

City College Plymouth

General further education college

Inspection dates		1-5 October 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This college is good because:

- The proportion of learners achieving their qualifications has consistently improved since the last inspection and is now high across the vast majority of the college's provision.
- Provision for apprentices in engineering and learners in hospitality and catering is outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations and aspirations for learners, resulting in high standards of learner behaviour and mutual respect.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and all learners take part in well-planned lessons with the majority making good progress.
- Teachers make good use of their extensive industrial knowledge, motivate learners to do well and inspire them to progress to higher-level courses and employment.
- High quality teaching and learning resources provide realistic working environments in many areas, which enable learners to develop very good employability skills.
- All staff are strongly committed to continuing to raise the quality of teaching and learning and to further improving the experience of all learners at the college.
- The college provides a very inclusive environment in which previously under-achieving groups of learners enjoy high levels of success.

This is not yet an outstanding college because:

- Learners on a minority of courses make less than expected progress.
- A minority of lessons still require improvement and not enough are outstanding.
- Learners do not always have the opportunity to develop their English and mathematical skills to a higher level, and learning support staff are not always deployed effectively.
- The college's own evaluation of teaching and learning is not sufficiently reliable.
- Governors do not yet have detailed reports and training to monitor outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Develop a more rigorous approach to observing lessons and sharing best practice so that the proportion of outstanding lessons increases.
- Secure consistently rigorous standards in lesson observations, performance management and self-assessment through strengthening moderation and validation processes and sharing best practice.
- Develop challenging targets for the minority of under-performing courses and share good practice from courses where improvements in learners' progress have been made to ensure all learners make the expected progress.
- Use the outcomes from initial assessment to inform lesson planning so that all learners meet or exceed their potential.
- Better plan the deployment of learning support assistants in lessons so that all learners derive the maximum benefit from the support.
- Provide sufficient opportunities for all learners to develop their English and mathematical skills to a higher level.
- Provide governors with more detailed reporting and the training support needed to enable them to monitor learners' outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- In 2011/12, a very large majority of learners who started qualifications at the college completed them successfully. The number of learners completing their qualifications has improved every year since the last inspection.
- However, the overall success rate figure disguises under-performance in the small provision for advanced-level subjects. Learners studying GCE Advanced- and AS-level subjects have not performed as well as learners in similar colleges over the last three years.
- The large majority of learners who study for apprenticeships are successful in completing their qualification in the timescale planned when they started the programme.
- Learners who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) are very successful in achieving their qualifications and progressing to other courses in the college.
- The large majority of learners make expected or better progress based on their attainment before coming to college. The exception is those learners studying advanced-level subjects and BTEC diploma courses. Learners' progression between levels of study and into employment is satisfactory overall. Increasingly reliable data on the destinations of learners are used well by staff and the number of unknown destinations has reduced significantly over the last two years.
- Learners' attendance and punctuality are good in all areas and their behaviour is outstanding.
- Managers recognised that male learners from minority ethnic heritages were not achieving as well as other learners. They put a range of interventions and initiatives into place which led to improved achievements for these learners in 2011/12.
- In 2009/10 managers identified that male learners were not achieving as well as female learners. Staff identified the underperforming groups and put additional support in place and the success rates for these learners have improved consistently over the last three years.
- Managers have been particularly successful in improving success rates for pregnant learners aged 16 to 18. Success rates for this group have risen significantly over the last three years and now nearly all learners in this group achieve their qualifications.

- College staff have put in place a wide range of initiatives to help learners develop the skills required to gain employment. Particularly successful initiatives include the **work**space project. The **work**space staff have been very successful in helping learners develop their curriculum vitae writing and interview skills. They arrange work experience and volunteering opportunities and they also help with business start-up and self-employment opportunities for learners. The large majority of learners on apprenticeship programmes stay in their jobs on completion of their training.
- All learners develop very good personal, social and employability skills. In engineering, learners work to industry standards and develop employability skills particularly well. The professional standards of the learners in hospitality and catering when working in the college restaurant and food production areas are very high. In sport and leisure, learners are able to take a wide range of additional qualifications that enhance their employment prospects.
- Learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses make good progress in developing their language skills. The vast majority of learners taking English and mathematics functional skills courses develop very good skills and are highly successful in achieving functional skills qualifications.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, reflecting the college's high overall success rates. As a result of a strong focus on raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for all learners, managers have reduced the proportion of lessons that are less than good to a minority. Clear plans are in place to reduce this proportion further.
- Teaching and assessment are outstanding in engineering and hospitality and catering. Teachers' excellent use of information technology in engineering helps learners remember the configuration of electrical circuits. In hospitality and catering, the excellent use of teachers' subject knowledge and industrial experience enlivens learning and results in learners attaining high professional standards.
- The vast majority of lessons are good. In these lessons, all learners take part and make good progress as a result of teachers' skilful and challenging questioning that develops learners' knowledge and understanding of the subject. Teachers ensure that their well-planned lessons contain regular changes of activity to meet individual learners' needs and maintain their high levels of enthusiasm.
- Teachers' instructional technique is good and enables learners to apply newly acquired practical skills to a high standard. For example, in a live events management course, learners successfully followed very clear instructions in how to set up ladders to carry and attach lights safely to stage rigging. They enjoyed the teacher's good use of probing questions to solve problems as they learnt the importance of good team communication skills to work collaboratively, use specialist equipment and maintain safety.
- Learners benefit from very good learning activities that take place outside the classroom. Activities include group tutorials and internships that promote employability and raise awareness of equality, diversity and citizenship. For example, staff on the **work**space project run employer-sponsored workshops that help young people to understand their rights, personal finance and jobs in specific sector areas.
- Teachers' assessment of learners' work is mostly good, with detailed written comment that helps learners to improve. However, in a minority of subjects, feedback from teachers is not always sufficiently developmental for learners to make further progress. In most subjects, teachers correct spelling, punctuation and grammar regularly, but in a minority of subjects they do not routinely correct mis-spellings.
- Learners benefit from good and regular tutorial and support arrangements that help them to identify and work towards challenging targets. Senior managers have invested in an electronic

individual learning plan (e-ILP) system that it has recently linked to its additional learning support system to record the outcomes of tutorials. Managers acknowledge that the very good practice that some areas of the college have developed in using the e-ILP to set measurable targets for all learners needs to be shared across all areas.

- Good initial assessment processes ensure that staff are able to promptly identify learners’ support needs in English and mathematics, as well as wider needs, and use in-class support so that learners make good progress. In most practical subjects, teachers integrate literacy and numeracy well, enabling learners to develop the functional skills relevant to their professional training.
- As a result of managers increasing the number of learning support assistants over the last two years, fewer learners leave their courses early because they have difficulties in their studies. Learning support assistants provide learners with high levels of individual support in lessons. However, teachers’ lesson planning rarely includes details of how they are to be used within the lesson to work with specific groups of learners or the contribution they will make.
- The outcomes of initial assessment appear on detailed course profiles so that teachers are aware of the needs of individual learners. In the best lesson planning, teachers use these profiles very well to match the teaching to the learning needs of each learner, resulting in these learners making good progress. However, too many teachers fail to take the detail of course profiles into account when planning their lessons and learners’ needs are not always fully met.
- In the minority of lessons that require improvement, teachers are not challenging learners sufficiently because they fail to match the teaching and assessment to their learners’ ability. The lack of direct or formative questioning by teachers results in a minority of learners making slower than expected progress, especially at advanced level, where the development of higher thinking skills is occasionally insufficient. In these lessons learners become passive because the teaching lacks pace and imagination.
- The skill with which teachers weave equality and diversity themes into their lessons remains too variable between curriculum areas.

Health, social care and early years	
Learning programmes for 16-18	Good
Learning programmes for 19+	

- Teaching, learning and assessment on health and social care, early years and public service programmes are good. Teachers set high professional standards for their learners, who work cooperatively and productively with their teachers and with each other. Outcomes for learners have improved to above national rates on nearly all courses.
- Teachers plan and deliver a wide range of well-chosen interactive teaching and learning activities that meet the needs of all learners. Learning outcomes for all lessons are identified by the teachers, but they are often too general and are not sufficiently focused on what the learners need to achieve.
- All staff have very good subject knowledge and draw on their extensive vocational experience from care, early years and public services to motivate learners and to illustrate theoretical points. Teachers use good questioning techniques to confirm and extend learners’ knowledge and understanding. However, in the minority of less successful lessons teachers do not ensure that all learners are included in full class discussion.
- Resources are good and teachers use these well to support the development of practical caring skills. Learners make good use of information technology, including the college intranet, in the research and presentation of their work.
- Learners use their workplace experience and other life experiences well to illustrate issues such as the safety and rights to choice of vulnerable children and adults, opportunities to celebrate

diversity and the barriers people with disabilities face in carrying out daily routines. The work skills qualifications, work placement experience and the group tutorial programme help learners to develop good employability skills.

- Teachers assess the basic skill levels of learners carefully and ensure that additional support for those identified with specific learning needs is timely and effective. Staff agree targets with all learners, which they monitor frequently. However, some of the targets set are insufficiently detailed and specific enough to help learners make the required progress.
- Learners receive good feedback and clear guidance for improvement from teachers and assessors and they understand the progress that they are making. All staff are conscientious and systematic when correcting the spelling, punctuation and grammar of learners' work.
- Learners receive good support for academic and personal issues. Tutors know their learners well and respond professionally and promptly to their personal and learning needs. However, tutors' records of this support sometimes lack sufficient detail.
- Staff provide good information, advice and guidance for all learners. The well-planned induction programme helps learners to settle swiftly into their programmes and into college. Learners' progression to higher level courses and to related employment is satisfactory. There is, however, particularly good progression from the health and care Access courses to related programmes in higher education.
- Teachers are skilful in extending learners' knowledge of equality and diversity. Learners report that they feel safe in college and staff have ensured that all appropriate measures are in place so that learners are safe and supported when attending work placements.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Apprenticeships

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment for apprentices in engineering and manufacturing technologies are outstanding. Working with highly skilled assessors and reviewers, apprentices develop outstanding technical and personal skills. As a result, the very large majority of apprentices consistently make outstanding progress and this is reflected in the outstanding success rates for many programmes.
- The vast majority of teaching and learning in lessons, workshops and at employers' premises is good. All staff have high expectations of their apprentices and they develop apprentices' skills and knowledge to very high standards. Teachers and assessors ensure apprentices are skilled at linking theoretical knowledge to industry practices, which employers view very positively.
- Teachers use a broad range of learning activities that meet the learning needs of all apprentices. For example, teachers in engineering use activities such as songs to help learners remember the arrangements of resistors as a memory aid for industry terminology, product names and mathematical theories. Teachers' use of information technology in theoretical lessons is effective in helping learners to make good progress.
- Teachers and assessors promote industry standards to an outstanding level. They encourage apprentices to assess each other's work, which helps to build their confidence and ensure they make rapid progress. For example, manufacturing teachers encourage apprentices to grade each other's products to industry tolerances.
- Assessment planning strategies developed by staff are outstanding and successfully meet apprentices' and employers' needs. For example, assessors in marine engineering work closely with employers to match apprentices' potential work opportunities to their qualifications, enabling apprentices to achieve in the time planned for their qualification. However, assessment

planning in electrical engineering requires improvement to raise it to the standard of the other engineering programmes.

- Care, guidance and support for the engineering and manufacturing apprentices are good. Apprentices value highly the support provided by staff. Assessors provide apprentices with encouraging and constructive feedback so they know how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- Learners from diverse backgrounds, such as those previously not in education, home-tutored learners, and learners with severe hearing impairment, receive outstanding support from college staff, which enables them to progress into apprenticeship programmes. The additional learning support, work experience, bespoke vocational programmes and employability skills training provided by staff enable learners to progress to intermediate and higher apprenticeships and into full-time employment.
- Apprentices feel extremely safe, both in the workplace and at the college. They pay good attention to health and safety procedures and know how to deal with safety incidents in workshops.
- Staff successfully promote equality and diversity awareness through a variety of community projects and targeted awards. Promotional activities such as 'Women into Technology' have resulted in improved participation rates by female learners.

Construction crafts	
Learning programmes for 16-18	Good
Learning programmes for 19+	

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good in construction, planning and the built environment. Learners benefit from very good practical lessons where they make good progress and demonstrate high levels of technical skills and strong workplace practice. However, teachers' delivery of theory lessons requires improvement. Teachers plan and manage assessments well and learners fully understand the process. This, combined with good teaching and learning, has secured high levels of achievement and good success rates for the very large majority of learners.
- Highly motivated teachers set high standards and expectations. This creates a well-structured and supported learning environment where clear boundaries are established and very high standards of learner behaviour and mutual respect are achieved. Staff make good use of their extensive industry knowledge and experience to inspire learners to progress into careers in construction. For example, in a brickwork lesson learners compared potential earnings of bricklayers at home and abroad with that of non-construction related professions.
- Learners have good opportunities to develop personal, social and employability skills. In a practical painting and decorating class, learners worked well together to mark out a room using levelling skills and develop the accuracy of their brush techniques using two strong contrasting colours to show definition. Teachers ensure courses are enriched by providing a broad range of additional activities including trade competitions, community projects, work experience and additional qualifications, all of which prepare learners for work.
- Teachers provide good written and verbal feedback on assessments, which helps learners to improve the standard of their work. Learners value the honest, positive and developmental feedback which develops their confidence. Teachers mark written work promptly and nearly all spelling, grammar and calculation mistakes are corrected.
- Well-managed resources provide relevant, realistic working environments. On the main college site a simulated building site provides learners with a realistic experience of industry practices where visitors are required to wear appropriate protective equipment and very high levels of

health and safety are maintained. Carpentry students practise their skills under realistic work conditions, fitting skirting boards, boxing in pipes and producing raised flooring in restricted spaces with limited access.

- In too many theory lessons teachers do not fully interest and excite learners about their subject. In these lessons teachers fail to provide learning objectives which are measurable and which focus on learning. Teachers do not use questioning techniques effectively to check the learning taking place and the more able learners are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Teachers do not routinely build into lessons opportunities to develop English, mathematical and language skills. In practical lessons, where the use of functional mathematics is more naturally occurring, staff reinforce and develop learners' confidence in using numbers. Staff develop learners' confidence in using construction terminology well. However, too few learners are provided with an opportunity to gain an intermediate English or mathematics qualification.
- Managers promote a culture of equality and diversity well across the department and learners demonstrate high levels of mutual respect with teachers and peers. However, the use of different teaching strategies to meet learners' individual needs and the promotion of diversity to broaden learners' views are not well developed, particularly in theory lessons.

Hospitality and catering

Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in hospitality and catering is outstanding, which reflects the very high proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications, develop high levels of employability skills and supports learners' preparation for progression.
- Teaching is lively, interesting and purposeful. Teachers set high expectations and are passionate about their craft; as a result, learners are inspired and demonstrate enthusiasm for extending their learning. For example, in a practical lesson learners examined unusual edible fungi foraged by the tutor. From this learners developed a good awareness of the importance of using good quality ingredients versus costs of the dish.
- As a result of teachers' skilful planning, learners make outstanding progress. For example, learners developed a menu inspired by sustainable local produce and were able to sell the concept of sustainability and pride in locally sourced ingredients to customers in the college restaurant.
- High quality teaching resources contribute to the rapid progress learners make from the start of their programmes. The kitchen and restaurant facilities in the college are of an industry standard and result in learners demonstrating very good standards in health, safety and hygiene practice. Teachers use technology well and learners develop good research skills in lessons.
- Well-established partnerships with a wide range of employers support learners in developing high levels of confidence, independence and employability skills. For example, a group of learners working at foundation level recently completed a work placement in a Swedish hotel school; learners explained that as a result of this experience they had the confidence to apply for part-time jobs and achieve employment.
- Teachers have developed a wide range of strategies to raise learners' awareness of equality and diversity. Learners demonstrate increasing levels of awareness of how a wide understanding of diversity is essential for good customer and staff relations. For example, apprentice learners explained how their change of approach in dealing with staff that speak English as a second language has improved levels of customer service.

- Learners make very good progress in developing industry-related English and mathematical skills. Teachers provide many opportunities for learners to practise these skills, for example for learners in their first restaurant service the teacher made clear the importance of an accurately written food order. Learners completed an order, received useful feedback from the teacher, and were able to adjust and correct the spelling and legibility.
- Teachers’ assessment of learners’ work is good and learners know what is expected of them and how they are progressing. Teachers mark work carefully and learners have identified that the feedback they receive helps them to improve. However, in a minority of subjects, teachers do not give sufficient written feedback to learners in the early stages of their programmes.
- Well-planned initial assessment and induction programmes ensure learners are on the appropriate level programme to meet their needs and aspirations, and result in learners making better progress than predicted by their prior attainment. Learners feel well supported and value the coaching and support provided by teachers and personal tutors to help them overcome barriers to learning.

Leisure, travel and tourism	
Learning programmes for 16-18	Good
Learning programmes for 19+	

- Teaching, learning and assessment on leisure, travel and tourism programmes are good and this is reflected in the good achievements by learners on their main qualifications and on additional industry-specific qualifications. Travel and tourism learners make good progress and many achieve high grades, while learners in sport make satisfactory progress.
- Staff have high expectations of all learners. They use their vocational experience effectively to ensure learners develop skills to the appropriate professional standards. Learners’ punctuality and attendance are very good and dress codes reflect industry practice and prepare learners to meet employers’ expectations in the sport, leisure and tourism sectors.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and set challenging learning outcomes to meet the individual needs of all learners. In nearly all lessons teachers use imaginative assessment methods to check learners’ knowledge and reinforce learning. In a sport lesson, an interactive activity to check knowledge of the skeletal system interested all learners and offered good assessment opportunities.
- Learners demonstrate good practical skills. They lead, coach and organise fitness sessions and sporting events with confidence. In travel and tourism, learners enjoy role play as resort representatives. In the role of cabin crew members, learners can explain health and safety procedures accurately.
- In the minority of lessons where teaching is less effective, learning outcomes identified by the teachers are not always linked to assessment activities and not all learners are sufficiently stimulated or challenged to make good progress. A minority of learners are not motivated and teachers do not check learning regularly during assessment activities.
- Learners benefit from the good support provided by tutors. All learners receive good initial guidance and are well prepared for their learning programmes. Tutors review and reinforce learning and assessment opportunities in the regular tutorials, but the targets they set for learners are under developed and do not take account of prior achievements. Learners are well informed and motivated about future learning and progression opportunities at the college or into employment and higher education.

- Teachers provide detailed written and verbal feedback for nearly all learners. However, for a minority of learners on sports programmes the feedback provided by teachers is not specific enough to help learners to develop analytical and evaluative skills and gain high grades.
- Teachers provide good support outside the classroom to help learners develop literacy, numeracy, language and functional skills. However, teachers do not always plan lessons sufficiently well to ensure these skills are consistently reinforced in theory and practical lessons. In planning lessons, teachers do not make best use of learning support assistants.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity well through discussions about the specific requirements of different client groups when participating in sporting or fitness activities. Travel and tourism learners discuss topics such as the issues for different tourism groups when visiting long haul destinations where diversity is less celebrated.

Foundation English, mathematics and ESOL	
Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+	Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. This is reflected in the good development of learners’ literacy, numeracy and language skills, their high achievement of qualifications and their progress between levels. In discrete literacy and numeracy courses for adults, teaching and learning are very good leading to particularly good outcomes at intermediate level.
- All teachers know their learners well and this is reflected in teachers’ good planning for learning. In mathematics, good course planning showed a clear focus on developing learners’ skills and confidence in using mathematics over a period of time. All teachers plan a good range of learning activities and close attention is given to the preferred learning styles of learners, capturing their interest and motivating them to make good progress.
- In the majority of lessons, learners enjoy lively, interesting and well-paced lessons. Teachers use discussions effectively to interest learners, develop thinking skills and clarify learning. Teachers are skilled and explain learning points clearly. In a discrete literacy lesson for adults all learners participated very well in an exercise on spelling multi-syllabic words. Learners actively developed their spelling strategies and study skills, and thoroughly enjoyed their learning.
- In ESOL, teachers structure lessons to ensure learners make good progress and develop language skills well. Learners enjoy a wide range of whole class, group and individual learning activities, incrementally building their knowledge and use of English. New vocabulary is reinforced and teachers make good use of questioning to assess learners’ understanding. Occasionally, teachers do not always allow for sufficient practice in the pronunciation of new words.
- In all lessons, learners and teachers use information technology well. Teachers and learners use interactive whiteboards to write and illustrate learning points and access on-line learning information. In all lessons learning materials are clear and well produced and the virtual learning environment (VLE) is used effectively by learners to access additional learning materials. In numeracy, good use is made of newspapers to demonstrate how the language of mathematics is embedded in everyday life.
- Teachers’ initial and diagnostic assessment of learners’ skills are good. Diagnostic assessments are thorough and teachers are skilled in their analyses. Teachers ensure learners know what they need to do to improve. Targets on learners’ individual learning plans (ILPs) are generally clear and precise. Teachers have revised the assessment practice in ESOL and this has ensured more learners remain on their programmes.

- In the majority of literacy, numeracy and ESOL lessons teachers do not plan sufficiently well to meet individual learners' needs. Teachers do not take into account specific and individual targets identified on learners' ILPs when planning their lessons.
- Teachers provide good support for learners in lessons. They give good individual support and promote a positive learning environment. Additional teaching support in English and mathematics lessons for learners on Access courses leads to much improved skills at an early stage of the learners' programme.
- Learning is inclusive and teachers manage diverse groups of learners very well. Learners treat each other with respect. Teachers promote equality and diversity well in lessons but they do not always demonstrate this in their planning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The Principal and senior managers have ensured the college is making good progress on its journey of improvement. Managers have taken actions to address key weaknesses identified at the last inspection and have secured clear improvements in the retention of learners, the impact of quality assurance and the sharing of good practice. Most teachers now better meet learners' individual needs and a much larger proportion of lessons are now good or better. These improvements have contributed to the significant increase in success rates across all types of provision over the last four years, and the college's performance now compares very favourably with similar colleges.
- Following a review of strategic options by senior managers, a new strategic plan encapsulates the refreshed values and direction of the college, which have the support of all its members. The key priorities are to raise the quality of provision further by continuing to improve teaching and learning and to align that provision more precisely with the needs of the local economy. Senior managers recently revised the curriculum structure to better reflect the key local growth sectors and curriculum managers are implementing the improvement agenda well. College targets set by governors and senior managers are suitably ambitious.
- Governors provide a useful range of professional expertise in their enthusiastic contribution to the strategic leadership of the college. Individually, they link well with different programme or service areas. While governors demonstrated good support and challenge at times, their monitoring of learners' outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning is not yet rigorous.
- Senior managers implement thoroughly the extensive arrangements for the performance management of teachers. Performance is directly linked to pay by aligning teachers each year against the different levels of the college's lecturer competency framework, promoting better standards of teaching and learning. Similar arrangements are not currently in place for managers.
- Self-assessment at course, programme area, faculty and whole college level forms the backbone of the college's extensive and coherent quality assurance and improvement arrangements. Reports are data rich, evaluative and reasonably self-critical. Inspectors agreed with the majority of self-assessment grades, but some variability remains in the rigour of evaluation and the specificity of action plans.
- Much improved use of extensive and reliable data by managers supports the very close monitoring of course performance by teams. Early identification by managers of under-performing courses leads to thorough investigation and, in most cases, rapid improvement.
- Arrangements for learners to contribute their views and influence developments are extensive and inclusive. The impact of training for learner representatives and participation rates at focus groups and learner conferences are areas for improvement; but examples of learners having a real influence on college policies and practices are plentiful.

- Senior managers' own monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning suggests a higher proportion of lessons are good or better than was found by inspectors. Development plans which accompany each lesson observation provide very specific and useful prompts for improving practice. A more rigorous approach is needed in evaluating how much learning is taking place in lessons and how much progress learners are making in order to make the college's own lesson grade profile become more reliable.
- Stronger moderation processes are required to help to rectify the inconsistencies found by inspectors in the rigour or standards applied in the evaluation of lessons, performance reviews and self-assessment.
- College managers are giving increasing attention to more closely aligning curriculum provision to growth sectors within the local economy. Very good and well-established initiatives to promote employability include provision that enables staff to successfully engage with young people not in employment, education or training and other vulnerable groups of learners to help them make the progress they were did not make at school.
- Staff provide a very inclusive environment. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities integrate well. Support for learners who are, or have been, in care is very good. Success rates for these learners and for those who have received additional learning support are a little higher than they are for the college as a whole.
- Data are thoroughly analysed for any under-achieving groups and those identified are swiftly addressed through programme area action plans. Safeguarding arrangements at the college meet legal requirements and comprehensively promote the well-being of students. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with well.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

City College Plymouth

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2
Early years and playwork	2
Engineering	1
Manufacturing technologies	1
Construction crafts	2
Hospitality and catering	1
Sport, leisure and recreation	2
Travel and tourism	2
ESOL	2

Foundation English and mathematics

2

Provider details

Provider name	
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	14+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 3,257
	Part-time: 7,918
Principal/CEO	Mr Phil Davies
Date of previous inspection	November 2008
Website address	http://www.cityplym.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	611	220	657	155	997	543	0	9
Part-time	70	757	126	732	27	389	0	50
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	310	137	249	244	0	0		
Number of learners aged 14-16	103							
Number of community learners	0							
Number of employability learners	372							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							

At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:

- Achievement Training Limited
- Deep Blue Sound Limited
- Plymouth Hospital NHS Trust
- Skills Group Limited

Additional socio-economic information

The college is situated in the city of Plymouth which has a population of 258,700. The number of pupils in Plymouth schools attaining five GCSEs at A* to C has been slightly below the national average in 2008 and 2009, but in 2010 this improved to slightly above the average. The unemployment rate in Plymouth is just below the national rate. The city is ranked 31st on the 2009 Index of Multiple Deprivation. The main employment in the city is public administration, education and health.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Margaret Swift HMI

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

What inspection judgements mean

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

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

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

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