

Weymouth College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130653

Name of lead inspector: Alex Falconer HMI

Last day of inspection: 22 October 2010

Type of provider: General Further Education College

Address: Cranford Avenue
Weymouth
Dorset
DT4 7LW

Telephone number: 0130 5761100

Information about the provider

1. Weymouth College is a medium-sized general further education college. The main campus is near the centre of Weymouth but there are a small number of community centres in Weymouth and Dorchester. Around 5,000 students are enrolled, a third of whom study part-time courses. Just over 1,500 students are aged 16 to 18 and over 3,000 are adults most of whom study part-time courses. There are over 150 pupils from local schools on part-time vocational programmes and nearly 700 work-based learners. Around 6% of the population of Dorset come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion in Weymouth is much smaller, very similar to the 3% of the student body that come from minority ethnic heritages.
2. The college offers courses in 13 of the 15 curriculum areas; although learner numbers in some are quite small. The majority of students are on preparation for life and work and health and care programmes. Substantial numbers study art and media and engineering courses. Courses range from entry level through to advanced level and foundation degree work. Almost a third of the students are on intermediate programmes and around 40% take advanced courses. Unemployment is low in Dorset and the college is situated in a largely rural area. Many schools in the area have sixth forms. Recent GCSE A* to C results for Year 11 pupils have improved to national averages.
3. The mission of the college is 'to transform the lives and economic prosperity of our local people by providing the opportunity to access learning delivered to the highest standards'.
4. At the previous inspection, in November 2006, the college was found to be satisfactory. Overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management were all judged satisfactory. Of the five curriculum areas inspected, construction was judged to be good. Health and care, information and communication technology (ICT), English, modern foreign languages and preparation for life and work were all found to be satisfactory.
5. The college provides training on behalf of:
 - West Dorset General Hospitals NHS Trust.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled students in 2009/10
<p>Provision for young students: 14 to16</p> <p>Further education (16 to18)</p> <p>Foundation learning, including</p>	<p>156 part-time students</p> <p>1,520 full-time students</p> <p>343 full-time students</p>
<p>Provision for adult students: Further education (19+)</p>	<p>1,318 full-time students</p> <p>371 part-time students</p>
<p>Employer provision: Train to Gain</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p>	<p>856 students</p> <p>300 apprentices</p>

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Grade 3
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	Grade
Outcomes for students	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3

Subject Areas	Grade
Engineering	2
Information communication technology	4
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Visual arts and media	2
Literacy and numeracy	2

Overall effectiveness

- Weymouth College is a satisfactory college that has improved over the past four years. Outcomes for students, although improved, continue to be at the improving national averages for general further education colleges. Students' achievements are best on advanced vocational programmes for 16- to 18-year-olds and for 14- to 16-year-old school pupils. Teaching and learning remain satisfactory. The range of curriculum provision is good and progression routes are clear in most curriculum areas. The college self-assessment report judges a further eight curriculum areas to be satisfactory. Partnerships with schools and other institutions are good. However the college recognises that links with employers are underdeveloped.
- Support and guidance for students are good and pastoral support contributes effectively to students' personal development. Additional learning support is well organised, but not all students receiving this support make as good

progress as their peers. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the college has ambitious plans for its future. Quality assurance, although well established, has not led to sufficient improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The promotion of safeguarding is good and the students report that the college is a safe and respectful environment in which to work. Equality and diversity are satisfactorily promoted, but are inconsistently embedded in some curriculum areas. Students' and other stakeholders' views are sought and acted upon to bring about improvements. Financial management is good.

Main findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Success rates for long courses, although improved, are broadly at national averages. Achievements are good for pupils aged 14 to 16 and full-time students aged 16 to 18 on advanced vocational courses. Outcomes for trainees on work-based learning and Train to Gain have improved but rates of completion within the planned time are below national average on Train to Gain.
- Overall, students make satisfactory progress in their studies and training. Pupils aged 14 to 16 and students aged 16 to 18 on advanced vocational programmes make good progress. However, some students receiving additional learning support make less progress than their peers.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although the college currently judges this aspect of its work to be good. A significant proportion of lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be satisfactory.
- The range of provision is good. Progression routes are mostly clear from entry level to advanced courses and above. However, the provision and progression in ICT was judged to be inadequate. A high proportion of pupils aged 14 to 16 attending part-time vocational courses move on to further study at the college.
- Advice, guidance and support for students are good. Comprehensive services help students make informed choices about their programmes and career paths. Pastoral support is good and contributes well to students' personal and social development.
- Additional learning support is well organised and supports students with a wide variety of needs. The college makes good use of links with external agencies to help those who need extra support. However, not all students accessing additional support make progress in line with their peers.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strategic plan sets out an ambitious vision for the future. Most strategic targets set in the previous plan have been met, but in autumn 2010 the college did not meet its enrolment target.
- Quality assurance is satisfactory. Most self-assessment reports are evaluative and identify key strengths and areas for development. However, in some cases, the judgements are over generous. Quality assurance arrangements have not led to significant improvements in teaching and learning.

- Managers and staff have made satisfactory progress in improving outcomes for students since the last inspection. Whilst improvements have been significant in some areas, such as public services, sport and performing arts, not all subjects have improved. The college self-assessment report judges seven curriculum areas to have improved since the last inspection, but notes that a further eight areas have remained satisfactory.
- The promotion of safeguarding is good. The college staff take the safety of students and vulnerable adults very seriously. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place. All staff and governors have undertaken relevant training and Criminal Records Bureau checks are in place.
- Equality and diversity are satisfactorily promoted. Managers and teachers rightly pride themselves on a calm ethos in which students feel supported and respected. However, equality and diversity are not always sufficiently promoted in all curriculum areas.
- Students' views are routinely sought and acted upon. Partnerships with other institutions and community groups are good, but links with employers are underdeveloped. College managers recognise the need to work more effectively with employers. The college provides satisfactory value for money and financial management is good.

What does Weymouth College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, through the lesson observation system and staff training, so that it focuses on learning and leads to demonstrable improvements in students' progress and achievement.
- Ensure quality assurance is sufficiently evaluative and accurate and takes account of national developments in order to drive further improvement in curriculum planning and teaching and learning.
- Improve links with employers to give more students opportunities for vocationally relevant experience.
- Ensure additional learning support is targeted precisely so that those who receive it achieve as well as they are able.
- Share best practice in the promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning so that all staff and students benefit from a greater understanding of other cultures.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What students like:

- the way teachers treat you like adults and with respect
- the enthusiasm of the teachers who have relevant industry experience
- the wide range of courses available
- the good personal support and help with progress from tutors
- the friendly and safe atmosphere in the college

- good specialist resources.

What students would like to see improved:

- the college virtual learning environment (VLE) is difficult to access and navigate remotely
- the learning gateway closes too early in the evening
- the lack of seating around the college campus
- some confusing timetable changes.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- well-established apprenticeship arrangements
- being consulted on curriculum developments in engineering and construction
- the sensitive way that college staff deal with students' personal circumstances.

What employers would like to see improved:

- more developed curriculum links
- more specific marketing of the college and its potential benefits for employers.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

8. The Principal, governors and senior managers have secured modest improvements in provision since the last inspection. Overall performance is still broadly in line with national averages. Self-assessment is used to identify strengths and areas for development; but judgements are sometimes over generous. Quality assurance arrangements, although well established, have not led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The college has made satisfactory progress tackling the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. GCE AS-level outcomes have improved but remain only satisfactory. Teaching and learning are also still satisfactory and equality and diversity are inconsistently integrated into curriculum areas. Governors provide appropriate challenge and are proud of the college's key role within the community. Students benefit from good facilities and resources and financial management is good.

Outcomes for students

Grade 3

9. Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Students' success rates for long courses, although improved, have been at national averages for the past two years. Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 on advanced programmes are good. Success rates for vocational courses and GCE A level were above national averages in 2009/10, while those for GCE AS level were broadly satisfactory. However, success rates for adults on advanced courses declined in 2009/10 and were below the most recent national average. At entry level, success rates were below national averages; but rates at foundation level were good. At intermediate level, success rates improved to the national average but those for GCSE courses were low. Outcomes for Train to Gain improved in 2009/10, but rates of completion within the planned time for trainees were below national averages. Work-based learning outcomes also improved and were good in 2009/10.
10. Retention is generally good. Pass rates are good for pupils aged 14 to 16 and full-time students aged 16 to 18 on advanced vocational courses. Outcomes for male and female students are broadly similar and there are no significant differences in success rates when ethnicity and disclosed disabilities are taken into account. However, students aged 16 to 18 on intermediate and advanced courses receiving additional learning support make less progress than other groups of students. College managers and staff have put strategies in place to remedy this. Overall, students make progress at, or slightly above, that predicted by their prior attainment. However, students aged 14 to 16 and students aged 16 to 18 on advanced vocational programmes make good progress.
11. Students enjoy coming to college and feel safe on the campus and in their lessons. There is a calm and respectful atmosphere in the college which is greatly appreciated by the students. Safe working practices are in place in

workshops, studios and classrooms. Students gain in confidence and develop skills which make them more employable. Young ambassadors are proud of the role they play in Weymouth and speak very highly of their Olympic fact-finding trip to China. Stonemasonry students achieve very high standards and have gained prizes for their work at national and international competitions. Students are increasingly making a contribution to local communities. A number of students mentor others and some students are actively involved in raising money for charities such as Children in Need and local children's support groups.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

12. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, as they were at the previous inspection. The college currently judges teaching and learning to be good. A number of improvements have been made to the quality of teaching and learning and to lesson observation arrangements since the previous inspection. However, inspectors found that a significant number of lessons observed were satisfactory rather than good. Increasingly, staff development is linked to lesson observation outcomes. However, college managers acknowledge that, in some cases, it has taken too long to moderate judgements on lessons and to provide teachers with specific staff development to help them improve their practice.
13. Lessons are well planned and teachers pay careful attention to health and safety and the sequencing of topics and activities. In the best lessons, students are interested in the activities, enjoy their learning and make good progress. Activities and learning resources promote learning and both formal and informal assessments successfully check students' learning and progress. Teachers use directed questions skilfully and the students work conscientiously on relevant and interesting tasks. Successful lessons involve a good range of varied but closely related activities. Information and learning technologies are used well to further learning in the best lessons.
14. In the weaker lessons there is a lack of urgency and, despite well-written lesson plans, students make slow progress. Teachers do not always involve all the students or check to see that misunderstandings are discussed and put right. Some ineffective classroom management coupled with teachers talking for too long, results in students becoming bored and passive. In addition, some questions are too general and directed at only a few individuals. Information and learning technologies are sometimes used without clear connection to the students' needs or the objectives of the lessons.
15. Written assessment is satisfactory. Most teachers provide prompt and useful feedback on written work. Many of the best teachers are skilful in their use of comments and examples to help students understand how to improve work. Initial assessment has improved and has been effective this year in placing students on appropriate courses at the correct level.
16. The range of provision is good. The college offers courses in 13 curriculum areas at intermediate and advanced level. Where foundation level courses are

in place, progression routes are good. A high proportion of pupils aged 14- to 16 attending part-time vocational courses move on to further study at the college. Full-time students take part in a wide range of interesting enrichment activities. Many students take up opportunities to do voluntary work, for example as young ambassadors supporting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

17. Partnerships with schools, the local authority and community groups are good but, as acknowledged by the college, links with employers are underdeveloped. The college is an active member of the Chesil Education Partnership and has taken a lead in developing provision for young people aged 14 to 19 including young apprenticeships and new diplomas. The college is responsive and works well with other organisations to provide successful courses for the vulnerable and disadvantaged. For example, 'Step Up' offers vocational courses for young people at risk of either becoming unemployed or not entering further education or training. Good links with employers in visual arts and media offer students opportunities to work with practitioners, but not all courses have links that benefit students in this way.
18. Comprehensive guidance services help students make informed choices at each stage of their studies. Few transfer or drop-out during 'Right Move' week. An effective school liaison programme and the innovative careers collaboration give students from Year 6 onwards experience of a wide range of career and study options. Pastoral support is good and contributes well to students' personal and social development. The tutorial curriculum offers a lively programme built around the Every Child Matters themes considering topics such as road safety, sexual health and careers education.
19. Additional learning support is well organised. The service supports students with a wide variety of needs ranging from complex learning disabilities to those with financial difficulties or personal problems. The college makes good use of links with external agencies. Learning mentors and student support assistants help students in the classroom and outside. Overall success rates for students who receive additional learning support have improved over the past three years. However, in 2009/10 success rates for students aged 16 to 18 on intermediate and advanced courses who received additional learning support were significantly below that of their fellow students.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

20. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Principal, governors and senior managers have revised most aspects of the college's provision since the last inspection and, in many cases, this has led to tangible benefits for students. For example, support for students has improved and resources and facilities are of a higher standard.
21. The strategic plan provides an ambitious vision for the future, whilst acknowledging the uncertainties facing the college, particularly in the light of likely reductions in funding and increasing competition from other providers.

Initiated by the Principal and governors, the vision for 2014 has been communicated effectively within the organisation.

22. Following a recent revision to the way in which the college monitors its performance against targets, individuals and teams have become more aware of how they contribute to the overall success of the college. As well as a top-level 'scorecard', each department, course or function now has its own targets that are linked directly to the strategic targets. Managers and governors anticipate that this revised system will play a key role in devolving leadership and management accountability and focusing more sharply on outcomes. It is too early to judge fully the impact of this process on raising standards.
23. Most strategic targets set by governors and throughout the college have been met, but in the current academic year the college has not enrolled as many students aged 16 to 18 as it had anticipated. The reasons for this shortfall are being investigated and there are appropriate plans to attract more students at a later stage in the academic year.
24. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Self-assessment reports are evaluative and use available data to inform strengths and areas for development but, in some cases, the overall judgements are too generous. Quality-assurance arrangements have not led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, which remain satisfactory, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Too many observers focus on the mechanics of teaching and do not evaluate in sufficient depth, the extent to which students learn, are challenged and make progress. In some cases, it has taken too long for follow up moderation and for staff support to take place.
25. Since the last inspection, overall success rates, when aggregated, have risen and in 2009/10 they were broadly in line with recent national averages. Whilst improvements have been significant in some areas, such as public services, sport and performing arts, not all subjects have demonstrated the same rate of improvement. As indicated in the college's self-assessment report, seven curriculum areas have improved over a three- or four-year period, but a further eight areas have remained satisfactory.
26. Governors are highly supportive and proud of the college and many are keen to make better use of their commercial expertise. Through scrutinising detailed reports on the college's performance, participating in committees, away days and training events, they provide the Principal and senior leadership team with some effective challenge. The corporation monitors progress appropriately with regard to its legislative duties in safeguarding, health and safety and equality of opportunity.
27. The promotion of safeguarding is good. College staff take the safety of young students and vulnerable adults very seriously and appropriate policies and procedures are in place to identify, support and monitor their progress. The college has provided awareness training for all staff and governors and has undertaken recruitment checks on all staff. The college works closely with

partner agencies to support students who require protection and safeguarding. Health and safety have a high profile within the college. Students employ safe working practices and report that they feel safe.

28. The extent to which the college actively promotes equality and diversity, tackles discrimination and narrows achievement gaps is satisfactory. The college rightly prides itself on a calm ethos in which students feel supported and respected. The college has well-formulated policies and action plans in place to meet its duties in relation to religion and beliefs, race, gender, age, sexuality and disability. Managers analyse achievement and retention data effectively to monitor discrepancies between different groups of students. There are no significant differences in relation to ethnicity or gender. But, the college has recognised that it needs to review the way in which it uses additional learning support so that students who receive support achieve as well as their counterparts. Some individuals and teams, for example in art, very skilfully use opportunities within their curriculum area to prepare students to work or study in a culturally diverse environment. This good practice is not, however, widespread.
29. Students' views are routinely sought and have influenced decisions taken by the college. Partnerships with schools are very productive, but the college recognises the need to work more effectively with employers particularly in relation to the planning, design and delivery of curriculum.
30. The college provides satisfactory value for money and financial management is good. Students benefit from a pleasant learning environment and good resources.

Subject areas

Engineering

Grade 2

Context

31. Currently 260 students are studying engineering and motor vehicle engineering. Two thirds study full time and around half are aged 16 to 18. One hundred and sixteen students are on motor vehicle programmes at a range of levels. Around 50 students are on engineering programmes at intermediate and advanced levels and each year over 100 pupils from local schools take part-time vocational courses. Apprentices amount to around 10% of the provision.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good and success rates on the National Diploma in manufacturing engineering have been very high over the past three years. Success rates at foundation and intermediate level have generally been good; but outcomes on the first diploma were only satisfactory in 2009/10. In addition, success rates for the advanced motor vehicle and repair course were also satisfactory.
- Overall framework completions for work-based learning apprentices are satisfactory, but rates of completion within the planned time are poor. Trainees make satisfactory progress in work-based learning. However, there is insufficient coordination between on- and off-the-job assessments.
- Teaching and learning are good and students develop a good range of practical skills. Their behaviour in workshops is purposeful and focused on completing practical tasks to a high standard. By using a range of well planned learning activities, teachers are able to meet the range of different students' abilities in the large well-equipped workshops.
- In most lessons ILT is used in innovative and interesting ways to reinforce learning. In others, teachers have allowed images and photographs downloaded from websites to become an acceptable substitute for using real equipment.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good and well integrated into lesson planning and assignments. Health and safety are well promoted and appropriately emphasised during practical activities.
- The use of learning assistants is not always effective. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not coordinate well with learning assistants. Students do not always make sufficient progress.
- Employer links for full-time courses are under-developed and students do not undertake work experience. Attendance is good, but punctuality is poor. In most classes this is appropriately challenged but in others it is not well managed.

- Partnerships with local schools are very good. Specialist taster courses are provided during holiday periods. Young apprentice courses for pupils aged 14 to 16 and school link courses are well established and attract significant numbers. Progression from these courses to full-time college programmes is high.
- Assessment and the standard of marking of learners' work are good. Learners also receive useful individual feedback on their work from their teachers. Initial advice and guidance are good. All learners are tested for numeracy and literacy levels and appropriate support is available where required.
- Leadership and management of engineering are good. Strategic plans to expand manufacturing engineering and its resources are well advanced with new facilities due to open in the immediate future. The use of data to monitor and improve achievement and retention of learners is good. Learners at risk of not completing their courses successfully are automatically identified and appropriate support is made available.
- The self-assessment report is accurate and effective in bringing about improvements. The associated development plan targets are realistic and progress reviews ensure that they are implemented. All staff are involved in the evaluations that lead to the self-assessment report. However, grades from internal lesson observations were found to be over generous and not always sufficiently rigorous.
- Teachers hold appropriate vocational and teaching qualifications. All staff participate in relevant continuous professional development sessions. Workshops and other practical areas are well equipped with industry standard equipment, although the vehicle fleet is dated and needs upgrading.

What does Weymouth College need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' achievements on intermediate level engineering and advanced motor vehicle courses by focusing on their learning using practical resources.
- By improving and developing more links with employers, provide full-time students with a wider understanding of engineering and with the opportunities to undertake work experience.

Information and communication technology

Grade 4

Context

32. Of the 63 students in this curriculum area, 34 are aged 16 to 18. The provision consists of a BTEC intermediate diploma in information technology (IT) and the second year of the BTEC national diploma for IT practitioners. ITQ intermediate level and some entry level courses are provided part time in the Learndirect centre in Weymouth town. The numbers of students taking ICT courses have declined significantly over the past three years.

Key findings

- Success rates were low on full-time courses at intermediate level. In 2009/10 retention was low on the national award for IT practitioners. This course is no longer offered. Success rates were above national average on the national diploma for IT practitioners in 2009/10, as were overall outcomes for the small number of part-time students. Attendance is good.
- For those students remaining in this curriculum area, work in lessons is good and they progress well. They develop a wide and relevant range of skills as practitioners and users of IT. All students complete e-safety awareness and know procedures to follow if safeguarding issues arise when using computers.
- Progression rates are unsatisfactory. Students on advanced diplomas last year have not been able to progress to the second year in the specialisms they enrolled on as two pathways have been amalgamated. However, in the previous year, second year students on these specialisms showed good progression to higher education.
- Lessons are well planned and successfully meet the needs of students. Most students work productively and with confidence both on computers and in group work. Assessment arrangements are appropriate and teachers give effective written feedback to students. Written work is of a high standard and professionally presented.
- The range of provision is inadequate. There is no first year provision at advanced level. As a result, students who completed intermediate level courses were unable to progress to advanced level programmes in the college or in the Weymouth area. Students studying the second year national diploma are unable to study their chosen units this year due to the merging of two differing pathways.
- The curriculum area has inadequate links with employers. Full-time students have few opportunities to deepen their understanding of industry. There is no work experience available for students. Students are given insufficient contact with the industry through visits or guest speakers. Links with local schools are very limited.
- Students receive satisfactory guidance and support. Additional learning support is well organised in classes. Learning mentors know the students' needs well

and provide good support in the college learning resource centre. However, students on the second year of the national diploma received insufficiently clear advice about progression into the second year.

- Leadership and management are inadequate. Self-assessment is generally accurate and recognises the need for improvements. Management of the provision over time has not ensured that students' needs and aspirations are met, nor has a positive strategy been developed to deal with significantly declining student numbers.
- Links with employers and other partnerships are poorly developed and do not promote improvement. Staff appraisals are incomplete and have not been adequately managed.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Equality and diversity are integrated successfully into group tutorials. In one class the teacher used the natural opportunity to discuss the work skill of tolerance, especially in relation to diversity. There are very few females on full-time courses and none on the national diploma.

What does Weymouth College need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' retention and raise the success rates for students aged 16 to 18 on intermediate courses by sharing best practice across all courses.
- Review and develop the range of provision to provide clear progression routes. Ensure that students have a choice of subjects, levels and qualifications that are relevant to their medium- and long-term personal, career and employment goals
- Develop and extend partnerships with local schools, employers and community groups to provide students with more opportunities to experience the breadth of the IT industry.
- Establish stable management arrangements to ensure that this curriculum area is led appropriately, with a clear focus on the needs of students.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Grade 2

Context

33. Currently 273 students attend a range of full- and part-time courses from foundation to advanced level in hairdressing and beauty therapy. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18 and a small proportion of the students attend part-time.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Students achieve outstanding pass rates on full-time hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes at intermediate level. Success and retention rates are satisfactory on NVQ level 1 hairdressing and on part-time courses such as NVQ 2 and 3 hairdressing, body massage, reflexology and Indian head massage. Success rates for work-based learners are good.
- Students develop good practical skills on advanced hairdressing courses. However, at intermediate level in both hairdressing and beauty therapy, skills development is satisfactory. Attendance is good and students feel safe in and around the college. They observe safe working practices and use appropriate protective clothing when carrying out chemical treatments.
- Teaching and learning are good in beauty therapy and satisfactory in hairdressing. Teachers are knowledgeable and have good relationships with students. They use directed questioning to probe students' knowledge and to develop their understanding. A good variety of activities are used to maintain the students' interest.
- Teachers successfully use a variety of strategies to check what students have learnt. For example, beauty therapy students successfully worked together to produce risk assessments for a range of commonly used chemicals. Equality and diversity issues are not always considered in the planning stages of lessons to ensure that they are promoted effectively.
- Students' professional appearance is not consistently reinforced by teachers in practical sessions. For example, some students' hair was not tied back and interfered with treatments. Students develop satisfactory customer service skills, but too few clients in the college salons means that students' ability to develop this further is restricted.
- Assessment is good and students' progress is monitored well. However, low client numbers sometimes reduce assessment opportunities. In addition, some students in the second year of their course have taken too long to complete units on shampooing and conditioning.
- The range of provision in hair and beauty is satisfactory and provides students with appropriate progression opportunities. Progression from foundation to intermediate level is good and many students go on to employment locally. However, low numbers of students progress on to advanced courses.

- A small number of pupils aged 14 to 16 take part-time courses each year. Outcomes are good and progression to full-time hairdressing programmes is good. However, progression on to beauty therapy courses is low.
- The college has developed satisfactory employer links through work-based learning and the local hair and beauty industry in order to provide students with work experience opportunities. Students participate enthusiastically in the good range of enrichment activities.
- Pastoral support is good. Course tutors know their students well and have good working relationships with them. Progress is well monitored and electronic individual learning plans are kept up to date. However, some targets in individual plans are not specific enough and are not measurable. Group tutorials are helpful and well planned.
- Leadership and management are good. The programme area manager works closely with staff. Regular meetings take place and there is good communication. The programme area manager knows students well and is fully involved and aware of pastoral issues.
- Self-assessment is satisfactory. However, some course reviews are descriptive with few evaluative judgements. Targets set to improve retention and success rates are monitored carefully by the programme area manager. Inspectors agreed that the lesson observation judgements were broadly accurate.
- Staff are fully involved in self-assessment each year. The self-assessment report identified most of the strengths and weaknesses identified at inspection.

What does Weymouth College need to do to improve further?

- Develop strategies and strengthen marketing to increase the numbers of clients in order to provide more opportunities for students to develop their skills and complete assessments.
- Raise standards in hairdressing so that students' appearance and skills replicate best practice in industry.

Visual arts and media

Grade 2

Context

34. Around 270 students study art, interactive media, media production, photography and film studies. Most students are aged 16 to 18. Courses include the BTEC first diploma and national awards, and diplomas in media production, interactive media and art. GCE A level and a diploma in foundation studies are also offered.

Key findings

- Students achieve excellent success rates on most courses. For example, in 2009/10, success rates were well above national averages in the BTEC first diploma, the BTEC national award in art and design and the BTEC national diploma in media production.
- Pass rates are high on all full-time courses. Students' progress compared to their prior attainment is very good in GCE A-level media and in BTEC advanced art and design programmes.
- However, the pass rate in 2009/10 for the diploma in foundation studies was well below national average. Retention is satisfactory overall, but in 2009/10 was poor on AS film studies. In the week of inspection, attendance was good at 93%.
- The standard of work in all specialisms is good. Progression routes from foundation level to undergraduate studies within the college are clear. In 2009/10, progression to higher education was very good. Teachers have relevant industry experience and offer useful specialist careers advice to students. All courses have a strong vocational focus.
- Students contribute well to community projects such as large public art installations. They enjoyed decorating a 44 metre-long public underpass and creating hoardings on the sea front and full size puppets for an Armada project. In carnival crafts, students designed and made a large float which was used in Weymouth Carnival.
- Most lessons are energetic and interest all students. They have a good variety of activities with well-planned resources, which are available on the VLE for later reference. Information technology is used well to enhance learning.
- Students' learning is successfully checked by open and targeted questioning. Feedback is detailed and positive, enabling students to improve. However, some lessons are slow paced and the needs of individual students are not always met.
- Support for students is good. Teachers offer good individual support, both pastoral and academic. Students speak highly of the support and help they receive from staff. Learning support is put into place quickly. Close monitoring

of students contributes to good progress throughout this area. Learning support is in place promptly when the need is identified.

- Students participate in good enrichment opportunities, including educational trips and visits, to extend their studies. Good preparation ensures that all opportunities throughout the trips are used. Students also benefit from visiting speakers who are practising artists.
- Specialist accommodation is satisfactory, and learning resources are good. Industry standard software is available to support media work. However, a minority of rooms are cramped, and some art studios do not have displays of work to create a stimulating environment. Health and safety for specialist areas is satisfactory.
- Leadership and management are good. Strategies to improve retention and achievement have had a positive impact. Communication is good and lines of responsibility are clear. Staff feel well supported and are keen to implement strategies for improvement. Communication between students, staff and managers is good.
- The college observations of teaching and learning in art and media are over generous. Teachers share some good practice through peer observations. The self-assessment report is evaluative and identifies accurately areas for improvement.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Exchange visits with a multi-cultural inner London college which shares Olympic opportunities have taken place. They successfully resulted in combined work and designs for large artwork which were displayed on the sea front.

What does Weymouth College need to do to improve further?

- Maintain and improve outcomes by making sure that there is sufficient challenge to all students, that their individual needs are met and opportunities to consolidate learning are thoroughly planned.

Literacy and numeracy

Grade 2

Context

35. Of the 1,881 students, just under half are female. Across a wide range of vocational courses, over 1,750 students attend literacy and numeracy lessons either as part of their main programme or as additional courses. Currently 64 students attend full-time literacy and numeracy programmes and a further 56 students attend part-time. Over half the students on full-time courses have a declared physical disability and many have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key findings

- Success rates are good and exceed national averages. Rates are especially good in functional mathematics, key skills including communications and application of number and in adult literacy. Success rates for adult numeracy programmes are satisfactory. Attendance is good.
- Most students work well in lessons, have clear career goals and gain in confidence. They are also able to apply their newly-acquired numerical and literacy skills to progress within their chosen vocational or social pathways. Progression is satisfactory. In 2009/10, two thirds of students progressed into further education, apprenticeships or employment.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In most lessons both planning and learning activities are good and include vocationally relevant materials. However, in a minority of lessons, plans fail to record in sufficient detail individual students' needs and are too general.
- Where students' progress is best, good use is made of differentiated materials and information technology. Well designed worksheets are used to enable students to work at their own pace. During these lessons good individual coaching takes place but teachers miss opportunities to have group discussions or presentations on common problems encountered by students.
- Learning support is satisfactory. Classes are mixed-ability groups, and many have additional support workers whose roles are not always sufficiently clarified by the teachers. In a minority of lessons there is insufficient challenge for intermediate students and more able students dominate open discussions.
- Short- and medium-term targets for students are unsatisfactory. Often targets only contain the expected final outcome or make a general comment. Targets are often too broad and are neither specific nor time bound.
- The range of provision is good, especially for functional skills and outreach provision to support local community organisations. The college provides a varied enrichment programme which students enjoy. The adult literacy and numeracy provision is good. However, at the time of the inspection there was little uptake for evening provision.

- Wide-ranging partnerships have been established with links that include off-site teaching with the Probation Service, young parent support groups, volunteer bureaux, advisory bodies, playgroups and organisations working with the long term unemployed. The college is actively engaged in functional skills development with 4 secondary and 24 junior schools.
- Pastoral support is good and retention has improved. The college provides opportunities for advice through its website, freely available literature and designated staff members. The college has good links with a wide variety of external support agencies including counselling. Recent support activities have focused on family, transgender, mental illness and anger management issues.
- Operational management is good. Managers follow up all feedback diligently and actively promote functional skills. Staff qualifications are satisfactory and a continuous staff development programme is in place to meet both individual and college-wide needs.
- Equality and diversity are satisfactory. In the best lessons, equality and diversity themes are planned for carefully and integrated into learning activities. Misbehaviour is immediately dealt with and effective action is taken following complaints. Issues are resolved promptly and actions taken are recorded and monitored.
- Self-assessment is generally accurate, although the internal grading of lessons is over generous. Feedback from course reviews, staff members and student forums is used well to improve provision. Managers work well to achieve targets that include reversing the 2008/09 decline in success rates. Data are managed well and teaching teams have been set realistic targets.

What does Weymouth College need to do to improve further?

- Clarify the roles that learning assistants play in supporting learning so that all students make the best progress, Make sure that students at intermediate level are challenged appropriately in class.
- Improve individual learning plans to ensure that targets are specific and measurable in order to raise outcomes and to increase students' involvement in their learning

Information about the inspection

36. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's vice principal for curriculum and quality, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, 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 to gain the views of students and employers. They also looked at questionnaires students and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed lessons, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Weymouth 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 students	1,820				
Full-time students	1,341	117	1,480	340	663
Part-time students				561	
Overall effectiveness	3	2	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3				
Outcomes for students	3	2	3	3	3
How well do students achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do students attain their learning goals?	3				
How well do students progress?	3				
How well do students improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3				
How safe do students feel?	2				
<i>Are students able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3				
<i>How well do students make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	3				
Quality of provision	3	2	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
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 students?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support students receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	3	2	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of students?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for students?	3				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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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

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