Coulsdon College

Sixth form College

Inspection dates		15–18 January 2013
Overall effectiveness	**This inspection:**	**Inadequate-4**
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate-4
Outcomes for learners		Inadequate-4
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 is inadequate because:

- Too many learners across the curriculum areas do not pass their qualifications or achieve to their potential.

- Many lessons are not good enough and do not contribute enough to positive outcomes for students.

- Foundation- and intermediate-level English and mathematics teaching does not secure satisfactory outcomes for students.

- Leaders and managers have not yet established a whole college culture of high expectations of staff and students.

- A number of weaknesses identified at the previous inspection persist and progress to remedy them is too slow.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Good and extensive use of information and learning technology (ILT) to engage students in learning.

- A welcoming and harmonious learning environment for young people who come from a diverse range of backgrounds.

- A wide curriculum offer for students.

- Good accommodation and learning facilities.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that governors, leaders and managers clarify priorities for improvement; set challenging targets for performance and rigorously put in place strategies to improve provision across the college. Develop a culture where all staff take responsibility for raising the standards of students' achievements.

- Improve outcomes for students, especially in GCSE English and mathematics and AS subjects, by making sure that students are actively involved in interesting and challenging activities and teachers have high expectations of the students.

- Put in place support and training to raise the standard of those lessons not judged to be good or better, in order to improve students' chances of success.

- Ensure that all students progress and achieve their full potential by regular and sustained tracking and assessment. Make sure that all students, no matter what their background or prior achievement, are supported so that they can make full use of their time at the college and achieve outcomes in line with their abilities.

- Urgently address poor attendance and punctuality and some behaviour in the learning zones by staff having higher expectations of the students.

- Make sure that training for teachers leads to more emphasis on relevant equality and diversity in lessons.

- Improve target setting so that the college meets all its strategic objectives and tackles weaknesses identified through self-assessment.

- Ensure that course teams use management information confidently so that accurate analyses are carried out and annual reviews focus on actions to secure improvements.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Inadequate

- Outcomes for learners have not improved enough since the last inspection 15 months ago. The proportion of learners successfully completing and gaining qualifications in 2012 was well below recent national averages.

- Students generally stay at college and complete their studies. The proportion of those completing their courses in 2012 improved and for students on intermediate and advanced courses retention rates were broadly in line with national averages.

- Students' pass rates at A level were below national averages in 2012, despite 14 of the 30 subjects having 100% pass rates. Pass rates on AS courses were inadequate and 17 of the 31 subjects had pass rates significantly below national averages. Attainments for students on advanced vocational programmes were better and in 2012 were around national averages.

- Outcomes for students on art, design and media courses improved significantly in 2012. However, students' attainments in the laboratory sciences and mathematics remained well below national averages.

- A small number of students take foundation courses and intermediate vocational programmes and, for these students, outcomes were broadly satisfactory. In 2012, students' pass rates for GCSE mathematics and English were very low; around one in five of the students were awarded A* to C grade passes. Students' attainments in functional skills mathematics and English were also below national averages.

- Students from a range of minority ethnic heritages did not achieve as well as the rest of the student body in 2011. Managers and teachers have taken steps to support these students and

were successful in closing the attainment gap in 2012 in some, but not all, of the identified groups.

- No significant achievement gaps exist between male and female students, or between students receiving additional learning support and those who do not. Students who identify themselves as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make progress slightly better than that of their peers.

- The progress made by students as measured by added-value indices is poor and has not improved over the past few years. Students taking A level, AS and GCSE programmes achieved outcomes significantly below that predicted from their prior attainment. Value-added indices for students on advanced vocational programmes declined in 2012, but remained mainly positive.

- Attendance and punctuality still require improvement. The start of too many lessons observed during the inspection was marred by poor punctuality. Current college data suggest that attendance is improving slightly, but during the inspection week attendance was around 80%.

- A good proportion of the students who succeed on advanced courses progress on to higher or further education and into employment. However, the proportion of students progressing from AS level to A level is low, as is the proportion of students progressing from intermediate courses to advanced programmes. College managers and staff work hard to gather progression data from leavers, but destinations for around half the leavers in 2012 are still unknown.

- Students successfully develop personal, social and employability skills by taking part in a range of social, recreational and competitive sports activities. Many achieved relevant key skills qualifications in Improving Their Own Learning in 2012. In addition, the students' representative body is active in college and student affairs.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement

- In the better lessons, students are well supported by experienced teachers who give clear instructions, check learning and foster good working relationships with, and between, students. Where teaching is effective, teachers are well prepared and use a variety of resources to promote active learning. For example, jazz was used to invoke New Orleans for English students reading *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In addition, examples of childcare students' work were well displayed in a vibrant and well-equipped classroom.

- In too many lessons teaching and learning, and assessment strategies, do not enable all students to make sufficient progress. Some early improvements to assessment focus on learning and raising teachers' expectations of students are beginning to be secured; however, progress has been slow.

- In lessons that require improvement, students lack focus and engagement and are too passive. Activities and discussions are not challenging enough to stimulate the students and teachers' expectations of the students are too low. Not enough teaching inspires and interests the students and, as a consequence, they are late to lessons and often do not attend regularly. Foundation and intermediate English and mathematics lessons do not prepare students to achieve their learning goals and outcomes are poor.

- Standards of students' work vary too much. Vocational teachers mark students' work well; their comments are evaluative and place strong emphasis on how students can improve. However, in a range of academic subjects, marking and assessment practices are not strong enough to enable students to develop analytical and study skills.

- Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Students receive appropriate and helpful information at the start of, and during, their courses. Initial assessments identify students' additional learning needs accurately. Learning support arrangements help students achieve their main learning goals, but do not always help students achieve intermediate English and mathematics qualifications.

- Students value the support they receive from their tutors and the additional qualifications they gain during tutorials. Good schemes of work for tutorial programmes provide a firm basis for the

provision. Teachers and tutors do not use the recently-developed electronic tracking systems to their full potential as they do not yet contain enough assessment data.

- Students enjoy using information and learning technology in their studies. They use laptop computers successfully in many lessons to access the college virtual learning environment. They upload assignments, complete on-line tests, use good quality worksheets and resources and communicate with each other and their teachers.

- Improving the quality of teaching is a high priority for managers and arrangements for observing teaching and learning are now more robust. However, high expectations of learners are currently insufficiently embedded across the college. Students in learning zones are too often chatting, listening to music or eating, and these behaviours are challenged insufficiently by college staff.

- The promotion of equality and diversity in the college is satisfactory. The college has provided training for staff and has embedded equality and diversity in schemes of learning. However, this training has yet to have a full impact on students' everyday classroom experience.

Science and mathematics Learning programmes for 16-18	Inadequate

- Too few students pass their qualifications and many do not make progress in line with their prior attainment. In too many lessons students are not challenged enough to work purposefully and the teachers are not sufficiently skilled in setting and ensuring high standards of classroom behaviour. Students often lose focus and take too long over individual or group tasks. A minority of students were even wearing headphones in lessons.

- Students' attendance rates have improved this academic year, but in intermediate mathematics lessons attendance remains very low. Many students arrive late. Attempts to improve punctuality have proved ineffective and consequently learning is disrupted for all students.

- In the least successful lessons the tasks set for students are insufficiently demanding. In a GCSE mathematics lesson, where most of the students had already achieved D grades, students were completing work well below that level. In contrast, there is some good teaching in advanced-level mathematics lessons where students work purposefully and effectively on appropriately challenging exercises.

- Science students benefit from good information and learning technologies in lessons. They use computer-based activities and simulations to good effect, particularly in group work. In a biology lesson, for example, students successfully viewed a short animation to help them understand the complexities of enzyme specificity.

- Students also benefit from the availability of computers in the library and the learning zones. Teachers have updated their schemes of work to include opportunities to direct students to resources such as 'MyMaths' and 'Bring On The Maths' that can help them in their learning.

- Students' grammar and spelling in their written work are satisfactory, but often the presentation of their work is messy and disorganised. Students work safely in the laboratories but do not always systematically record their findings.

- Teachers do not always use directed questions to check students' understanding, to challenge them further and to stimulate debate. In addition, few teachers use resources such as mini-whiteboards to ensure all the students are thinking about, and responding to, the topics being discussed.

- Assessment to monitor learning requires improvement and managers have recently introduced monthly formal assessments of students' progress. This is beginning to have a positive impact and students are now more confident of their progress towards their target grades. However,

the resulting action plans for students are often not detailed or specific enough to help them improve.

- Students value the tutorial support they receive. They make progress towards gaining personal, social and employability skills through key skills programmes. However, scheduled individual meetings between tutors and students are too infrequent to track progress effectively.

Art, design and media Learning programmes for 16-18	Requires improvement

- The majority of students in art, design and media now achieve pass grades, although not enough students achieve high grades due, in part, to the quality of teaching. Too few students make the progress expected of them compared to their qualifications on entry.

- Students enjoy their studies and appreciate the support they receive from teachers. Students whose work is below standard are required to attend additional workshops in order to help them improve. These workshops are very effective in helping students complete assignments and they appreciate the extra help they receive.

- Teachers encourage students to raise their ambition and to strive for high achievement by setting themselves high targets. Students' aspirations have also been raised by a programme of inspirational visiting speakers and trips.

- Teachers plan lessons well and assignments are interesting and relevant to students' lives. Most teachers assess students' work assiduously and provide detailed feedback which helps students improve their work. In a minority of cases, however, feedback is scant and students do not know how to bring about improvement.

- Where teaching is good, curiosity and imagination are stimulated well and teachers work hard to make sure the student develop new skills and understanding. The standard of work is good and students develop refined analytical skills. In one class, students found drawing their own image reflected in a steel plate challenging but rewarding. The drawings they produced were perceptive, well crafted and led to good-humoured remarks as students recognised each other's distorted features.

- Not all teachers challenge and excite students or engage them sufficiently in learning. Lessons are slow and students lose interest and fail to make good progress. Good practice is not sufficiently shared to extend continuously teachers' repertoire of teaching methods and activities.

- Studios are well equipped and students use modern information technology and social media proficiently. Teachers provide helpful blogs which enable students to access teaching and learning materials to extend their learning or to catch up. Students in art and design manipulate imagery imaginatively and produce interesting electronic sketch books. Film studies students compile comprehensive on-line notebooks providing them with up-to-date, easily accessible information.

- Students are actively encouraged to extend their understanding of key concepts and relevant terminology. For example, media students routinely compile glossaries of terms and important definitions. In addition, art and design students develop sound business skills by running craft stalls and selling Christmas goods.

- Students receive helpful advice and guidance at interview and are made aware of the demands of their course. Careers and higher education information is comprehensive, enabling students to make informed decisions for their future. A significant number of students progress to further or higher education.

- Students draw on a range of artists, film makers, genres and cultures to usefully extend their understanding of equality and diversity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement

- Senior managers and governors have undertaken a range of initiatives to improve outcomes for students and improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some early signs of improvement are evident, but students' achievements have not improved. Some teaching teams, such as art, design and media, have shown appropriate urgency in implementing improvements. However, it is too soon to judge whether teaching and learning initiatives have brought about sustainable improvements.

- Governors regularly receive and analyse performance data, but are less clear about how to challenge standards of teaching and learning. Senior managers and governors confidently state their commitment to make the college a vibrant learning community and the first choice for young people of Croydon. However, whilst this vision is understood by most staff, it is not yet apparent in the standards achieved.

- In the last fifteen months managers have put in place strategies to tackle deficiencies in organisation and quality assurance. These include restructuring the college and revising the curriculum offer. As a consequence, approximately a quarter of teaching staff are new.

- Professional learning communities and learning and teaching forums have been developed and have focused closer attention on the need to improve the quality of teaching across the college. In addition, staff now have good access to, and support for, professional development specifically aimed at improving teaching and learning.

- Managers have improved performance management and appraisals for staff. However, despite including the outcomes from lesson observations, the evidence base for teachers' appraisals is often narrow and does not result in further action when targets are not met.

- Leaders and managers have significantly revised quality assurance arrangements. The lesson observation system has been improved and self-assessment is now more robust. Management information and data such as students' attendance, retention and achievements are now more accurate and accessible, but not all subject teams use this information effectively.

- Teachers, managers and governors are fully involved at each stage of review and self-evaluation and the self-assessment report is generally accurate, addressing most of the key issues facing the college. However, course team reviews are of variable quality and the urgency placed on actions to secure improvement is not always sufficient.

- In 2012, managers set targets for students' retention, achievements, value added, enrolments and progression. None of these targets was fully achieved. Currently, targets are monitored much more rigorously and there are some signs of improvement. However, significant areas for improvement identified at the last inspection still remain.

- Students can choose to study a good range of academic and vocational courses at advanced level, but some group sizes are small. The number of students enrolling onto AS courses dropped significantly, in part due to more stringent entry requirements. Links with partner organisations and local employers are limited, but work placements for vocational students are well established.

- Actions taken by teachers and managers have narrowed the achievement gaps for some groups of students, but not all. The promotion of equality and diversity is central to the college's ethos and a recently reviewed equality policy is in place. Although staff receive training, equality and diversity are not sufficiently embedded within teaching and learning.

- Teachers and managers make good use of students' views. Students are represented on the governing body, the student council is strong and learner views are regularly used in course reviews. Resources are good and the college building provides an excellent learning environment. However, learning zones are not always well managed; they can be noisy and difficult to work in.

- Students come from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds and many travel some distance from Croydon to attend the college. The college provides a safe welcoming environment and the number of exclusions is low. Bullying and discrimination are dealt with effectively and last year disruptive incidents reduced considerably.

- Arrangements for safeguarding are given high priority and the single central record is comprehensive and up to date. Staff, and a named governor, receive appropriate training and updating. Health and safety issues are reinforced extensively for students using laboratories, workshops, the sports centre and the theatre.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Coulsdon College		

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Science and mathematics	4
Art, design and media	3

Provider details

Coulsdon College	
Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16-18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1,289
	Part-time: N/A
Principal/CEO	Mr David Goodlet
Date of previous inspection	October 2011
Website address	www.coulsdon.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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	19	1	113	2	954	48	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	-	-	-	-	-	-

Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A
Number of community learners	N/A
Number of employability learners	N/A
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A

Additional socio-economic information

Coulsdon College is a sixth form college situated in the south of the London Borough of Croydon, on the Surrey border. The college provides courses in 11 of the 15 subject areas and most students take advanced vocational, A level and AS courses. Science and mathematics, visual and performing arts, languages and literature, and business, administration and law recruit the highest numbers of students each year. Well over half the students come from minority ethnic heritages; a proportion well above that in Coulsdon, and much more typical of south Croydon. Indeed, the majority of the students live in south Croydon and face long journeys on public transport to get to the college. GCSE attainment in local schools has improved to around national averages. However, many of the students at Coulsdon College do not have A* to C grades passes in English and mathematics when they enter the college.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Alex Falconer HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three 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 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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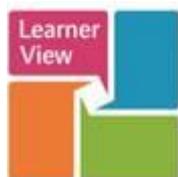
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