

Croydon College

Inspection dates		10-14 December 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Inadequate-4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

General further education college

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- Since early 2011, Croydon College has been faced with a range of significant challenges that have required extensive and radical change. While the college has had some success in raising achievements, it is now in a much more secure position to raise standards through its quality improvement arrangements.
- The proportion of students who achieve qualifications across the college is below that of the average for similar colleges, and improvements in success rates for all groups of students have yet to be established.
- The rates at which students both attend and are punctual to lessons are too low and have a negative impact on their learning.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good enough and does not sufficiently inspire and challenge all students to achieve of their best.
- The initial testing of students' English and mathematical abilities is not used sufficiently well to plan lessons, monitor student progress or set challenging improvement targets.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Effective senior leaders and managers provide a clear and ambitious vision for the future of Croydon College while dealing decisively with significant, fundamental and urgent change over a short period of time.
- Self-assessment is accurate, self-critical and comprehensive and is backed by effective planning for improvement and attentive monitoring of progress.
- Committed, well informed, challenging and particularly supportive board members provide strong governance.
- Outstanding partnership arrangements help to motivate students and improve their personal and social skills

- The college offers extensive and effective support for local community initiatives and students who are facing increasing levels of deprivation.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' attendance and punctuality by ensuring that staff and students rigorously implement the agreed procedures.
- Raise success rates and students' progress by strengthening further the focus on improving teaching and learning.
- Review and revise as necessary the varying approaches to teaching functional skills and fully implement planned changes.
- Ensure that assessment procedures, including planning, and the quality of feedback are further improved.
- Make better use of initial assessment to inform teaching and learning to meet the needs of students, particularly those on foundation level courses.
- Continue to improve the management skills of heads of division and team leaders to ensure that consistently high standards are the norm across the college.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Inadequate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As recognised by the college, outcomes for students are inadequate. Unreliable data in 2009/10 inflated apparent success rates to well above the national average for similar colleges. In reality, success rates were considerably lower. Accurate data for the following two years confirm that success rates are still too low, although they improved faster in 2011/12 than the average for other colleges. The number of students who remain on their programme is at the national average; however, too many students fail to gain the qualification they set out to achieve. ▪ Over the last two years, success rates have varied between course levels and age groups. For example, in 2011/12, success rates improved particularly well at foundation level and advanced level provision for adults. However, success rates at intermediate level and advanced level provision for students aged 16 to 18 declined. The college closely monitors achievement gaps between different student groups and is actively working towards reducing variations. ▪ Success rates in health, public services and care improved significantly and are now high. Many students on access and GCSE mathematics provision achieve high grades. However, in arts, media and publishing, preparation for life, business, administration and law and AS provision, success rates are well below the national average. ▪ Apprenticeship success rates are low, although many students did achieve the vocational qualification. Recent changes to curriculum planning of apprenticeship provision have been effective and are already ensuring students achieve aspects of their English and mathematics qualifications in a much more timely manner. Overall, functional English and mathematics course results improved significantly in 2011/12, although around 40% of students still failed to achieve the qualification. ▪ The progression rates of students to further education and work are satisfactory. Many students make the appropriate progress expected of them during their course and, overall, the standard of students' work is satisfactory. However, in construction and visual and performing art courses, too many students are not challenged sufficiently to go beyond the minimal requirements of the qualification. 	

- Students enjoy coming to college. However, the rate at which they attend and are punctual to lessons continues to be a challenge for the college, although early indications of improvement are encouraging.
- The development of students' social skills is particularly good. The college effectively promotes volunteering opportunities and many students take part. Students develop a satisfactory understanding of the world of work. For example, health, social and child care students get good opportunities to develop their employability skills. However, in some subject areas, this is under developed.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In 2011/12, too many students had below standard learning experiences. For example, poor assessment procedures resulting in rushed and poorly prepared work, and staff changes and absences had a negative impact on learning. The college recognised many of the problems in that year and its effect on low student achievement. Although, improvement in most areas in 2012/13 is impressive with the majority of students now fully engaged in productive learning, the recent changes are not yet consistently and fully applied within and across all subject areas.
- Students are remarkably positive about the changes and to a large extent this is reflected in the renewed vigour of both the remaining and new staff. Aspects of teaching and learning are particularly good, with many carefully planned lessons using a variety of interesting tasks, good use of resources, and inspiring teachers. An appropriate sense of urgency and ambition is instilled by teachers about forthcoming examinations and assessments. Students support each other well in tasks and work well in groups that are carefully selected by the teacher.
- Technology is used particularly well in the majority of lessons, with a commendable exploitation of the power of interactive whiteboards aiding imaginative and engaging teaching and learning. The use of electronic submission and return of work is increasingly improving the learning process and includes a forum to allow peer review of students' work. The relatively new learning resource centre is a particularly good and well-used facility; the carefully planned modern design and innovative ways of supporting students mean it is at the centre of the college physically and academically.
- However, as recognised by the college, there are still pockets of unsatisfactory teaching and learning, epitomised by poor classroom management, insufficient planning of learning, uninspiring learning materials and disruptions caused by poor punctuality, leading to students losing attention and occasionally resorting to their mobile phones for something more interesting.
- The initial testing of students' English and mathematical aptitudes is carried out for most students, although the results are not always used effectively by teachers to ensure their teaching is shaped to meet the needs of students. Managers have acknowledged this issue and are developing new procedures. Learning support assistants add to the effectiveness of learning, although in some cases their impact is limited.
- Overall, action planning for students in the majority of areas is carried out satisfactorily through personal learning plans. However, in too many cases, targets are generic, lack specific challenge and focus on individual student improvement. The tracking and monitoring of student progress can be unduly complex and time consuming due to the variety of systems available. Formal tutorials are designed to play an important part in encouraging learning, as well as improving attendance and punctuality, but the effectiveness of these sessions is too variable.
- Assessment procedures, such as making it clear when assignments should be completed, have improved recently and are now satisfactory. Students are aware of the course requirements and are increasingly working as independent learners. Work is usually marked and returned in a prompt manner, although the overall quality of feedback lacks the insight and detail needed to be most helpful.

- Functional skills are now subject to enthusiastic management and pockets of good practice are having a positive impact on the quality of provision with outcomes improving rapidly. However, differing teaching strategies, for instance the use of vocational staff in some areas and specialists in others, has had variable success. GCSE mathematics provision is good and the English GCSE provision is improving, although in the latter too few students achieve grades C or above.
- Initial advice and continuing guidance and support are good. Students understand, routinely use and value the comprehensive support systems for personal and academic matters, and this support is reflected in improving retention rates on long courses.
- Students’ understanding of equality and diversity is reinforced through some particularly good cross-college activities. The very diverse student body means that, as a matter of routine, students experience different aspects of culture and diversity with a pleasant atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding in the college. Specific development through lessons is done well in some areas, such as health and social care or foundation English, but opportunities to promote aspects of equality and diversity are missed in other areas such as construction and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

Health, social and child care

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are very good. This is reflected in the recently very high success rates with student retention and attendance rates continuing to improve. Most students progress onto higher level courses or employment.
- The standard of students’ work is high, and students progress well in lessons. The planning of lessons accurately takes account of students’ personal and specific learning needs. Teachers use a broad range of methods to motivate and inspire students well. The use of directed questioning to test students’ knowledge in most lessons is excellent. Teachers are well qualified and use their good industry experience well to develop students’ knowledge and skills.
- English and mathematics skills are developed particularly well and nearly always contextualised to the subject area. For example, students on an access to nursing course precisely developed a mathematical formula that determined the correct dose of medication for a baby based on its weight. In another lesson, students learnt the essentials of accurately reading and issuing the correct dose of medicine at the right time.
- All students develop good work-related skills in relevant and interesting work placements, even though in some cases this was not a course requirement. Industry speakers present and meet students throughout the year to enliven the curriculum and make it more relevant to the workplace. One good approach to developing workplace communication skills was for students to watch a film on girl gangs that highlighted the need for a more appropriate language when dealing with different service users.
- Assessment practice is particularly good. Student work is marked promptly and detailed feedback from teachers enables students to improve the standard of their work and, on most courses, gain higher grades.
- Students are supported very well. Pastoral and academic support ensures that students achieve of their best, regardless of learning or welfare difficulties. Outside of lessons, access to tutors and teachers is good. Students greatly appreciate the time and effort spent by staff, particularly by those at risk of withdrawal. Tutorials are effectively planned to encourage students to become independent learners and develop a much greater understanding of their responsibilities towards themselves and the local community.
- The monitoring of students’ progress is good with students and teachers having good access to computers to update electronic learning plans. Students are set specific, challenging and

measurable targets to produce high quality work, to clear deadlines and take responsibility for aspects of their lives that might have an adverse impact on their time at college.

- Information, advice and guidance are good with students having a clear understanding of the requirements of their course and the career options available. Students' English and mathematical abilities are appropriately tested at the start of the programme and the college ensures that students are on the most appropriate course and are given the necessary support for any additional learning needs.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Apart from vibrant displays around the college and in some classrooms, every opportunity is taken by teachers in lessons to celebrate and develop a rich and broader understanding of different cultures and religions. Students have an excellent understanding of the subject. An ethos of good manners and respect in the department ensures a harmonious atmosphere and creates an environment that is highly conducive to learning.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment have recently improved, but still require further improvement to be good. Well qualified and experienced teachers share their knowledge well to increase students' skill levels and attainment, which are satisfactory. Teaching and learning generally reflect outcomes in construction courses and success rates are broadly in line with the national average for similar provision. Apprentice success rates are low, but many students gained the vocational qualification.
- Generally, practical lessons are a more positive learning experience with good levels of individual coaching linked to safe working practices. Apprentices quickly gain additional advantage from employers' on-site training that develops their skills to current industry standards. Teaching and learning for foundation students on short courses are particularly effective. Students benefit from well-resourced construction workshops. Employers of apprentices have recognised recent improvements in college-based training and report that students have improved confidence.
- However, theory lessons do not engage students effectively and the planning of lessons focuses too much on the teacher, with insufficient student involvement. Teachers fail to meet the expectations of all students with appropriate and challenging activities for those who are more able or adequate planning for those students requiring additional support. Too many students disengage in these lessons and become bored. Poor grammar, punctuation and spellings by students are not always corrected.
- The initial testing of students' English and mathematics quickly identifies those with additional learning needs. Extra support is arranged and apprentices benefit from individual support that impacts positively on their learning. However, for college-based students, teachers and learning support staff do not communicate sufficiently with each other to plan learning and monitor students' progress effectively.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessment feedback in practical lessons enables students to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding effectively. However, the checking of learning in theory classes is not always sufficiently clear and opportunities are missed for students to evaluate their own learning. Apprentices are appropriately informed as to whether they have met awarding body standards. However, assessment questioning is often too generic and students' answers do not always lead to more in-depth questioning. Generally, students are not encouraged to explore ways on how to develop their skills beyond the minimal requirements of the qualification.

- Students benefit from English and mathematics lessons that link well to practical scenarios. Students demonstrate their ability to measure, gauge, quantify and calculate through a range of tasks. Previously low success rates for apprentices are partly attributable to poor assessment planning with the testing of English and mathematics being delayed until after the vocational training has been completed. Recent changes now ensure students are entered for tests at a much earlier stage of the programme.
- Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Students have a clear understanding of progression routes and receive timely information on next steps into employment or further training opportunities. Pastoral support for students is adequate. However, recently introduced arrangements to encourage college-based students to attend more regularly have yet to prove themselves.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Students show appropriate respect to peers, teachers and colleagues. They are able to identify equality and diversity themes, but too many have a limited understanding. Many opportunities to raise equality and diversity are missed in lessons, progress reviews and workplace assessments.

Leisure, travel and tourism

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement as reflected in students’ outcomes. Teachers provide good care and support for students, maintaining regular contact to keep them on track. Students enjoy their lessons and value the chance to work in the library and use computers outside of class time. Students receiving additional learning support with assignment writing are helped to improve their work well. Most students aspire to progress to higher level study.
- In the better lessons, teachers effectively relate topics to employment opportunities and activities develop students’ confidence and communication skills well. Teachers are well qualified and use their good industry knowledge effectively. Good lesson planning, class management and learning resources maintain focus and pace. Teachers use questioning skilfully to check learning and students have valuable opportunities to evaluate what they have learned. However, even in the better lessons, punctuality is poor.
- Weaker lessons are poorly planned and do not provide sufficient challenge for more able students. In these lessons, all students do the same work and those who finish early have little to do and become bored and distracting. In one lesson, the teacher failed to organise students effectively and throughout the lesson they made poor progress.
- Teachers know their students well and appropriately monitor their progress and set targets in tutorials. Teachers encourage students to reflect on their own performance in key areas, including attendance, punctuality, achieving minimum target grades and completing assignment work. However, they do not set challenging tasks to build on and extend learning for students to achieve their best.
- Teachers advise students which aspects of work need attention and some feedback is encouraging and motivating. However, overall, students’ marked work does not consistently help them to sufficiently improve their work to a consistently high or professional standard. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are not routinely and consistently corrected. For example, some students’ letters to employers requesting work experience were not of an adequate standard.
- Advanced apprentices in sporting excellence are supported well to achieve their career goals by skilled, expert sports coaches. The innovative use of smartphones allows teachers and students to capture and review performance during training sessions and effectively use the information to plan future learning goals towards becoming a professional athlete and competing at the

highest level. Following previous difficulties and poor success rates, the college now works with only one partner to deliver this programme. Regular communication is now in place, and current students are making good progress.

- Appropriate and timely information, advice and guidance support students on all programmes. Pastoral support is good. Students benefit from a wide range of relevant trips, visits and cultural activities. The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is satisfactory. Travel and tourism students benefit from free travel on public transport in London and this improves their access to events promoted by the travel and tourism industry.

Arts, media and publishing

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not good enough to ensure students achieve their full potential. Success rates on art and design foundation and intermediate level courses are high and many students progress from these to higher level courses. However, success rates on most other courses have declined and are now low.
- In the best lessons, students' progress is closely monitored and teachers encourage them to develop their artwork independently. Students enthusiastically take part in the lessons and make good use of the resources available.
- However, a significant minority of teaching and learning at advanced level is inadequate. In these lessons, the progress of students is often slow and teachers do not provide sufficient encouragement to students to improve the standard of their work or to develop independent learning skills. Too often students are set tasks that are dull and that lead to work of a basic standard. The technology and web-based media that are prevalent in the arts are not used effectively by teachers to help students improve the standard of their work.
- Art base rooms provide a stimulating, creative environment and students are increasingly displaying their work with pride. The music and performing arts courses are well resourced and art studios are spacious. However, some studios are untidy and uncared for and the limited range of media available in print and three dimensions places restrictions on students' creativity.
- In media courses, teachers ensure students gain work experience in the industry through links with media companies and client-led commissions. In other subjects, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for students to develop the skills they will need to gain employment in the arts industries. This is improving in art and design where students are now designing a 'pop-up' shop and producing work to sell in it.
- Attendance in lessons is low. Students have experienced too many changes of teachers and this has had a negative impact on the planning and teaching of many courses.
- Initial advice and guidance are not always effective in placing students on the right level of course. Too many students on advanced level vocational courses do not meet the entry criteria for their course and struggle to succeed.
- A high proportion of students has low levels of literacy that are identified appropriately at the beginning of their course. However, teachers fail to help students redress these deficiencies adequately. Plans to integrate literacy into vocational lessons have been ineffective and success rates in functional skills in this subject area are low.
- Assessment is satisfactory and, in most areas of art and design, students receive good, regular feedback on their progress. In performing arts, feedback to students on assessed work clearly shows them what they need to do in order to improve. In other areas, however, written feedback is infrequent or brief and does not focus sufficiently on the key improvements a student can make in order to improve their performance.

- Students take part in a wide range of enrichment activities that promote equality and diversity. In lessons, teachers and students work well together and treat each other with respect. Art and music students draw on their cultural heritage for inspiration and art teachers plan projects that encourage students to explore and celebrate the diversity of Croydon.

Languages, literature and culture

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. This is reflected in outcomes for students that are satisfactory, although there is much variability between different courses. Students enjoy their lessons but their progress and development of skills vary considerably between programmes.
- In the good and better lessons, students make good progress and their focus on learning is excellent. Teachers have high expectations, are enthusiastic about their subject and engage well with students. The variety of activities motivates students and the pace of lessons is good. Students have a well-judged degree of practice to learn and apply new concepts and develop their skills.
- The quality of the accommodation, audio-visual materials and workbooks is good. Teachers use resources to good effect, for example film clips to teach Macbeth at GCSE level and a matching card game to revise terminology to describe language at GCE A level. Staff are well qualified and access a broad range of professional development opportunities.
- In less effective lessons, learning objectives are not sufficiently ambitious and the degree of challenge does not encourage students to excel. The planning of teaching and learning to meet all students' individual needs is not consistently effective and in some cases has a negative impact on learning and progress. Teachers do not always check students' understanding effectively. For example, some teachers do not give students sufficient time to formulate answers or actively engage in learning tasks.
- Punctuality and attendance vary considerably. Student attendance is excellent in some lessons but not in others. Although, latecomers are held to account and the process of following up on non attendance is good, too many students arrive late and this disrupts lessons.
- Outcomes of initial testing of students' language skills are not used effectively to set individual and group targets and to inform the planning for learning. Progress reviews are insufficiently specific on the progress that students make and how students can improve further.
- Students feel safe and enjoy studying at the college and many receive good pastoral support. Students have high expectations of progression to further and higher education, for which they receive good advice and guidance. The quality of tutorials is improving, but the materials being piloted are not yet good.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good and teachers foster good relations. Students come from very diverse backgrounds and treat each other with respect. Enrichment activities provide good opportunities for development, for example orientation visits to universities and fundraising for charity.
- Many students on GCSE and A-level courses have language backgrounds other than English. While their English language skills are sufficient to cope with the requirements of the course, they receive little or no feedback on their spoken English language in the classroom and this hampers their ability to express themselves clearly and accurately.

ESOL**Learning programmes for 16-18**
Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement as reflected in student outcomes. Success rates are low; however, effective strategies are in place to closely monitor students' progress which is now satisfactory and sometimes good. The re-design of the curriculum to accommodate students' individual progress on separate components of ESOL, for example listening and speaking, has resulted in improved retention rates.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students. There is now a strong focus on attendance to maximise opportunities to improve student chances of success and, at the time of inspection, attendance was satisfactory and improving. Students are well motivated and enjoy hugely the termly award celebrations that recognise their commitment.
- In the better lessons, effective planning ensures that students' individual needs are met well. Teachers use a broad range of teaching methods to engage and inspire students. Activities are fun and challenging and many are applied to students' personal lives. Interactive technology is used effectively to engage pre-entry students in matching images and words and the use of mobile phones and video clips to support examination practice is good.
- In weaker lessons, however, there is less personalised learning in topics chosen and opportunities are missed to use students' experience or outside interests. Too many lessons are mechanistic with similar teaching formats used. Planned activities are poorly structured resulting in bad behaviour by some younger students. Some students are not actively encouraged to take part and therefore make slow progress. In lessons designed to prepare students for external assessment, feedback on spoken language is not consistently effective. Generally, equality and diversity are under developed and not explicitly promoted.
- Effective initial testing of students' language abilities ensures that students are placed on the appropriate level of programme. Comprehensive student profiles identify clearly the barriers to learning and the skills that the students need to develop to maximise achievement. In many cases these are used carefully to plan learning. Improved curriculum planning now gives students greater opportunities to achieve at different levels for speaking and listening than for reading and writing.
- Tutors clearly identify language development targets and some students use these appropriately during lessons to improve particular aspects of language. However, not enough time is given to generate comprehensive action plans and review individual progress.
- Teachers support and care for students well and have clear empathy with the additional problems many face. Links with external agencies provide good independent support. For example, the college has initiated an effective partnership arrangement with a local voluntary organisation to support young refugees and asylum seekers with mental health needs and complex emotional difficulties leading to their improved commitment to learning.
- Progression onto higher levels of ESOL programmes is good. Students are able to move from full-time to part-time courses with ease to accommodate employment commitments and some students effectively combine part-time ESOL courses with a good range of vocational programmes.

Foundation English**Learning programmes for 16-18****Learning programmes for 19+**

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and this reflects the need to further improve outcomes for students on many courses. Poor assessment planning in 2011/12 significantly reduced opportunities for many students to achieve the qualification. This situation has been fully resolved and now ensures students can complete their assessments in a more timely manner. For example, most students have successfully completed the listening and speaking unit of their English functional skill qualification before the end of the first term.
- In the better lessons, teachers use their expertise effectively to engage students by using interesting activities and tasks that are fun and stimulating. The use of effective questioning techniques by teachers ensures all students are actively included in the lesson. Lessons are planned well to develop students' confidence and promote and enhance their employability skills. For example, topical discussion and role play help students to prepare for the world of work.
- Imaginative use of information and learning technology effectively engages and develops students' knowledge and understanding. For example, students who had not been in education for a long time sang along to a musical video to engage them in a subsequent discussion that was linked well to their assessment.
- Most teachers use learning materials and a range of teaching methods effectively to foster good relationships. However, some teachers fail to sufficiently challenge and motivate students or promote the importance of English in developing students' careers. Learning activities are not planned well or are not well suited to meet the individual needs of all students. A few lessons are uninspiring and students quickly become bored.
- The standard of students' work is satisfactory and some work is good. However, a significant minority of students fails to achieve consistently the standard expected. Some of the written feedback by teachers is good and clearly identifies areas for improvement and students respond well. However, there is much variation in the quality of feedback and good practice is not shared effectively.
- Most students benefit from high levels of support from staff, both individually and in group activities. This enables many of them to enjoy their learning and develop their English skills appropriately.
- The review of students' progress and the effective setting of personal and specific targets for students to improve are too varied. Some students have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve, but for others their progress is not formally reviewed and they have little knowledge of how they can develop language competencies.
- Many students are tested at the start of their course to determine their level of competence and to identify the level of additional learning support required. However, the results are not always systematically used to plan lessons or monitor students' progress. Communication between additional learning support staff and teachers does not always lead to an effective learning plan.
- Initial advice and guidance do not sufficiently support further progression to higher qualifications or employment, especially in work-skills courses where topics could be explored further in order to provide individual guidance to students relative to their chosen destinations.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is satisfactory. In a few lessons, there is positive promotion of equality and diversity through careful selection of resources and activities, for example the role of women in the police force and the discussion on different religious and cultural celebrations. However, some teachers miss naturally occurring opportunities to develop student understanding further.

The effectiveness of leadership and management**Requires improvement**

- Strong leadership has steered the college successfully through a very difficult period over the last two years. The significant problems exposed by a whistle-blower in late 2010 showed widespread inaccuracies in student performance data. The Skills Funding Agency deemed the 2009/10 data to be so unreliable that it decided not to publish them and issued the college with a notice to improve.
- Consequently, a number of external bodies have carried out many audits of the college's latest data regarding student performance. They are now satisfied that they present an accurate, but much less favourable, picture of success rates. Success rates have shown some good improvements in some parts of the college over the last year. However, in a large number of areas, they remain low.
- Since early 2011, a new Principal, a new chair of governors, a largely new management team and many new governors have worked particularly effectively to implement a rigorous approach to self-assessment. The college now has an accurate picture of the variable quality and standards of provision across the college and has built sound foundations on which it can continue to improve. The college has effectively re-established its reputation as an important and valued place of learning for the local community. The notice to improve has now been removed.
- The college has clear and well-developed strategic plans that it is using effectively to bring about improvements. Governors are well organised and they effectively monitor the college's progress. However, while governors and managers have proved their ambition and tenacity, they have yet to prove fully their impact. A well-developed management training programme is helping to consolidate the college's performance. However, students' attendance and punctuality and the quality of teaching and learning still need to improve quickly so that all students can be helped to do their best and make the progress of which they are capable.
- The college offers a calm and friendly face to all its students who come from the ethnically diverse locality that it serves. A culture of respect and mutual tolerance pervades the college and this is effectively supported with a wide range of well-implemented policies and strategies. Managers monitor success rates closely to identify areas of under achievement. There are some, clear action plans in place to try and remedy this and progress is evident. Not all teachers promote equality and diversity well in their lessons. An excellent range of successful approaches ensures that students are actively involved in the college's decision making.
- Outstanding partnership arrangements improve the personal, social and employability skills of students. For example, Ministry of Defence personnel lead sessions to develop the skills of students for job interviews and, following the summer riots of 2011, the local police found a strong and trusted partner in the college. Links with employers are developing well with the college offering a flexible and reciprocal approach towards training opportunities for students.
- During a period of significant change, the college is now very actively improving teaching and learning in most curriculum areas. Teachers are well qualified and benefit from regular professional updating. The thorough performance management system includes formal observation of teaching and learning that is only part of a wider, comprehensive approach to improvement. However, such developments follow on from a year when many of the basics, such as appropriate assessment planning, were not fully in place. Despite recent interventions, inspectors judged that the quality of teaching still requires improvement in many subject areas.
- There are comprehensive policies and a clear approach to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding students. Staff have forged very strong links with relevant local agencies and the progress of vulnerable students is monitored systematically and well. Appropriate checks are made to ensure the suitability of adults to work with young people and vulnerable adults. These records are maintained accurately in a single central register. The college provides a welcoming environment and the overwhelming majority of students feel safe.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Croydon College

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Good
- 3: Requires improvement
- 4: Inadequate

	Overall	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3	3
Outcomes for learners	4	4	3	4
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	2
Building and construction	3
Sport, leisure and recreation	3
Visual arts	4
Other languages, literature and culture	3
ESOL	3
Foundation English	3

Provider details

Croydon College	
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: 2804
	Part-time: 4310
Principal/CEO	Principal Frances Wadsworth
Date of previous inspection	July 2009
Website address	www.croydon.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	587	220	457	107	991	769	0	0
Part-time	44	820	9	1509	80	1018	0	0
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	113	146	87	77	0	0		
Number of learners aged 14-16	99							
Number of community learners	0							
Number of employability learners	43							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learning Curve (JAA) Ltd ■ NCC Skills ■ Marathon Sports 							

Additional socio-economic information

Croydon has a large and diverse population ranging from areas with low levels of disadvantage to some with England's highest levels of deprivation. The number of pupils gaining five GCSEs at grade C and above, including mathematics and English, is about average for Outer London and above that for all English state schools. Around 36% of residents are from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. The employment rate is 74.6% and among the highest in London. Croydon College offers courses in 14 of the 15 subject areas.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Richard Beaumont HMI

Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and nine additional inspectors, assisted by the Deputy Principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on students' achievements over the last two years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students 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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