

City of Bath College

Inspection dates		28 January-1 February 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

General further education college

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes for students, and the effectiveness of leadership and management are all good. Students make good and better progress in lessons and develop valuable vocational, personal and employability skills that prepare them well for their future careers; their progression into further study or employment is good.
- The college provides a harmonious and purposeful environment for learning, with excellent facilities and resources that provide real-work environments for students and enable them to develop high-level industry-standard skills and commercial awareness.
- Governors, leaders and managers have made good progress in tackling areas for improvement from the previous inspection and have been very successful in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through an excellent programme of performance management, continuing professional development and observations of teaching, learning and assessment.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough students stay to the end of their programme or reach their learning goals.
- The quality of lessons and assessment is not yet of a consistently high standard throughout the college.
- The development and teaching of functional skills in English and mathematics are not sufficiently consistent to enable all students to benefit and improve their future employment prospects.
- Sufficient challenge for all students and the systematic checking of their learning are not yet established firmly in all curriculum areas.
- The impact of management in subject areas across the college is not yet at the level evident in the areas where it has been most effective.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the sharing of outstanding practice in teaching, learning and assessment to improve outcomes for students still further.
- Ensure that planning for teaching, learning and assessment in lessons is always rigorous and precise, so that learning activities are more consistent in meeting the needs of individual students fully and in providing appropriate levels of pace and challenge.
- Integrate opportunities for students to participate actively throughout lessons by using a range of strategies to stimulate their thinking, involvement and contribution from an early stage.
- Build on teachers’ training in incorporating equality and diversity themes into teaching, learning and assessment, to enable all students to gain a better understanding of equality and diversity beyond their immediate experience.
- Make sure that teachers know and understand how to prepare for, and teach, functional skills in English and mathematics, so that:
 - students are consistently motivated and interested and can apply their knowledge and practise the techniques in the context of their vocational learning
 - students achieve well and improve their capabilities for gaining employment or progression.
- Develop a more complete management overview of performance in functional skills to enable more thorough monitoring and evaluation of performance across the range of subject areas.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. Students make good progress overall in lessons and develop valuable vocational and personal skills that prepare them well for their next steps into employment or further study. The importance the college places on employability skills is particularly evident in the high standards of students’ practical work in real-work environments in the college, and in their commercial awareness. For example, students working for clients in catering and hospitality reflect with insight and maturity on the skills they have developed, such as team working and working to deadlines in a busy kitchen environment. They show a clear understanding of how their own performance affects the team’s efforts to meet the needs of their customers and to ensure their business is successful. In many areas, students take additional qualifications that enhance their employability and broaden their range of skills.
- The proportion of students completing their courses has improved significantly since the last inspection, although it remains broadly average for students on full-time courses. The college demonstrates that it is tackling successfully its long-standing challenge of ensuring that students stay to the end of their course. Most apprentices complete their programmes, developing valuable commercial skills, and the large majority do so by the planned end date. Employers are rightly appreciative of apprentices’ contribution to their businesses.
- Students frequently demonstrate strong leadership and problem-solving skills, with the skilful encouragement of their teachers. Many students make very good use of information and learning technology (ILT) using, for example, tablet computers or mobile phones, to learn independently of their teachers. In a lesson for apprentices in refrigeration, apprentices were making very good use of mobile phone ‘apps’, as used in the field by refrigeration engineers, to complete complex conversion calculations.
- A high proportion of students progress to higher level study within the college, irrespective of their starting points. Many students continue to university or employment at the end of their

course; in visual arts, many students gain places at prestigious universities. The college has taken an innovative approach to developing employability skills, evident in the partnerships it has established with local businesses and other organisations, and in the development of real-work environments in first class facilities in the college. For example, the college has established 'production houses' in visual and performing arts and media to provide additional opportunities for work experience in this industry.

- The achievement gap between male and female students is reducing significantly and is now small. Students who receive additional learning support complete their qualifications successfully at a level at least in line with their peers. Students often demonstrate good skills in English and mathematics in lessons; however, this skills development is not always reflected in formal qualifications in these subjects.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment, both at college and in the workplace, are well planned and enable many students to make good progress. Students enjoy their lessons and feel particularly motivated to succeed when their teachers demonstrate high expectations of them. Teachers accelerate students' learning through a range of timed activities which provide good pace and suitable challenge for students, so that they learn quickly and effectively.
- Group profiles include important information about students' abilities and characteristics, standards of work and target grades. Teachers usually use group profiles to good effect when planning lessons, so that they design activities well to meet the needs of individual students. Many teachers make good use of the profiles as a key source of reference in order to extend the knowledge, skills and understanding of each student in the group.
- Teaching and learning are largely good or outstanding. Lessons which are at least good start crisply and have clear objectives which are relevant and sharply focused. Activities are suitably challenging for students of all abilities, the pace of learning is brisk and motivating and students participate fully. Students make good progress and teachers check their learning frequently and securely in a number of different ways. These include skilful questioning, or sometimes using mobile technology and other methods which are enjoyable and appealing to students.
- Apprentices and many college-based students develop good skills for employment including good practical skills, good awareness of commercial and industrial requirements and how to work safely. Most students benefit considerably from undertaking work experience or volunteering activities which enhance their personal, social and practical skills. The college's hairdressing and beauty therapy salons and hospitality restaurants are very popular with the public and provide students with good opportunities for developing occupational skills.
- Teachers draw on their valuable industrial experience to make learning relevant to the professional workplace. Students develop professional ways of working, including their work with customers and clients.
- In weaker lessons teachers do not always use group profiles effectively to tailor activities to the needs of each student and to ensure that students make good progress. The pace of learning is too slow and the checking of learning is not secure or frequent enough. Teachers tend to talk too much in these lessons; as a result, students are not sufficiently involved in activities and remain passive.
- The development of students' skills in English and mathematics is not effective enough, although there are good examples of where specialist vocabulary, more complex language, spelling, grammar and punctuation are explored and corrected effectively in lessons and marked work. Opportunities to relate functional skills to students' courses are often missed.
- Many students develop skills for independent learning very effectively. The routine use of ILT in many lessons enhances learning. Students often make excellent use of the latest technology when researching and recording information and completing assignments, for example they

make good use of the virtual learning environment (VLE). Students monitor their own progress online and use social media highly productively to communicate with teachers and peers.

- College staff assess students' skills in English, mathematics and a range of practical activities at an early stage of their course and provide prompt support when needed. Teachers, tutors and support staff ensure that students with academic or personal difficulties receive good support both in lessons and outside the classroom. Students attend their lessons regularly and absences are followed-up quickly.
- Many students are set challenging goals and are aware of their progress towards meeting them. Feedback during individual tutorials and on written work is usually well focused, detailed and helpful. It usually highlights what students need to do to improve their work and achieve a higher grade, including attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation, but it does not always provide sufficient information about how they can do this.
- However, feedback on written work is sometimes too brief or insufficiently constructive and does not always correct spelling effectively. Marked work is usually returned to students quickly but, on occasion, it is late. The practical assessment of students' work in college and the workplace is frequent and feedback helps them to improve their skills.
- Most specialist accommodation, equipment and resources are of a good or excellent standard and have a very positive effect on students' learning.
- Students receive good and timely information, advice and guidance before starting their courses and in preparation for progressing to employment or into higher education. Students are made aware of coherent progression routes available to them for the next steps in their careers. Induction helps students to settle into their courses well and to become familiar with the college ethos and requirements.
- Students and staff treat one another with respect. The promotion of equality and diversity is variable with many good examples of aspects of diversity being explored and integrated well into lessons. However, teachers do not always make use of relevant opportunities for the exploration of equality and diversity themes in lessons and planning for these themes is insufficient in some lessons.

Health and social care and early years

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Outcomes at advanced level in both health and social care and childcare were poor but are improving, as are students' achievements at foundation and intermediate level. Students' attendance and punctuality are good. Those students who complete their courses successfully progress into further learning or employment.
- Students make adequate progress in lessons. Teachers' planning of lessons is of an inconsistent standard, although all teachers pay particular attention to matching the level of work to the individual needs of students using detailed group profiles that show the particular support needs of each student.
- In the better lessons teachers use questioning techniques effectively to challenge students of all abilities. Students make good progress in these lessons. For example, in one lesson students brilliantly presented findings on aspects of anatomy and physiology to the class in small groups using presentation software. The remainder of the group extended their own knowledge and learned new words and meanings relating to working in healthcare.
- The teaching of functional skills in English and mathematics by specialist teachers is highly effective. Students are highly motivated in lessons and teachers monitor students' progress

closely. The development of students’ English functional skills is good in nearly all vocational lessons and closely linked to skills for work in health and social care and childcare. Students’ development of mathematical functional skills in vocational lessons requires improvement in order to relate effectively mathematics to childcare and health and social care. For example, too few students are sufficiently skilled at calculating ratios and the measurement of medication to enable them to progress into their chosen careers or further learning.

- Students are unable to work at their own pace and independently in many lessons. Teachers provide too few signposts to relevant resources to encourage students to study independently. Students’ understanding of how to use the VLE is weak, and the resources available are insufficient to enable students to keep up with their work and to extend their knowledge and skills.
- Teachers assist students to develop good employability skills by linking theory to the practice students gain on work placement; in addition, students complete an award in work skills. In mock interviews students develop the confidence to demonstrate their breadth of learning and be successful in interviews. External speakers enliven the curriculum and make it more relevant to work. Work placements for students are of a very high standard. Monitoring and assessment of practical tasks within the placement are timely and well recorded by a dedicated work placement coordinator.
- Assessment of students’ assignments is thorough and encourages students to give more detail and to link theory to practical work in health and social care or childcare and produce a higher standard of work. However, there is not always enough ongoing assessment to provide full support to students to improve their work.
- Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory, enabling students to choose the course in relation to their long-term career aims but are insufficient as students progress through the programme. Tutorials are infrequent and therefore some students are unsure of their progress.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in the classroom requires improvement, although it meets the minimum requirements of the curriculum. Teachers do not celebrate and recognise sufficiently the rich diversity of students in this subject area at the college to develop students’ understanding further. Misconceptions and inaccuracies in students’ work go unchallenged.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+ Apprenticeships	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and result in good outcomes for students and apprentices alike. Teachers plan well and their good vocational knowledge and experience enables learners to develop commercial standards skills rapidly. Students have a wide variety of clients so that they can practise important skills such as the colouring of long hair or nail art.
- The commercial training salons in the subject area are outstanding and enable students to develop high-level skills to industry standards. Modern reception areas support very good training in customer care and retail skills and knowledge. Training sessions run by both employers and the college have contributed to the improvement of apprentices’ success in hairdressing.
- Students value teachers’ expertise, and their caring approach supports students particularly well in practical sessions. The majority of lessons have a challenging pace which keeps students focused and engaged in work tasks. Learners develop more advanced skills in cutting, colouring and body massage which prepare them well for jobs in the industry. Teachers make good use of questioning to check learning, but do not always involve all students, so the learning and progress of a minority go insufficiently checked.

- The hairdressing and beauty therapy department staff test all students for their appropriate level of learning. Teachers take into consideration their prior learning and experience in hairdressing and beauty therapy. This has improved students’ focus and commitment. Attendance is good on all courses.
- Students have good access to ILT, which is improving their learning and progress. The introduction of tablet computers in a pilot programme has been successful in developing students’ learning independently of their teachers and in providing them with additional challenge. Students use the college’s VLE widely, which has improved communication and target setting.
- Assessment is comprehensive as a result of a wide variety of clients with varying needs. Salon-based assessors provide additional assessments for some learners which is accelerating their progress. Students complete comprehensive client consultation documents and treatment plans and receive detailed written feedback on these which helps them to improve.
- Frequent and regular visits to apprentices and the effective sharing of information with employers assist learners in making rapid progress. Learners receive very clear and constructive feedback on their performance and agree clear next steps for development. However, the current format of the documentation does not allow these targets to be recorded formally in writing for learners’ later reference.
- The teaching of mathematics and English is too general and does not make best use of vocational examples to illustrate and enhance learning. For example, although students learn about ratios and volume when mixing products in hairdressing and beauty therapy lessons, this learning is not linked to lessons in English and mathematics, so that opportunities to reinforce this learning are lost.
- Learning support inside and outside the classroom is good. Learners speak highly of the support they receive which has increased their skills in reading and writing and improved their confidence and readiness to progress to higher level courses.
- Advice and guidance are good. Support and care for learners’ individual and personal concerns are prompt and effective. Learners feel safe.
- Equality and diversity themes are included in lessons, for example in the discussion of differences in European and African-Caribbean hair and in beauty treatments for men and women. Learners’ attitudes and behaviours towards clients with physical disabilities are discussed thoroughly to ensure the same high level of client care appropriate to their needs. However, teachers do not plan formally and systematically when introducing these topics into their lessons in order to ensure clear and measurable outcomes for learners.

Sport Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, resulting in good learning and progress for current students, whereas in previous years students’ achievements have been weak. Attendance is now high and standards of work are now good. Students are making good progress towards achieving their qualifications. Progression to employment and higher levels of study are outstanding. Students have good coaching skills shown in their providing well-structured sessions with confidence to their peers.
- Staff set high expectations of students, rigorously monitoring individual progress towards targets based on qualifications on entry. They identify quickly students at risk of underperforming and put into place appropriate intervention strategies. The vast majority of students are on target to achieve or exceed their target grade. Students facing challenging

personal circumstances benefit from excellent care and guidance from the college's support services.

- Planning for learning is good. Teachers develop activities which build effectively upon prior learning, providing stimulating experiences that challenge students to achieve their full potential. For example, in a number of lessons, diverse groups of students displayed great confidence in using complex language in explaining the psychological concepts of the different types of motivation and using anatomical terms of motion when describing movement.
- The use of interactive and mobile technologies motivates students and enhances their engagement with their learning and assessment. For example, students used their mobile phones to send answers to the board and made a video telling the story of glucose from digestion to muscle contraction, as part of their assessment. In a basketball session, students took photographs of the different phases of the set shot to outline the key coaching points.
- Assessment is highly effective and has a sharp focus on roles within the sports industry. Assessment is personalised to suit individual needs and students are supported well in improving their work. A voice and video application provides exceptionally high quality and detailed feedback that students value greatly, clearly identifying what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers are well qualified and maintain their subject expertise through involvement in sport outside the college either coaching, competing or leading fitness classes. Their passion for sport shines through and they make positive role models for students. However, students currently have limited opportunities to maintain their participation in competitive sport in the college, an issue which the college has well-developed plans to resolve.
- Enrolment procedures are applied consistently, so that students are very aware of the demands of their course and can make an informed choice. Students build friendships early in the course through outdoor activity team building trips during induction which support them in the transition from school. The development of sports science and sports coaching pathways meets students' needs and interests very well, and the vast majority are now staying on their course.
- The work skills qualifications, work placement experience and a focus in lessons on highlighting progression opportunities help students to develop good employability skills. The college plans to re-introduce the opportunity for students to achieve coaching badges, leadership awards and other industry-specific qualifications, valuable for employment. The development of English and mathematics is inconsistent. Teachers do not always plan learning sufficiently well to make use of, and reinforce, naturally occurring opportunities to improve students' skills and knowledge in these subjects.
- Teachers are skilful in extending students' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity. In a sports injury lesson, students made excellent contributions to a discussion on the socio-economic implications of the cost of expensive footwear and the implications of blistering. Students demonstrate high levels of mutual respect with teachers and peers and report that they feel safe in the college.

Visual arts

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Students produce very high standards of work. Drawing underpins and suffuses all student work and, as a result, students use drawing techniques with fluency and confidence. Sketchbooks are rich and lively and characterised by excellent research and good experimentation using a range of media with ideas explored both systematically and experimentally. Final images and products are refined and professional and

presented to a very high standard. Students annotate and evaluate their work well and acquire an excellent set of well-rounded skills.

- External partnerships enable very good links to the workplace. Partners set commercially-based assignments, and students engage in relevant work experience, increasing their employability. For example, the local mayor's office commissioned graphics students to design a corporate Christmas card. Through a good work skills qualification, students learn how to apply for jobs, present information professionally and prepare for job interviews. All students study additional courses enhancing their skills and preparation for higher education or employment.
- Teachers are well qualified, knowledgeable and enthusiastic and have appropriately high expectations of students. Visiting staff enrich the curriculum with current and relevant industry expertise. Lessons are well planned and assignments are carefully conceived and designed. Project briefs are very well laid out with inspiring images and good relevant tasks for students with excellent research links to follow up. Outstanding facilities, resources and equipment support the production of very high standards of work.
- In most lessons students make very good progress and learn well, both independently and from others through group work and discussing work in reviews. Lessons are well organised; students are engrossed in their work. Teachers ask probing open-ended questions eliciting very good responses from students that often engender thought-provoking discussions; however, teachers do not always employ more probing questions to challenge students further and extend their understanding.
- Video and sound clips enhance learning. Students value excellent course-level social media sites and use them frequently for notifications, to upload images and to refer to websites links posted by both staff and peers, developing their critical approach well.
- In the very few weaker lessons, students' work does not reach the same high standards. For example, in a design lesson students relied too much on secondary source material and were slow to develop ideas. In a few lessons, key points and themes raised and discussed are not captured by students through note taking or image making to enable the development of their work efficiently.
- Induction is highly effective and students settle into courses well with initial projects acquainting students with course requirements swiftly. Comprehensive group profiles are available but these are not consistently used well to challenge more capable students so that they make better progress. Students are very well supported in lessons, in individual tutorials, and additional learning support is very good.
- A revised assessment system is clear, consistent and robust. Internal verification is thorough and all staff use a common approach to assessing work. Students are provided with good verbal feedback in lessons and summative assessment so that they know how to improve their work. Students know how well they are progressing and can re-submit work to improve grades. Target setting is integrated into coursework and assessment practice assisting the improvement of students' work very well.
- Students develop good skills in English and mathematics. In a functional skills class, students learned how to lay out a business letter to a professional standard. In history of art and design, grammar and spelling are routinely corrected.
- Initial advice is good and staff complete an effective initial vocational assessment so when students start their courses staff already know them well. The interview process is thorough and students are guided onto appropriate courses at the right level. The majority of students progress to further study, employment or higher education, often to prestigious universities.
- Students are exposed to, and explore, a diverse range of artists and designers work. They consider wider issues and topics well; for example, in textiles, students question conventional body types in the fashion industry and graphics students complete a 'designing with a conscience' assignment. Good relationships and mutual trust foster learning and students feel completely safe in college.

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

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. This is reflected in the outcomes for learners on many courses. Students achieve at a higher rate at entry level, but achievement is particularly poor in functional skills English at higher levels. Poor assessment planning in 2011/12 contributed to a decline in functional skills achievement for many students. This situation has been resolved with students completing their assessments in a more planned and timely manner. The current standard of students' work in functional skills is satisfactory.
- Intervention to improve performance on some functional skills courses has been successful. However, this success is not shared across the provision. College leaders and managers are committed to change the pace and the impact of improvement by improving the skills of teaching staff, access to more timely and accurate management information and the ability of managers to interpret and use the data to develop and implement effective plans for improvement.
- Progress in lessons is satisfactory for the majority of students; however, the students on the work-related courses such as Pathway to Employment and Training make excellent progress and return to college for further education and training.
- In the better lessons, effective planning ensures learning activities meet closely students' individual needs. Teachers provide lively and imaginative lessons using interactive technology to interest and motivate learners. Good rapport between students and tutors in most lessons creates a positive learning environment to challenge students to succeed. In one lesson, a tutor encouraged students to develop further their writing skills by choosing the most challenging exercise from the wide range of writing tasks provided.
- Where teaching is stronger, the teachers use information technology effectively to engage students, particularly the pre-entry students, in quizzes, matching words and individual research. In other lessons, although good interactive resources are available, they are not used fully. Too frequently their use is limited to the display of learning objectives and reviews at the end of the lesson. Staff and students make very little use of online functional skills resources to extend functional skills learning independently or in lessons.
- In weaker lessons learning activities are poorly structured. Learning is less personalised in the topics chosen and teachers do not exploit opportunities to engage students by drawing on their experience, interests or prior knowledge. Some students are not encouraged to take an active part and therefore make slower progress. Some of the more able students are inactive for significant periods of time, resulting in poor behaviour by some younger students.
- Verbal feedback from teachers is motivational, supportive and, in most cases, developmental. However, teachers' feedback on written work tends to be descriptive and non-developmental and hampers the development of students' understanding of how to make improvements. Teachers do not always accurately mark students' work, leaving grammatical mistakes uncorrected. Tutors do not sufficiently develop students' independence by enabling them to assess their own work or that of their peers. The sporadic nature of the individual tutorial provision means that assessment and monitoring of students' standard of work and progress against the learning targets are not always sufficiently effective.
- The development of students' employability skills and awareness of the world of work is better on pre-entry and work-related courses than on other courses. The vocational taster course on Pathway to Employment and Return to Work, and campaigns such as 'Have a Go' make a significant contribution to helping those previously disengaged from education, training or work and to improving the skills of unemployed adults. The development of students' employability

skills improves progression opportunities for students on higher level courses, although bespoke enrichment activities such as work placement, volunteering and visits to the workplace are limited.

- Information, advice and guidance and support provided at pre-interview and interview are very good. Effective initial and diagnostic assessments of students' English ensure that students are placed on the right level course with a clear identification of their learning needs. However, tutors do not always make systematic use of these results to plan effective individualised teaching, learning and assessment. The individual learning plans focus too much on mapping activities to the Skills for Life and functional skills descriptors, and not enough on personalised targets and assessment methods.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Tutors do not exploit sufficiently naturally occurring opportunities to promote equality and diversity in lessons and develop further students' understanding. However, in one very successful lesson, the sensitive and considered choice of resources and activities to produce a facial mask indicated positive promotion of equality and diversity through respect for the cultural and spiritual values of students.

Business	Good
Apprenticeships	

- Good teaching, learning and assessment are enabling learners to develop valuable employability skills through a balanced combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. Learners add value to their organisations through up-to-date business knowledge, for example in introducing systems into their workplace to improve the running of the business, such as accounting software and useful interactive data analysis spreadsheets.
- Learners are supported to progress to advanced level qualifications, with extra responsibilities negotiated with their employers. For example, learners at intermediate level, responsible for meeting and greeting customers at reception, have progressed to an advanced level qualification with the support of their employers. They now have extra responsibilities, for example preparing the weekly staff rotas and sales reports. Learners who are capable of doing extra units from a higher level course are enabled to do so which further improves their transferable employability skills.
- Supportive, very frequent visits from suitably qualified and experienced assessors are enabling learners to complete their qualifications on time and to make rapid progress. At intermediate level, learners exceed the expectations of their qualification by doing an extra technical certificate. For example, if they are doing the business administration module, they also do the technical certificate for the customer service module and vice versa. However, assessors do not always make best use of opportunities provided during the visits to challenge learners to exceed minimum requirements. For example, learners at advanced level are asked to gather minutes of meetings as evidence for their portfolio without the encouragement to practise their skills in actually taking minutes of meetings themselves.
- Assessors provide thorough and constructive feedback so that learners are very clear about the evidence they need to collate to meet the requirements for the course. They use the electronic portfolio software well to set clear targets. Learners are easily able to identify gaps where evidence needs to be submitted or modified, based on the feedback they receive. They are encouraged to upload relevant evidence electronically in preparation for the assessor visits in order to make more effective use of time during visits. Additional resources on the VLE enable good support for learners in their independent learning from home and to catch up on sessions they have missed, so they complete their programmes on time.

- Tailored support enables learners to make rapid progress relative to their starting points. Learners' portfolios are completed fully, with individual learning plans showing clear targets and appropriate personal information about learners indicating their needs for support. For example, learners with English language needs have been given extra time, with support, for completion of the advanced level qualification. Learners are clear about their personal goals for doing the business apprenticeships and value the opportunities that the programme provides for potential careers in business management or administration.
- Success in functional skills in English and mathematics is good and the majority of learners pass their tests first time. However, opportunities for learners to practise these skills in the workplace are not always recognised, for example communicating formally and informally, problem solving and using e-mails and the internet safely.
- Learners have benefited from improved information, advice and guidance that have ensured they are on the right programme to meet their personal and career aims and have enabled more frequent assessment in the workplace.
- Learners at risk of failing to complete their apprenticeship are supported well. For example, learners who found it difficult to settle into the roles provided by their apprenticeship programme were transferred to a department where they felt more comfortable and inspired to complete their qualification through effective negotiations with their employers.
- Learners express their skills in communicating with customers from a diverse range of backgrounds well and they are confident in dealing with difficult situations, such as responding to the needs of disappointed customers. Most learners have good awareness of the relevance of equality and diversity in the workplace, for example the maternity rights of women and the importance of making a workplace accessible to all. However, there is scope to develop further the skills of learners by enabling them to apply their knowledge to a wider range of situations.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership group, with the valuable support of the governors, has raised standards and outcomes through a very successful quality improvement strategy. An excellent and very successful programme has brought together performance management, continuing professional development and observations of teaching and learning, resulting in better teaching, learning and assessment across the college. Prompt interventions have seen swift improvements this year in some 'problem' areas, including some outstanding advancements in teachers' professional practice and much improved outcomes for students.
- The revised performance management system has been highly effective in improving teaching and learning and tackling the poor performance of individual teachers. It has raised the importance of teaching and learning across the college, recognising and rewarding good teaching. As a result, teachers and support staff alike welcome the professional and constructive feedback on their performance from observation, and the prompt and helpful professional development that follows systematically.
- Teachers are appropriately qualified. All teachers have appropriate and distinct targets to improve their teaching and undertake appropriate actions to improve further in order to become or remain outstanding.
- The system for observing teaching, learning and assessment is strong and thorough. It has led to prompt actions to tackle weaknesses in courses identified through the thorough risk assessment process. The system is positive; the Professional Improvement Programme, action research opportunities and other incentives reward and recognise good and outstanding performance, while giving the appropriate support and encouragement to those teachers performing less effectively.

- The college has been innovative in using the views of students to improve teaching, learning and assessment, such as through training and reference to students when making decisions about the appointment of staff. The lessons of those appointed through this process have in college observations been assessed as good.
- Management in subject areas is sound and the appointment of some new managers is making a positive difference to students. The management development programme is helping them develop. However, consistency in bringing about improvements and ensuring good and better outcomes in all areas of the college is not yet secure.
- The self-assessment process is robust and involves staff as best suits their roles. It identifies clearly key strengths and areas for improvement, with a maturity of judgement that demonstrates a sound self-critical approach. Monitoring by the senior leadership group is appropriate and there is clear follow through and follow up in the quality improvement plan.
- The governors are well informed and know when to challenge and to ask the right questions. Through the Quality and Standards Committee, they monitor carefully the outcomes for learners and the progress in improving teaching, learning and assessment across the college. They have supported the progressive and impressive investment in resources and building that have helped to raise pride and reputation in the college among students and community.
- The college has tackled appropriately the areas for improvement since its last inspection. For example, the strong attention to increasing the employability skills of its students has led to closer attention to improving their functional skills in English and mathematics and the creation of very effective links with employers and local businesses. These links build on the wide range of supportive and productive local and regional partnerships that the college has maintained since its last inspection.
- The college has successfully implemented a vocational curriculum that meets students' needs and local employment priorities, with good progression routes that benefit students, bringing more higher education work locally to their students. Its active participation in the Bath Educational Trust and Bath and North East Somerset Learning and Skills Partnership is benefiting students through the resources, wider opportunities and work experience provided.
- The centralised planning and promotion of equality and diversity are good. However, teachers do not always take up relevant opportunities in lessons to capture the essence and effect of equality and diversity on daily lives. Several creative initiatives have resulted in students taking the lead in promoting aspects such as understanding the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and in appointing the college chaplain to support all students. Students have high expectations of staff fostering equality and bringing appreciation of diversity into their lessons as it is appropriate to the situation. This reinforces the college's commitment in maintaining its highly inclusive approach.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. It is comprehensive and its promotion among staff and students has resulted in an ethos of mutual respect where there is almost no intimidatory behaviour and any such activity is quickly dealt with.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

City of Bath 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	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	3
Early years and playwork	3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Sport	2
Visual Arts	1
Foundation English	3
Administration	2
Customer service	2

Provider details

City of Bath 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: 1676
	Part-time: 3453
Principal/CEO	Mr Matt Atkinson
Date of previous inspection	January 2010
Website address	www.citybathcoll.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	104	26	365	47	919	236	0	0
Part-time	175	258	126	988	51	1505	0	6
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	139	100	33	35	0	4		
Number of learners aged 14-16	37							
Number of community learners	648							
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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Premier Training International ■ NGaged Training ■ Learning Curve 							

Additional socio-economic information

The City of Bath College is a medium-sized general further education college in the centre of Bath, in the local authority area of Bath and North-East Somerset. The city has a number of high-performing secondary schools and independent schools. GCSE pass rates at C or above are well above national averages. Bath is a prosperous area, but with areas of economic deprivation to the south west of the city. The area is strong in the creative industries: arts, crafts, media, design, software, architecture and engineering. In addition, the retail and tourism sectors, and financial and professional business services make very significant contributions to the local economy.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Russell Jordan HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six 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 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.

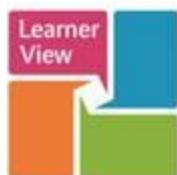
What inspection judgements mean

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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