

Totton College

Sixth Form College

Inspection dates		6-9 November 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate-4
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- Despite some good improvements in performance since the last inspection, the proportion of students completing their courses successfully is below the national average on a significant minority of courses.
- Too few students make better than expected progress given their entry qualifications.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies, and not enough is consistently good or better.
- Quality improvement and performance management are not yet fully effective.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Managers, staff and governors share a strong vision which has successfully raised expectations.
- The Principal and senior managers provide strong leadership which has led to improvements, including improved teaching, learning and assessment, over the last year.
- The proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their training programmes is good, and has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- There is a welcoming, inclusive and supportive atmosphere which is greatly appreciated by students.
- The college's wide range of courses and programmes meet community and employer needs much better than at the last inspection.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more teachers learn quickly from the outstanding teaching practice that exists in the college.
- Ensure that all teachers consistently plan their teaching and assessments to match the needs of their students and provide students with appropriate challenge.
- Provide all students with frequent and informative feedback on their work to help them to improve and make consistently good progress.
- Further develop effective strategies to improve students' attendance at lessons.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the revised entry requirements and improved information, advice and guidance on learners' progress and achievement.
- Ensure all teachers more effectively promote awareness of equality and cultural diversity in lessons.
- Ensure the effective implementation of the well considered new arrangements for the performance management of all staff.
- Ensure the consistency and rigour of self-assessment and action planning across all subject areas.
- Develop and implement an action plan for equality and diversity with published and measurable objectives.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On many courses, the proportion of students who successfully complete their studies has improved since the last inspection. Overall, success rates on long courses for younger students and adults have risen generally and are now around national averages. There are no significant achievement gaps between different groups. ▪ This improvement has not been consistent across all the college's provision. On a significant minority of significant programmes and courses it remains the case that not enough students are completing their courses and successfully achieving their qualifications. While success rates on GCE AS-level subjects have improved overall, some significant subjects remain stubbornly below the national average and show little evidence of improvement. ▪ Success rates on apprenticeship programmes are good. In 2011/12 around 86% of apprentices achieved their awards, almost all of these within the time planned. This is a significant improvement from the picture at the last inspection. Apprentices enjoy their training programmes. Employers report that their training helps them to develop better skills to support their work. ▪ Most learners make the progress expected of them given their qualifications on entry. This varies across subjects and courses. GCE A-level Dance was the only subject where students did much better than their entry grades predicted. By contrast, eight subjects at GCE AS level performed poorly. Students taking BTEC courses generally make good progress given their entry qualifications. ▪ Most students make either satisfactory or good progress in their lessons. They are largely attentive, work hard and usually most of them successfully complete their tasks in the time allowed by the teachers. Students' attendance at lessons requires improvement. It was around 84% in the last academic year and failed to meet the college's planned target. There have been some improvements in the autumn term of 2012, but these are not consistent across the whole college. 	

- Students say that they enjoy their lessons and the time they spend in college. They are generally confident. They frequently work well in pairs or in small groups. Their oral and written skills vary widely; some of them can express themselves well, while others are less effective at presenting their arguments clearly and coherently in writing. The college provides good support to help them to develop these skills.
- Many students make good progress to either higher study or to employment when they leave college. They feel that the college prepares them well to progress into higher education or employment. Managers pay close attention to students' destinations after college and review the progression data for different groups. In the last year, around two thirds of students from full time advanced level courses progressed to further study in higher education.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection. All three elements still require improvement, as is reflected in students' broadly average achievement and progress.
- The Totton Standard, a brief set of statements that define what is expected of teachers and students, sets out clearly high but realistic expectations for teachers and students to meet. Both groups welcome and value the clarity that these expectations bring to their work. Teachers are enthusiastic and support students well both during and outside lessons. However, some teachers still do not always have sufficiently high expectations of students. The weaker lessons are often those that feature learning activities which are insufficiently challenging.
- Better lessons include interesting, varied and relevant tasks which interest and enthuse students and enable them to make expected and better progress in their learning. However, even in these lessons, teachers make little use of detailed student profiles to plan learning to meet the often wide range of students' prior attainment in their teaching group. Too often all students complete the same tasks, irrespective of their ability, and higher performing students do not have opportunities for additional challenge to accelerate their learning and progress.
- Even in the better lessons, teachers' questioning of students to check and extend learning is inconsistent. Most teachers ensure that all students contribute, but some teachers are occasionally too ready to summarise students' answers and hence miss opportunities to require students to justify their answers and challenge their thinking. Questioning is at its most effective when teachers support individual students or groups during their independent working on tasks and causes them to reflect on, and evaluate, their work. This was evident in a very good English lesson where the teacher supported a group of students who were analysing and evaluating a text.
- In the weaker lessons, teachers talk too much and so do not provide sufficient opportunities to assess or support students' learning and progress. Students have little opportunity for active participation or to learn independently of the teacher.
- Students rightly report improvements in the quality and frequency of teachers' written and verbal feedback, although not consistently across all areas of the college. Most students receive constructive advice on how to improve the quality of their work, although this is not always sufficiently precise to enable students to make the required improvements. On a few vocational courses, assessment is too infrequent to support the effective checking of learning and progress, resulting in learners having to resubmit large pieces of work for re-assessment.
- Arrangements to monitor students' progress are systematic and effective, so that students know how well they are progressing. However, not all targets are sufficiently clear in students' learning plans to ensure precise measurement of their progress.
- Inspectors saw good examples of the development of students' skills and knowledge in English and mathematics. However, students' written skills are not always strong and their spelling mistakes and poor grammar are sometimes left uncorrected by their teachers.
- Good support for students outside lessons is effective in helping them to achieve. 'Study Skills' sessions provide effective, well-structured and tailored support for students who need additional

help in English and mathematics, and for those students who have fallen behind in their learning. The college has raised the entry requirements for advanced level study, so that they are more in line with those commonly found in a sixth form college. They have also introduced a system that enables teachers to make precise use of predicted grades from students' prior attainment at GCSE. Both of these actions have helped to ensure that students now have a more coherent, realistic and informed choice of subjects based on their prior attainment, aptitudes and aspirations than was evident at the last inspection. Teachers are not yet promoting equality and diversity effectively across all curriculum areas.

- Teachers reflect well on the improvement of their professional practice. There are now well-developed arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning. These arrangements have contributed significantly to the improvement of teaching and learning since the last inspection.

Health, care and social studies

Apprenticeships

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, although there are some examples of good practice across the courses and subjects in this area. This improved picture of teaching and learning reflects students' improving performance on most courses, many of which have success rates that are now at, or slightly above, national averages
- Students are developing good learning and employment skills. They gain confidence as they become more reflective and use their increased knowledge to improve their work practice. Apprentices gain confidence in the workplace, and become better at their work, as a direct result of their training.
- In many lessons students are challenged, independent learning is encouraged and students are fully focused on the tasks set. Lessons generally include a good variety of activities which motivate students. In the better lessons students are given a set time to complete their tasks and this encourages them to work efficiently. Most teachers use questions to test students' new knowledge and to reinforce their learning. In the weaker lessons, teaching lacks inspiration, the learners lack motivation and there are too few challenging tasks. Sometimes the pace of the lesson is too slow, students lose concentration and time management is poor.
- Assessment is generally well planned. Assignment briefs are clear and teachers' written feedback to students usually identifies what has been achieved and what requires further work. In most lessons assessment is used very effectively to support learning. However, in the poorer lessons assessment is not used effectively to extend knowledge and understanding. Sometimes, the endings of lessons are rushed and there is not enough time for the successful conclusion of some assessments.
- Target setting is good. Students set their own targets for assignment work with the support of their tutors. For those students who are not meeting targets or want help to achieve higher targets there are additional support sessions to help them make progress. Attendance and punctuality are monitored well and where necessary tutors develop action plans and targets to help students to improve their attendance and punctuality.
- Students' literacy and numeracy skills are generally well developed. For example, in one lesson students were encouraged to calculate body mass index or calorie intake. Many did this well and showed that they understood the calculations involved, but some missed opportunities to use bar charts and did not complete their analysis of this data. Teachers are not consistently correcting mistakes in spelling and grammar in students' assignments. Not all apprentices have

key skills effectively integrated into their programmes; sometimes, they are left too late in the programme for students to benefit fully from them.

- Students are well supported through an effective tutorial system. They receive regular one-to-one sessions to address personal issues as well as monitor academic progress. They take part in a well-planned tutorial programme covering topics such as homelessness, coping with failure and youth unemployment.
- Learning is well supported with computer-based teaching materials. Course material is available online and there is easy access to teachers' presentations and handouts for lessons as well as assignments, grading criteria and various other resources.
- Equality and diversity issues are clearly identified on schemes of work and are well promoted during lessons. For example, in one lesson gender and racial stereotyping in children's books was the subject of a lively and well-managed discussion which helped students to see how subtle some of these influences can be.

Science and mathematics

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. At the last inspection these aspects were inadequate. Students now make generally satisfactory progress and outcomes have improved to around the national average on many courses.
- In the better lessons, teachers use a range of activities to stimulate and motivate the students and encourage them to learn from each other. Chemistry students, for example, used mini-whiteboards to compare answers to questions on covalent bonding. A foundation mathematics group measured their heights and shoe size to contribute to data which they will use to analyse the outcomes of a survey on healthy living. In a biology lesson, a group of students adapted an experiment to extract chloroplasts from spinach with a view to supporting others in their group who were out on a visit.
- Computer-based materials are used well to support learning in mathematics at all levels. In a GCE AS physics lesson, video clips of the recent free fall from the stratosphere were used well to stimulate a discussion on the effect of drag on acceleration. Not all teachers effectively promote the use of computers and the virtual learning environment. The use of these systems is underdeveloped in the vocational courses in science.
- However, many lessons lacked stimulation and sufficient student participation. Teachers do most of the talking while students remain mainly quiet. They answer questions if asked or complete written examination questions for long periods, an activity that could be undertaken as homework. Teachers frequently do not acknowledge prior experience, knowledge and ability by providing more challenging activities to enable students to reach their full potential. They do not effectively plan and deliver their teaching based on their knowledge of what students can do already and hence they fail to meet individual students' needs.
- In lessons, mathematical skills are effectively developed in many science courses and the standard of English in written work is generally good. Grammatical and spelling errors, however, are not consistently corrected. There is little promotion of equality and diversity.
- Assessment on most advanced level courses is now often good. Teachers regularly set homework based on examination questions. It is marked and returned in a timely way with constructive comments which help the students to improve. This is aided by the newly developed feedback sheets which compare the homework grade with the minimum target grade and enable the students to identify areas for improvement against set criteria. These sheets are not, however, consistently and effectively used across the whole area.

- Teachers of GCSE mathematics do not set sufficient homework to monitor the extent to which learning is taking place. Students on these courses do not have sufficient well-marked work to enable them to see where they need to improve.
- Students greatly appreciate and value the highly effective support provided by teachers both in class and, at advanced level, in the additional Smart Study workshops. These workshops are run regularly for those students identified as requiring support and others who wish to attend simply because they see them as beneficial.
- All students are set targets based on prior attainment. They are used to help determine the right course for a student at enrolment. Tutors, however, tend to use these targets more effectively with students whose progress is causing concern than with more able students.

<p>Business administration and law</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good with some outstanding features. Course teams have been successful in increasing the proportion of learners completing their courses since the last inspection. Students’ success rates and progress were broadly average in 2011/12, with A-level success rates having improved significantly.
- Most teaching and learning activities are stimulating, varied and engage students effectively. Students are enthusiastic and motivated in lessons. They enjoy their studies and are developing analytical and evaluation skills appropriate for their course. In particular, adult students on part-time courses are being prepared well for a variety of relevant employment. For example, in one lesson adult students were preparing for job interviews through role play. They all achieved a high standard of analysis and understanding of interview techniques and demonstrated insightful awareness of their strengths and where they needed to improve.
- Most teachers plan and enable a wide variety of activities which build students’ confidence and develop independent learning skills. Teachers’ use of questions to extend students’ understanding and check learning is generally good. However, many younger students are not yet developing sufficiently confident use of the technical language they need in some subjects.
- The effectiveness and outcomes of the college’s substantial work-based apprenticeship provision in business administration and finance are good. Outcomes, including success rates and skill development for progression at work, are good. Apprentices respond very well to opportunities to take on higher levels of responsibility. Employers speak highly of apprentices’ readiness to develop and their value to the organisation. Effective liaison between college staff and work-based supervisors contribute to this effectiveness and are valued equally by apprentices and employers.
- Most students and teachers make good use of information and learning technology to enrich and extend learning. All teachers draw appropriately on their specialist knowledge and experience to reinforce and consolidate learning. However, in several lessons attempts to enliven learning with examples from business and the professions are frustrated by students’ limited experience and knowledge of the business world more generally.
- Assessment activities within lessons are mostly timely and appropriate to confirm whether learning is taking place. The quality of written feedback on students’ work varies and some needs to improve. The best practice seen in some subjects includes standardised feedback sheets with comprehensive evaluative comments against clear assessment criteria. Such good practice is not yet consistent across the curriculum area and in a few cases errors of grammar and spelling are uncorrected.

- A comprehensive strategy for developing enterprise and employability skills is being introduced to help to extend the good work already evident in the best lessons within the business studies area. This strategy, including further enrichment activities, enterprise projects and the use of business mentors, is appropriate in meeting students' needs and interests. It is too soon to evaluate properly the impact of this strategy, but it is soundly based.
- Equality and diversity are not promoted sufficiently in most lessons, despite opportunities to create awareness of different cultures and employment environments, thus limiting preparation of students for a diverse society. There are positive social relationships in lessons and many good examples of collaborative learning and team building.
- The strong commitment of staff to support and care for students is evident within lessons including those where additional learning support is provided. The support and individual attention for business administration and work preparation students are particularly good.
- Revised arrangements have just been introduced for the setting of targets for individual students and monitoring of progress towards their achievement. The system has yet to be implemented fully and impact cannot currently be evaluated.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The Principal and senior managers provide strong leadership. With the staff and governors they have revised the college's mission, ethos and objectives to raise the aspirations of students and staff alike. Teachers and managers have embraced the new vision and are enthusiastically putting it into practice. The open and transparent style of the Principal and senior managers is appreciated by staff and communication is good. The changes which have taken place over the last year in many aspects of the college's work have improved retention and success rates, which are now at or approaching average levels. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of many of the systems which have recently been implemented.
- The governing body has significantly improved its oversight of the college's performance, a key area for improvement at the last inspection. The governors now have a good grasp of key performance indicators and offer rigorous challenge to managers on many issues. They acknowledge the need to develop their understanding further. Governors bring valuable professional skills to bear on the work of the corporation. The college's financial health is good.
- Managers have developed and implemented a range of methods for improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over the last year. The observation of lessons produces reliable judgements about the quality of lessons, which have improved, although too few are good or outstanding. Staff benefit from sharing good practice. The redesign and refurbishment of the Totton campus has been an important element in the strategy to improve learning. Students are benefiting from informal study spaces, better social facilities and an improved environment.
- The revised organisational structure has increased the responsibilities and accountability of middle and curriculum managers. Improved access to robust data and regular meeting slots enable them to monitor course performance carefully and make necessary adjustments. Senior staff encourage innovation, and enable managers to implement their ideas. Governors have agreed revised performance management arrangements for individual staff, linked to new strategic objectives, which have not yet started.
- Following the last inspection, the college devised a thorough and effective improvement plan which has produced improvements, for example in science and mathematics. Managers have developed well-considered quality assurance arrangements which are at an early stage of implementation. The college's self-assessment report for 2011/12 is currently being developed. For many staff this is their first experience of close involvement with self-assessment. Governors recognise that the curriculum reviews in the draft report are of varying quality.
- The curriculum is unusually broad for a sixth form college. It meets the needs of students and the local and wider area well. Managers have reviewed the curriculum and made adjustments to

ensure that students are placed on appropriate programmes. Fewer students are taking AS courses in the current year; more have been placed on alternative programmes better suited to their needs. The college makes highly-regarded provision for learners with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as a range of academic, vocational, work-based and community-based programmes. The focus on employability and enterprise skills is enhancing opportunities for local people. The college is well regarded by its partners and collaboration with employers and other agencies is beneficial to students.

- The college promotes equality and diversity well through its inclusive range of programmes which enable many local people to progress to higher education and employment. Managers make strong efforts to ensure that vulnerable young people are identified before and during the enrolment process, and that their progress is monitored and further support is provided where necessary. Data on students' outcomes are analysed for differences between groups of learners. Achievements by male students, previously lower than those of their female peers, have improved. The few instances of bullying and harassment are recorded and dealt with promptly. The college's equality and diversity policy does not have a specific published action plan or impact measures.
- Managers and staff safeguard learners effectively. The college meets its statutory requirements. The atmosphere is inclusive; students feel safe and adopt safe working practices. Staff and governors have received appropriate training. Child protection matters are dealt with effectively by designated staff working closely with local agencies.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Totton College

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	3
Science and mathematics	3
Business administration and law	2

Provider details

Totton College	
Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1,312
	Part-time: 2,958
Principal/CEO	Mr Mike Gaston
Date of previous inspection	September 2011
Website address	www.totton.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)								
Full-time	118	6	187	17	679	52	0	0
Part-time	20	399	31	300	112	118	0	39
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	27	207	7	106	0	2		
Number of learners aged 14-16	5							
Number of community learners	144							
Number of employability learners	0							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southampton Engineering Training Association ▪ Impact Learning and Data Solutions Ltd ▪ Social Care in Action 							

Additional socio-economic information

Totton College is based in Totton, a small town of around 35,000 people about five miles from Southampton and the largest urban area in the New Forest. The college offers a broad curriculum including a large core of full time vocational and academic provision for 16- to 18-year-old students, significant provision at foundation, entry and intermediate levels and rapidly growing apprenticeship provision. The curriculum range and diversity are more typical of a small general further education college than of a sixth form college. Students come from Totton, Southampton, the Waterside area, Romsey and Salisbury, some of them travelling for a long time each day to reach the college. The economic profile of these areas varies widely, and includes very economically deprived wards in Redbridge and some parts of Totton to much more affluent areas. Students start at the college with generally lower levels of attainment than is usual for a sixth form college.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Wilf Hudson HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the 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, telephone calls 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 provider. 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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