 18, and around 70% of adults, attend full time. Some 36 students aged 14 to 16 follow the young apprenticeship scheme.

Key findings

- Success rates on the majority of courses are good. However, those for the small number of students in hairdressing at foundation level declined in 2009/10 to below the most recent national average. The college is fully aware of the reasons for this and have taken appropriate action to improve outcomes. Achievement rates on the young apprenticeship programme, for students aged 14 to 16 from local schools, are satisfactory.
- Progression of students onto higher level courses within the subject area is good. Many students progress from entry level onto foundation or intermediate level courses. The majority of students on intermediate hairdressing or beauty therapy courses in 2009/10 have progressed onto advanced level programmes in the current year.
- Students feel safe and secure. They are confident that staff will respond appropriately if they were to report their concerns. Learning activities successfully improve students' attitudes and behaviour, and raise their awareness of how to stay safe from bullying and harassment. Health and safety are strongly reinforced when necessary.
- Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are well planned and provide a range of learning effective activities. Students enjoy their lessons and many are confident in working independently. However, in a small number of lessons students are not motivated or challenged. In practical lessons training or lesson plans do not always identify students' training needs effectively.
- Arrangements for teaching functional skills are satisfactory. However, in too many lessons, literacy and numeracy teaching is not linked effectively to the students' vocational subjects, tasks are not planned sufficiently to suit students' different levels of ability and the more advanced students quickly become disinterested.
- Assessment is well managed. Assessors brief the learners well at the start of the process and provide good written and verbal feedback on the quality of their work and progress at each stage.
- Students have very good access to a wide range of courses in hairdressing and beauty from entry through to advanced level. Students aged 14 to 16 enjoy the

start of a career in hairdressing whilst still at school through the college's young apprenticeship scheme.

- Pastoral support is good. Group tutorials, supported by effective guest speakers, provide students with useful information on many aspects of health and well-being. Students identified as requiring additional learning support are quickly allocated a tutor for practical and theory lessons. However, in too many lessons teachers do not always use this support to its full advantage.
- Curriculum management is good. Two newly-appointed managers have quickly improved the day-to-day operation of the hairdressing and beauty therapy provision. Both managers focus well on quality improvement. This is raising expectations amongst teaching staff to promote good teaching and learning and improvements can already be seen in the quality of provision.
- Hairdressing and beauty staff are effective in raising awareness of, and promoting, safeguarding and equality and diversity with students. They frequently use relevant case studies to ensure that students are fully aware of their responsibilities in their own practices and in the practices of others.
- Accommodation is satisfactory. The provision has grown over the last three years and teaching rooms are often too small. Not all of the salons are of the high standard now frequently found in the industry.

What does Redbridge College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the best practice in teaching and learning is shared between all staff to improve students' success on foundation hairdressing courses.
- Ensure that teachers plan the work of learning support tutors more effectively in lessons to enable students to make better progress.
- Improve the coherence of the functional skills teaching with the vocational subject so that students are better able to increase their literacy and numeracy skills.

Sport, leisure and recreation

Grade 3

Context

33. The subject area has approximately 200 students, aged mainly 16 to 18, enrolled on full-time programmes from foundation to advanced levels. Programmes include the Introductory Diploma in Sport and Leisure, first and national certificates and diplomas in sport, Extended Diploma in Sport, NVQ level 2 in Coaching, and the Diploma for Progression.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. In 2009/10, success rates were high for the Diplomas in Sport at levels 1 and 3 and on the intermediate level Diploma for Progression. They were satisfactory for the National Certificate and NVQ, and low on the First Diploma.
- Until recently, success rates for students from different ethnic backgrounds have been similar. However, in 2009/10, rates for Black British-African students declined and are lower than for White British students.
- Pass rates are low for the minority of learners on introductory and first diplomas in sport, but high for other courses. Retention is poor on the First Diploma and the NVQ, and has been inconsistent on all courses in recent years. Current attendance and punctuality rates are around average. Students make satisfactory progress in lessons and progression to further study is also satisfactory.
- Students enjoy their courses, and written assignments are of a satisfactory standard. Students feel safe and supported in a caring environment. Most work well together to develop their skills and knowledge during lessons. Students enjoy many opportunities to work in well-managed group activities. They show respect for their teachers and for others.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In most practical lessons students demonstrate good coaching and instructing skills and satisfactory sports skills. However, in too many theory lessons teaching methods lack creativity, are repetitive and require written responses that students find uninspiring.
- Learners on NVQ courses benefit from coaching children in local primary schools. They have a good awareness of health and safety and safeguarding priorities and are aware of the challenges of coaching children of different ages, gender and ethnic backgrounds. Students on other courses, however, do not have opportunities for organised work experience.
- The college provides a satisfactory range of courses to meet the needs and interests of students. It recognises that it offers insufficient additional short qualifications to enhance students' employability prospects. Students participate well in the college enrichment programme. They enjoy the varied activities which help them in their learning, develop their self-confidence and contribute to a better college experience.

- Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. The college provides a broad range of welfare support services. Students feel safe and are able to make well-informed choices about their own health and well-being. However, academic support is less effective. Tutors set imprecise individual targets and students are often unclear about what they need to do to make better progress.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Courses and induction are well organised. Internal communications are good and ensure that staff and students are well informed. However, a few areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection have not been resolved. For example, actions to improve retention consistently across the curriculum area have been unsuccessful.
- Students gain a good understanding of equality and diversity through college events. However, there are very few female students on the sports courses and too often lessons focus on sport in a male context. The department has recently recruited a female teacher and plans to introduce a wider variety of sports to address the gender imbalance.
- Teachers are well qualified. A broad staff development programme is offered by the college. It is tailored well to meet teachers' needs that are identified in lesson observations and through other quality assurance activities. It is beginning to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

What does Redbridge College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers plan their lessons to include more challenging and varied learning activities to enable more students to be motivated to remain, and succeed, on their courses.
- Ensure that lessons better promote the gender diversity of sport and further develop recruitment activities to increase the recruitment of female students to sports courses.
- Increase the additional courses and opportunities for work experience available to students in order to improve their employability.
- Ensure that individual targets are more precise and measurable so that all students know how to make better progress and achieve to their full ability.

Preparation for life and work - ESOL

Grade 1

Context

34. Currently, 386 adult students, of whom around two thirds are part time, 121 full-time students aged 16 to 18, and six part-time students aged 14 to 16 are studying on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. Courses run from entry level through to intermediate level. The curriculum area is managed by two curriculum area managers, one for adults and one for younger students. Courses are offered at both college sites.

Key findings

- All students make outstanding progress in attaining their learning goals. Retention is very high with virtually all students who start remaining to complete their course. Most courses have very high pass rates. The outstanding overall achievement of students is supported by their regular attendance which is generally above average.
- Students make excellent progress in their speaking and listening skills. They acquire useful study and employability skills and gain much confidence as speakers of English. Over three quarters of the students on ESOL courses progress onto vocational courses at Redbridge College. Three students have gained university placements in the current year.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are characterised by high levels of energy and enthusiasm from the staff which encourage a similar response from the students. Planning is comprehensive and detailed. Teachers provide an extremely wide range of interesting activities that motivate and challenge students to extend and deepen their social and personal skills as well as their linguistic development.
- Some rooms for younger students are cramped and stuffy and restrict the use of more interactive teaching and learning strategies. In some classes the size of print used on interactive whiteboards is too small for students with less acute eyesight. Some teachers are unsure of the full potential offered by information and learning technologies (ILT).
- Students' individual starting points are established clearly through thorough initial and diagnostic assessment. Individual and group profiles are used effectively to set targets and plan activities. Personal learning plans provide clear curriculum and personal targets. Regular review of these targets provides a thorough basis for assessing and recording student progress.
- The wide range of courses from entry level through to intermediate level is well matched to the needs and interests of the students. Courses at all levels have a strong and successful emphasis on enhancing employment prospects. Managers have designed an effective programme for supporting students who are new to the country. The department also provides an interesting range of enjoyable enrichment activities.

- Partnership working is good. Staff have established good links with local schools and local authorities to make provision for pupils who need more intensive language support. However, recent financial constraints have resulted in successful projects being discontinued.
- Support for students is good. Very effective initial advice and guidance provide a good direction for students, many of whom are new to formal education.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers show much energy and enthusiasm and provide a positive climate in which teachers are encouraged to extend the interactive nature of their lessons. The emphasis on improving teaching and learning is well understood and acted upon by staff. Communication within the department is excellent. Peer observation and coaching are used well to share good practice.
- Results of teaching observations and other performance measures feed into the appraisal process and have resulted in a growing number of outstanding lessons. Self-assessment is detailed and based on the good use of data. The department identifies accurately its many strengths, but is less thorough when identifying areas that could be improved.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Teachers use every opportunity provided at induction, in the teaching programme and in the passing comments of students to reinforce a culture of respect. The backgrounds and prior experiences of students are used effectively to demonstrate the value the college places on difference and diversity.
- Processes for listening to what students have to say and involving them in the quality improvement process are well developed. Staff value the contributions made by students and demonstrate by their response that these views are taken seriously.

What does Redbridge College need to do to improve further?

- Develop the skills of teachers to be able to use ILT more efficiently and creatively to enhance the learning experiences of all students.
- Review group sizes and room allocations so that students have reasonable accommodation in which to undertake a full range of learning activities.

Business, administration and law

Grade 2

Context

35. Vocational courses are offered, from foundation to advanced levels, in business and accountancy, and NVQs in business administration for apprentices. Of the 268 students, 181 are aged 16 to 18 and the remainder are adults. All younger students and almost all adults attend full time. Just over half the students are male. Over three quarters of students are from minority ethnic heritages.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Success rates are high on first and national diplomas in business, NVQ accounting at level 2 and intermediate certificate in personal finance. Around three quarters of apprentices in business administration and customer service complete their frameworks on time.
- Most students' work is of a high standard. Students develop a wide and relevant range of skills in business and accounting. Retention is low on the introductory diploma and the national certificate in business, although achievement is high. Punctuality is poor and is not always challenged by teachers. This can sometimes result in disturbance of class activities.
- Students' progress is good in lessons leading to outstanding progression rates within the college and beyond. For example, 90% of students progress from level 1 and level 2 to the next level, almost 90% of business students at level 3 progress to higher education, and all accounting students progress to higher education or employment.
- Students develop a wide range of employability skills through visits and well-managed debates in lessons. They are active in supporting the college and several charities. Students are very respectful to visitors, the staff and to each other. Group tutorials promote a wide range of activities to encourage all aspects of personal development and work skills.
- Teaching and learning are good. The majority of lessons are well planned and meet the needs of students well. Most teachers use a wide variety of learning activities which interest and stimulate students. Most students work productively and with confidence during collaborative activities. However, a very small minority of lessons lack appropriate stimulus to retain students' motivation.
- Assessment arrangements are good and teachers give helpful written feedback to students. Students use a wide and relevant range of topical business situations in their written work, which is to a high standard and professionally presented.
- A wide range of courses provide good progression routes which meet the needs and interests of business and accounting students well. Career academy students study an additional finance qualification with their national diploma.
- An interesting range of enrichment activities are organised. Students have the opportunity to develop understanding of real work settings and careers from

the employers who are guest speakers from the business and accounting sectors. All accounting students at intermediate and advanced levels benefit from work experience and career academy students find their internships particularly helpful.

- Students receive good guidance and support. There is good pastoral support and guidance which helps to promote good progression. Students' progress and targets are reviewed regularly in individual tutorials. However, targets are not always measurable and students are not fully aware of the progress they are making. Group tutorials frequently present varied activities which interest and motivate the students.
- Leadership and management are good. The self-assessment report is detailed and accurate and uses students' views well. Good progress has been made on the actions of the quality improvement plan. Staff are set challenging targets in their appraisals based on performance and undertake a significant amount of professional development.
- The promotion of equality and support for diversity are satisfactory. The needs of individual students are identified and met well. Equality and diversity are included successfully in group tutorials. However, there is insufficient evidence of embedding and promoting equality and diversity in lessons. Although a small minority of students from minority ethnic heritages have been identified as underperforming, strategies to narrow the achievement gap are underdeveloped.

What does Redbridge College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the variety of learning activities in introductory diploma and national certificate programmes to raise the retention rates and improve success rates.
- Ensure that all staff apply rigorous procedures to improve the punctuality of students to lessons.
- Ensure that all targets for students are clear, with measurable outcomes, so that all students know how to improve and achieve to their full ability.
- Improve the monitoring of students' progress and take appropriate remedial action quickly to narrow any achievement gaps between different groups of students.

Information about the inspection

36. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's assistant principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the Skills Funding Agency, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on students and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
37. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires that learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Redbridge College

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	2039		1248	767	
Part-time learners	520	121	73	230	120
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2	1
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010