

# The City of Liverpool College

## General further education college

<b>Inspection dates</b>		4–8 February 2013
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Inadequate-4</b>
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding-1
Outcomes for learners		Inadequate-4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Inadequate-4
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Inadequate-4

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This college is inadequate because:

- Too many students leave the college without achieving their qualification. Students' achievements vary significantly across different subjects and courses.
- Students' progress, particularly on advanced-level courses, is poor and most do not achieve their full potential. The proportion of students who continue to study at a higher level is low.
- Too many lessons are not good enough as they do not engage students in relevant and interesting activities and there are insufficient checks on their learning.
- Attendance is unacceptably low and too many lessons are disrupted by students arriving late.
- Initial assessment is not used appropriately to identify learners' starting points and enable sufficient planning to meet students' needs effectively and promptly.
- Target-setting is weak and many students are not given specific information by their teachers to help them to improve the quality of their work.
- Many students achieve high grades in GCSE English and mathematics. However, spelling and grammatical mistakes are not routinely corrected in subject areas.
- The new curriculum leadership is not yet effective in bringing about sustained improvements across the college.

#### This college has the following strengths:

- This is an inclusive, safe and friendly college with supportive teachers who respect students' views, including those who are most vulnerable.
- The college has aligned its vision for the curriculum with the city's skills needs with outstanding bespoke workplace training.
- The new leaders have an open and critical approach to identifying and communicating the significant issues underlying the historical underperformance at the college.
- Remedial actions by senior managers led to improvements in success rates in 2011/12 towards those of similar colleges.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of learning by ensuring that all teachers:
  - clearly communicate, reinforce and monitor the importance of students attending all lessons, arriving on time and being ready to learn
  - have high expectations of what their students can achieve and drive success throughout the college
  - plan lessons that include a range of activities that engage and motivate all students to learn new knowledge and skills
  - set regular and meaningful assessments that are marked promptly and provide sufficiently detailed and useful feedback to help students improve the quality of their work
  - ensure that students develop independent working and research skills by setting activities that involve work outside lessons, including the use of information and learning technology.
- Improve success rates on most courses by:
  - ensuring that all students have aspirational, clear and measurable targets so that progress towards achieving their full potential can be monitored
  - using data across the organisation to identify and take swift purposeful action to improve underperformance quickly and consistently.
- Ensure that management information is up-to-date, understood and used by managers at all levels to drive improvements.
- Develop quality assurance systems to monitor improvement actions and ensure they are having a positive impact.
- Implement robust performance management so that actions to improve standards are followed consistently by all staff and standards rise rapidly.

### Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Inadequate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Success rates have fallen in recent years to a very low level in 2010/11. Despite increases in 2011/12, mainly due to improvements in retention, they remain below those in similar colleges and too many students leave the college without achieving their qualification. Adult students achieve better outcomes than students aged 16 to 18.</li> <li>▪ In 2011/12 success rates for students aged 16 to 18 increased significantly at advanced level and slightly at intermediate level, but they both remain below average. Success rates at foundation level declined to an alarmingly low rate in 2011/12 primarily due to poor achievement on additional qualifications. Adult students on advanced-level courses achieve satisfactorily.</li> <li>▪ Student achievement varies considerably across different subjects. While there are some poor pass rates, most notably in AS subjects, there are good pass rates on vocational courses in</li> </ul>	

complementary therapies and in professional cookery, and on access provision. The proportion of students achieving high grades A\* to C is above average across all GCSE courses.

- Too many apprentices do not achieve their framework. In 2011/12 a higher proportion achieved in the planned time, but this remains below average. Apprentices' achievements are good in construction and engineering but exceptionally poor in social care. Learners on bespoke workplace training to meet the specific needs of an employer achieve exceptionally well.
- Many students do not make the progress expected of them based on their starting points. Poor attendance inhibits students' progress in most lessons. Students of all ages on advanced-level courses make inadequate progress. The proportion of students achieving high grades is low.
- Progression rates between levels of study are low. Progression from AS to A level is poor. The college is not aware of the destinations of many students, particularly those on entry-level courses and those that leave early.
- Inspection evidence indicates that too many students are not encouraged to be independent learners and develop research skills. Opportunities for, and participation in, course enrichment activities vary considerably with some good examples in catering and the arts.
- The standard of students' work on vocational courses generally meets awarding body requirements but too many students are not challenged sufficiently to realise their full potential. Opportunities to participate in work experience are too variable and are not always used effectively to develop realistic work skills.
- Apprentices demonstrate good levels of competencies in their specialist area. Almost all workplace learners, many of whom are completing bespoke specialist programmes that meet employers' needs, achieve their qualification.
- Students' behaviour around college and in lessons is good. However, poor punctuality is not challenged with sufficient rigour and this does not help eradicate poor habits and attitudes in order to prepare students for the future.
- The proportion of students achieving functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics decreased slightly in 2011/12. The majority of students studying GCSE mathematics and English achieve high grades. English and mathematical skills in vocational contexts are not developed consistently, and spelling and grammatical mistakes are not routinely corrected.
- The college is an inclusive and friendly learning environment. Students feel safe and value the support they get from their teachers. The achievement gaps of students from minority ethnic groups have been reduced; the most significant group of students with low achievements are White British male students aged 16 to 18. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Inadequate**

- The quality of teaching and learning is poor in too many lessons and this is reflected in inadequate outcomes for learners. A high proportion of lessons requires improvement and very few are outstanding. In many lessons teachers' expectations are too low and they do not carry out enough checks on students' learning. Too often learning is disrupted by late arrivals, absenteeism and students not being ready to participate in the lesson. Consequently, the progress of many students is poor.
- Despite recent support for teachers, planning for learning is not good. Teachers do not always establish clear objectives that determine what individual students will learn during the lesson or how they will be able to assess the learning that has occurred. All students complete the same task irrespective of their abilities; the more able become disinterested while others struggle to complete the activities.
- In many lessons not enough attention is given to the promotion of equality and diversity or the development of students' ability in English and mathematics. The planning of learning and assessment to enable apprentices to complete their frameworks is weak.

- In the better lessons teachers use a range of activities to engage students in relevant tasks. They use questions effectively to test students' knowledge and understanding, to consolidate their learning and to establish students' progress from their starting points. In these sessions, teachers challenge and support students to develop their responses to an appropriate level.
- Teachers make effective use of the college's well-equipped realistic work environments in catering, motor vehicle, and construction to develop students' vocational and employability skills to a good standard. In practical lessons in art, catering and bricklaying students receive very helpful oral feedback which enables them to perform to a good standard and grow in confidence. However, too many teachers praise students for providing basic answers and there is no further probing or development of these responses.
- In curriculum areas such as catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and the arts, teachers enrich and enhance learning through visits, competitions and industry placements. For example, catering and beauty therapy students successfully managed a hotel and spa in the Lake District for a weekend, a positive experience that successfully developed their skills.
- Assessment is too variable and is not used effectively to promote learning. Too often assignments are not marked or returned promptly to students. Teachers' feedback to students on their written work varies considerably from detailed comments that provide clear guidance on how they can improve to a few ticks and a grade. In most subjects insufficient attention is given to correcting spelling and grammatical mistakes. Apprentices' assessments are robust but not always flexible enough to allow learners to complete them when they have developed the specific competencies, thus restricting their progress.
- Initial assessment and subsequent planning to meet students' identified needs require improvement as the support to meet individual needs is not always implemented promptly. Around 400 students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments, receive and value individual support from well-qualified staff.
- The new individual tutorial and monitoring systems are not yet used consistently across the college. In several subject areas one-to-one tutorials are too infrequent. Students are not always given specific targets to help them progress. Progress reviews for work-based learners are ineffective, on- and off-the-job experiences are not always linked and targets set do not support apprentices to complete in the planned time. The quality and frequency of these activities are not adequately monitored by managers.
- Students receive appropriate support, advice and guidance to progress to further courses and to higher education but the rates of progression remain low. The support for learners entering employment and self-employment is insufficient.
- Information and learning technology resources are good. However, they are not used imaginatively to enhance or enrich learning and students on a few courses do not have sufficient access to computers. In too many subjects the virtual learning environment (VLE) needs improvement. Learning resource centres are well equipped and their staff are currently engaged in a project to improve usability by students.
- Some staff and many students have insufficient understanding of equality and diversity. Naturally occurring opportunities, particularly in the specific vocational context being studied and for apprentices in the workplace, are not used to enhance students' understanding.

## Health, social care and early years

### Learning programmes for 16-18

### Learning programmes for 19+

**Requires improvement**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are improving but are not yet consistently good. Students' outcomes have improved recently. In too many lessons students are not challenged sufficiently and their progress is unsatisfactory. A higher proportion of students are completing their course and the significantly underperforming Foundation Level course, delivered in the community centres, has been withdrawn.

- The quality of lessons is variable and the pace of learning is hampered by students' erratic attendance. In the better lessons students are actively engaged in a range of activities that help them to develop a good understanding of concepts such as complex family structures and the circulatory system. Teachers use skilful questioning to tease out more detailed student responses.
- In the weaker lessons teachers spend too long presenting ideas using PowerPoint; students have to sit for too long listening and they become disinterested. Teachers do not use enough directed questioning to check whether or not students have understood the key points. Classroom activities are not thought out sufficiently to help students link their theory work to their practical assignments and so their progress is slow.
- Teachers' planning of lessons does not always take into account the different abilities of students in the class. Students complete the same activity, which fails to challenge and encourage the more-able students as they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills of analysis and evaluation.
- Students have access to a good range of vocationally relevant resources but they are used more effectively by health and social care students than those studying childcare. The use of the VLE to support and enhance teaching and support learning is inconsistent.
- The variety of work placements in schools, nurseries and hospitals enables students to develop the skills needed to progress to employment. Some teachers make good use of their own occupational expertise to extend students' ability to link theory to workplace practices but this is not consistent across all lessons.
- The new tutorial system is not yet embedded and students are not benefiting from regular one-to-one meetings with their tutor. The majority of 16 to 18-year-old students are not aware of their personal targets or how well they are currently progressing. During their work placements students receive good support.
- Teachers' written feedback on individual assignments is very detailed and it enables students to improve their work. However, students' work is not consistently corrected for spelling and grammatical errors. Teachers compensate for low attendance by providing additional support outside class to help students to complete coursework.
- The development of students' English and mathematical skills is variable. In some lessons students develop their confidence and oral skills satisfactorily through presentations and in others they are encouraged to check and correct their spellings using dictionaries. In too many lessons teachers do not reinforce or develop students' English and mathematical skills in the vocational context.
- In the majority of lessons students listen attentively to each other and are respectful of others' opinions. Teachers consistently plan opportunities to develop students' awareness of individual rights and needs linked to different cultures and faiths, for example, how to meet the dietary needs of those with medical conditions. Students are aware of stereotypical behaviour and the negative effect this can have on self-esteem.

### **Motor vehicle Apprenticeships**

### **Requires improvement**

- The training and assessment of apprentices are not yet sufficiently good to ensure that a higher proportion achieve their framework in the planned time. The number of apprentices successfully achieving has declined over three years and is below that in similar colleges. Advanced apprentices' achievements are around the national average.
- Theory classes are not appropriately planned to ensure that all apprentices have a thorough understanding; tutors spend too long presenting information. Tutors too readily accept basic responses from learners and do not use questioning sufficiently to probe their depth of understanding and application to their job role. Attendance and punctuality are poor.

- Practical sessions are thoroughly planned and learners have good access to high-quality industry-standard resources to develop good skills in using machinery and tools. Tutors are knowledgeable and make good use of their industrial skills to contextualise learning in practical sessions and work-based assessments.
- The college's garage enables learners to work on customers' vehicles independently to a high standard. Learners enhance their skills through the good variety of tasks they complete in the workplace.
- The content of learners' portfolios and the standard of their written work are variable. Learners spend most of the time completing workbooks and there is little opportunity for them to develop their knowledge beyond the minimum requirements. Tutors correct spelling mistakes and the use of specific terminology satisfactorily.
- Learners adopt safe working practices in a range of motor-vehicle applications. For example, learners working on a range of body-paint activities follow safe working practices in the use of tools, applications and protective equipment.
- Learners receive good support from college staff while in college and at work. College staff are quick to respond to learners' requests for help and support. Employers are very supportive of their apprentices and value the support provided by college staff.
- The VLE includes a good range of resources and learning materials but it is not organised well enough to help learners access the information they require. Very few learners use the VLE to submit their assessments and do not benefit from more rapid online marking and feedback.
- The planning of the delivery of the framework is not sufficiently focused on completing functional skills early on in the programme. Consequently, too many apprentices do not achieve the framework within the planned time. The initial assessment of English and mathematical skills is appropriate in identifying and supporting apprentices with specific needs.
- Workplace reviews are frequent and involve the employers. All apprentices have an individual learning plan but the specific targets in these plans are not sufficiently challenging, detailed or linked to the work they are doing in their jobs to be able to monitor their progress between reviews.
- Advice and guidance are good. A high proportion of apprentices who complete their framework progress to the advanced-level programme. Very few young apprentices progress to the next level but those who do often make rapid progress and one apprentice will soon be the youngest MOT tester in the country. Progression from full-time college programmes into apprenticeships is poor.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Tutors do not fully develop learners' understanding in the context of the motor-vehicle industry. The checking and questioning of equality and diversity during reviews are superficial and do not explore the wider implications.

**Hairdressing and beauty therapy**  
**Learning programmes for 16-18**  
**Learning programmes for 19+**  
**Apprenticeships**

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies significantly and this is reflected in the wide range of student achievements across different courses. Most students achieve in line with those in similar colleges and they progress satisfactorily. The weakest teaching is on foundation-level courses where success rates are poor.
- The planning and monitoring of apprentice programmes are not good enough given the significant rise in learners completing these programmes and the decline in success rates. In 2011/12 the apprentices' progress was slow and most did not complete in the planned time. Current apprentices are making appropriate progress.

- In the best lessons, effective planning enables students to work independently. In theory sessions students make good contributions to discussions and develop their confidence. However, the planning of lessons is not always sufficiently detailed so that students can develop their skills at the pace appropriate to their level and many find the work too easy. Teachers do not always reinforce theory when carrying out practical hairdressing demonstrations.
- New technologies and the VLE are not used to support and enrich learning, for example, by using clips of current industrial/commercial practices to develop cutting techniques. Students make good use of the internet to carry out assignment research and develop independent learning skills. Assessment practices are adequate.
- Staff have good industrial experience that they use effectively to develop students' employability skills. Teachers set high standards for personal appearance and students look professional in their uniforms. While students are enthusiastic, particularly in the salons, their poor attendance and lateness hamper their progress and would not be accepted in the workplace.
- Written feedback from teachers on students' assignments is variable. In many cases teachers provide detailed comments that motivate students to achieve higher standards. In several portfolios the marking is superficial and does not support students to improve their assignment grades.
- Teachers do not routinely correct spelling and grammatical mistakes. Students' English and mathematical skills are not developed in the context of hairdressing and beauty therapy. For example, the use of fractions was not linked to measuring the correct ratios of hair-colouring products.
- Students value the support given by their personal tutors. One-to-one tutorials encourage and boost students' confidence although they are not effective in improving attendance. Meaningful short-term targets are negotiated with the teacher, which helps students progress, although some of these are not sufficiently aspirational.
- Equality and diversity issues are not promoted consistently to ensure that all students have a detailed understanding of aspects relevant to the industry, where image is crucial. For example, the application of different beauty-therapy treatments in different cultures and the importance of different hair texture when considering treatments are not covered adequately.

**Visual and performing arts**  
**Learning programmes for 16-18**  
**Learning programmes for 19+**

**Requires improvement**

- Recent improvements in the quality of teaching led to an increase in students' outcomes in 2011/12; closer to the national average but with significant variability across courses. Teaching and learning are not yet consistently good enough to ensure that all students make the rapid progress that is made by those studying AS-level art and design. In too many lessons the pace of learning is slow and lacks challenge.
- Most lessons are planned satisfactorily with a range of creative tasks to develop students' understanding and skills. In the best sessions theory is taught skilfully and is linked effectively to students' practical work which advances their critical skills. For example, provocative images of the First World War bomb shelters are used to challenge students' perceptions of shape.
- Most assignments are appropriate and suitably designed. They challenge students to produce imaginative work and provide opportunities to extend their creativity. However, some intermediate-level assignments contain too many tasks and dense text, and there are not enough images to support students in developing their ideas to achieve their full potential.
- Promotion of health and safety is good and all students complete safety audits of specific hazards relating to the different disciplines, such as the importance of warm-ups in performing arts. Students feel safe and enjoy studying at the college.

- Assessment is regular and appropriate. Students like the use of digital technology, including blogs and texts, to generate feedback. Teachers' feedback motivates students to acquire new knowledge and develop their skills. However, students are not always given precise enough information so that they know what they need to do to improve their work to achieve the highest grades.
- Students can access a wide range of industry-standard specialist equipment to support their studies. However, the great demand for information technology sometimes prevents students from using computers other than in their taught sessions. Many studios contain displays celebrating students' achievements but several theory classrooms are uninspiring.
- Learning is enhanced by a range of enrichment activities including trips and competitions. A fashion student's work has recently been featured on the cover of an industry magazine and production arts costume students are finalists in 'Tosca' at the Royal Opera House, London.
- Work experience successfully develops students' industry-related skills. Events management students work with French puppeteers to perform a celebration in the city commemorating the Titanic and performing arts students work in West End shows.
- Students' progress is monitored satisfactorily. Individual learning plans for most students contain specific targets but for some individuals their targets need to be more detailed to support their learning. Students' targets and progress are reviewed regularly at one-to-one tutorials.
- Assignments help develop students' English and mathematical skills satisfactorily. For example, games-development students designed life-size Avatars using scale and measurement. Many students articulate their ideas and use technical language confidently. Observational drawing using proportion and ratio develops students' mathematical skills effectively.
- The curriculum is planned appropriately to enable progression to higher-level courses. The proportion of students progressing to the next level and higher education is satisfactory. The arts department is unaware of the destinations of too many of its students when they leave college.
- References to other cultures and beliefs are skilfully woven into lessons. Performing arts students complete Flashmobs for the college's diversity day and dance students research the absence of black ballet dancers. Fashion students produce strong textile images comparing the eclectic architecture of Liverpool with churches in Krakow and California.

**Humanities and social sciences**  
**Learning programmes for 16-18**  
**Learning programmes for 19+**

**Inadequate**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate as too many students do not achieve their qualification. The progress of students who remain on their advanced-level course is poor and very few achieve high grades. Adult students on access courses achieve better and the proportion achieving grades A\* to C in their GCSE is good.
- Teachers' expectations are too low and too often there is insufficient checking of students' learning and understanding. In the vast majority of lessons teachers' questioning is superficial and students are not encouraged to develop their responses. Students are well behaved but passive.
- In most lessons progress is slow as teachers do not pay enough attention in the planning or delivery of lessons to meet individual student needs. However, good practice was seen in an outstanding psychology lesson on prejudice and discrimination. The teacher used targeted questions skilfully to develop students' understanding and confident use of terminology. Through well-planned group work they demonstrated very good progress and extension tasks were given to those who finished early.



- Learning and progress are hampered for many students by low or erratic attendance. Poor punctuality disrupts the start of lessons and learning is interrupted frequently as students arrive late. Teachers try to compensate by providing additional support and catch-up lessons, which are appreciated by the students.
- Although teaching staff have sound knowledge of their subjects, too few students are engaged sufficiently to complete their AS courses or progress to A-level. Those students who do complete their A-level studies develop a good understanding of social science concepts and theories and are equipped to progress to higher education. Access students develop good study and research skills to prepare them for university.
- Relevant subject-related enrichment includes a visit to the slavery museum in sociology or talks by visiting speakers in psychology. Students do not have access to a wide range of textbooks but there is an increasing number of relevant e-books. Many students make good use of the resources provided on the VLE, particularly in psychology and sociology.
- Assessment practice, including the marking of students' work, is variable. Most access and sociology students receive useful comments on assignment cover sheets. Teachers' comments in other subjects do not provide students with detailed information about how well they are performing or what specifically they need to do to improve. Grammatical and spelling mistakes are not routinely corrected.
- Although teachers now use GCSE scores to set target grades they do not use this information sufficiently to plan their lessons. The variation and inconsistency in setting students' aspirational grades confuse students. Most students know their target grades but it is too soon to identify whether these will have the desired effect on outcomes.
- The new tutorial system for 16 to 18-year-old students has yet to become fully embedded and there is too much variation in the frequency and usefulness of one-to-one meetings. Access students benefit from a strong tutorial system with effective links between personal tutors and subject tutors to support them.
- Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily using exemplars which are readily accessible and relevant to learners. As identified by the departments, the history syllabus includes too many 'male friendly' topics.

### English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

#### Learning programmes for 16-18

#### Learning programmes for 19+

**Requires improvement**

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement for students to achieve their full potential. Success rates are improving but are below the national averages. Attendance rates are satisfactory but too many students are late to lessons and teachers do not deal with the issue effectively.
- In lessons students develop good oral and literacy skills, learn to pronounce words clearly and improve their grammar. They develop the confidence to use English in their everyday lives, for example, speaking with their doctors. However, there are insufficient opportunities to develop students' employability and mathematical skills.
- Teachers use a range of resources to make learning both enjoyable and challenging. Everyday items, such as medicine bottles, are used to get students to read the instructions on the labels. Teachers use a variety of activities to support learning but they are not always adapted to meet the needs of individual students as there are considerable differences in students' ability levels in each class.
- The use of technology, including the college's VLE, is poor. Teachers and students have insufficient access to computers or interactive whiteboards. Where available, good use is made of technology to enhance language learning, for example, by listening to a popular song to consolidate vocabulary.

- Teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic and provide a safe and welcoming learning environment. Students participate in lively discussions to share ideas. Students' interaction with their peers in both group and paired activities is good. In one lesson students' spoken English was successfully developed by enthusiastic instructions on how to cook sausages.
- Students benefit from regular homework which extends their language learning, particularly in improving their writing skills for external tests. Regular tests at the end of each topic help students to know how well they are doing. However, the quality of teachers' written feedback on students' assignments is inconsistent and does not always help them to improve.
- Students with additional learning needs receive good support. ESOL students on advanced-level courses benefit from good support to develop their English skills. However, the outcomes of students' assessments and their individual learning targets are not used consistently by teachers to plan lessons.
- Teachers check students' progress in lessons effectively. Students aged 16 to 18 have regular one-to-one tutorials to monitor and support their progress. However, the individual target-setting and monitoring of adult students' progress is poor.
- A culture of inclusivity and respect underpins the work of the department. Students aged 16 to 18 learn about gender, stereotyping and equality issues as part of their induction. Diversity is embedded in a broad range of topics and the celebration of different festivals. The annual International Day helps students to learn more about other countries, cultures and traditions. External speakers provide good role models on the benefits of dual language skills.

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

**Inadequate**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English is inadequate as reflected in the low achievements, particularly for students aged 16 to 18. Students develop personal and social skills in lessons and as a result gain in confidence and recognise the relevance of improving their English for their next steps in education or employment. However, attendance at lessons is low.
- In adult classes most students make good progress and benefit from a range of learning activities that challenge and extend their learning. In one lesson students use their senses to describe everyday objects as a precursor to an assessed writing activity. Students work collaboratively and participate in lively discussions based on current national and local issues.
- Skilful planning in a few lessons inspires students to improve their skills and prepare for progression. Level 1 students sample higher-level reading activities that prepare them for the next level. Students are motivated and recognise the importance of improving their reading and writing skills. For example, level 2 students worked well together to produce a piece of writing for a monologue and this helps them to prepare for their GCSE work.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons so that all students can make rapid progress. The learning activities are sometimes too easy and students become bored. In too many lessons too much time is spent on recapping the previous lesson for poor attenders. As a result regular attenders and the more-able students become disengaged.
- Learning technologies and the VLE are not used to encourage and accelerate the learning of the more-able students or support those who are struggling with basic grammar and spelling. The interactive whiteboards are not used skilfully to encourage students to participate actively in lessons and demonstrate what they know and can do.
- Teachers' feedback is variable. In a few lessons teachers use a good range of direct and probing questions to assess continuously students' individual progress and inform the pace at which the activities can be delivered to meet individual targets. In the good lessons students participate in peer assessments which help them to reflect on and monitor their own progress. Teachers' written feedback is mostly detailed and helps students to improve.

- Students benefit from good advice and guidance to plan their progress. In community venues effective links with, and student visits to, the main college sites enable students, particularly the less confident ones, to plan their next steps in learning.
- Learning support is inconsistent; it is better organised and more effective for adult students. In community classes students benefit from a range of support strategies including personal tuition, telephone tutorials and the delivery of homework, and make good progress. Many adult students who are at risk of not completing their course are successfully encouraged to continue and achieve. The in-class support for students aged 16 to 18 is not planned sufficiently to help them progress at the same rate as their peers.
- Equality and diversity are promoted in lessons using positive role models and interesting activities raise students' awareness. For example, Martin Luther King's speech 'I have a dream' is used to inspire students to develop their speech-writing skills to support local causes. A safe and supportive learning environment encourages students to express their opinions.

### **Business studies**

#### **Learning programmes for 16-18**

#### **Learning programmes for 19+**

**Inadequate**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not effective in ensuring students achieve their potential and too many do not pass their course. Attendance is poor and students either leave the college or make inadequate progress.
- Success rates are very variable and in most subjects they are low. Pass rates on A-level business and some specialist short courses, such as medical terminology, are good. A high proportion of advanced-level vocational students do not achieve their qualification and only half of AS-level students pass business studies.
- The majority of lessons require improvement as the planning and delivery are not sufficiently challenging to engage all students. Too frequently the activities are not carefully matched to students' ability level or experience and so their progress is slow. Too many lessons are dominated by the teacher delivering key facts at a pedestrian pace, with limited student interaction and slow progress. Planning and delivery of learning frequently fail to challenge sufficiently the range of abilities in a class, limiting students' progress and achievement.
- In several lessons, relevant and topical case studies enable students on advanced-level courses to link business theory and practice confidently. For example, students could explain the impact of branding on the life cycle of a product. Occasionally vocational students work collaboratively to complete a range of practical tasks that develop their confidence and presentation skills effectively. Well-planned, challenging and creative approaches to learning ensure that adult students on a medical administration course make excellent progress and succeed.
- Students value the good level of care and support they receive from their teachers, particularly during one-to-one tutorial sessions. However, the systematic monitoring of students' performance is inconsistent. Interventions to support A-level students at risk from underachievement or withdrawal are not always timely. The number of students progressing from AS to A level and onto higher education is low.
- Teachers use a range of assessment methods to check students' knowledge, skills and understanding. The effectiveness of teachers' questioning is too often limited to checking what students can recall and not what they understand. Oral feedback is generally supportive but does not enable students to develop their responses. The quality of written feedback is variable and students do not get enough useful comments to help them to improve.
- Students benefit from participation in a wide range of enterprise and entrepreneurial enrichment activities. For example, seminars led by high-profile entrepreneurs and local employers help to stimulate students' creativity and knowledge of business start-up. Specialist competitions and enterprise festivals provide valuable experiences for students to apply their learning and develop independence.

- Arrangements for initial assessment of students' needs and prior attainment are inconsistent. Ongoing assessments are not used well enough by teachers to plan their lessons. Opportunities to embed the development of students' English and mathematics skills are insufficiently planned for, or harnessed, in the large majority of subject lessons.
- The use of information and learning technologies and the VLE to enhance learning is rarely exploited. Administration students benefit from a training office to apply and practise their skills in a realistic work environment.
- Students' understanding of equality and diversity issues is limited. New initiatives, such as female business leaders acting as mentors and links with the Muslim community to support learners on the enterprise course have been introduced, but it is too soon to judge their impact.

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

## Inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate. The principal and senior team share a clear view of the college's current weak position and have communicated the urgent need for improvement. The reputation of the college in the city is a main priority. Partnerships with key stakeholders are firmly established to support economic regeneration. The strategic plan clearly links to the city's priorities and is underpinned by strategic aims. However, not all indicators of success are tightly defined so it is difficult to judge progress.
- A very new management team is in place and is configured to meet the aspirations in the strategic plan. The new team shares the vision and drive for improvement. New processes for improvement are in place and there is a greater clarity on managers' accountability but the impact of this work cannot yet be seen. Curriculum managers recognise that new systems are not applied consistently, for example how at-risk students are supported or how targets are used to improve students' progress.
- Managers have not yet communicated effectively their expectation of high standards and the need for all staff to have high expectations of what their students can achieve. A new online system is now in place to support progress monitoring for workplace learners but this is not yet effective. Students' feedback indicates that course organisation and management are sometimes poor and there have been issues with timetabling, resources, induction arrangements and class cancellations. The management of subcontracted provision is good.
- College-wide targets for performance improvements over a four-year period have been set and reviewed upwards following the improved success rate in 2011/12. Targets are linked to the performance monitoring of senior staff and included in curriculum action plans but the actions taken are not consistently effective. Attendance, for example, remains considerably below target. Management information needs to improve so that it can be used as a tool to drive improvements. In some areas course leaders are insufficiently aware of performance data.
- Governors share the vision of developing the college's reputation and now understand the major challenges. Until recently governors have not monitored the significant deterioration in student performance. The quality of information they receive is improving as is their understanding of overall performance. They recognise that teaching, learning and assessment are areas for improvement but they are unclear what progress has been made.
- Performance management has not yet sufficiently improved teaching, learning, assessment and student outcomes. A revised comprehensive performance-management framework has been developed but not yet implemented. Underperformance is beginning to be tackled but too much variability exists. Advanced lecturers are in place to support improvements in teaching but managers do not have an accurate picture of the quality of lessons. Consequently, the priorities for advanced lecturers are not focused sufficiently on those areas of teachers' practice that would have the greatest impact on students' learning. For example, the impact of the work to improve lessons for the more-able students and ensure they all make good progress is limited as too many students are not working at or above their target grade. The identification and sharing

of good practice are not systematic. Support for part-time and new teachers successfully introduces them to college systems but is not focused on setting high standards.

- Self-assessment has not yet delivered sustained improvements in outcomes for students. The self-assessment report is an honest reflection of performance and the judgements are based on evidence, including feedback from students. Many quality assurance processes are very new or not yet implemented. Some improvements in retention rates have been achieved recently but success rates remain below the national average. While the processes are improving, they are not targeted at specific direct actions that will have the greatest immediate impact. Managers are not always clear about how they will monitor and evaluate the impact of their actions.
- The college has begun to diversify its curriculum to meet the city's skills needs more effectively. Through partners, an increasing range of provision for adults in the workplace is provided, for example, an increase in apprenticeships and workplace learning for the health service. Partners report that the college is responsive to their needs, relationships are carefully managed and communication is good. The development of English and mathematics in lessons is inconsistent, as is the use of initial assessment to plan learning to meet the needs of all students. Learning programmes are not always planned effectively to meet the needs of students.
- The college is inclusive and welcoming. It meets its statutory duty in relation to equality and diversity. The equality and diversity group has a clear remit to oversee the college's response to legislation and judge its impact. An annual review is reported to governors. A programme of training for equality and diversity is in place for all staff. Complaints are dealt with quickly and there are very few instances of bullying. The performance by different groups of students is analysed and has led to some specific action in some areas to recruit staff and students from under-represented groups. In the arts there is good promotion of equality and diversity but for most students their understanding is not developed.
- A clear policy and procedures are effective in ensuring students are safe and the college meets its statutory responsibility in relation to safeguarding. The college has appropriate links with relevant referral agencies and all staff are trained annually. Appropriate recruitment and vetting processes for all staff, contractors and governors are in place. A link governor for safeguarding takes a close interest in the effectiveness of college procedures and governors receive an annual report.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### The City of Liverpool 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	Other work-based learning	Community learning
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	4	4	4	4	1	4
Outcomes for learners	4	4	4	4	1	4
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	4	4	4	4	1	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management	4	4	4	4	1	4

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	3
Early years and playwork	3
Motor vehicle	3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	3
Visual arts	3
Performing arts	3
Humanities	4
Social science	4
ESOL	3

<b>Foundation English</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Business studies</b>	<b>4</b>

## Provider details

<b>Provider name</b>	<b>The City of Liverpool College</b>
<b>Type of provider</b>	General further education college
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	Full-time: 5,560
	Part-time: 11,130
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Elaine Bowker
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	January 2009
<b>Website address</b>	www.liv-coll.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+
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>								
<b>Full-time</b>	370	234	1,071	882	1,675	1,455	8	15
<b>Part-time</b>	362	1,947	397	1,105	624	657	n/a	63
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	286	351	132	273	n/a	n/a		
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	58							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	2,003							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	428							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							

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

- Accounting Academy Partnership
- Barnardos
- Blackburne House
- Eldonian Group Limited
- Everton in the Community
- Fit UK
- GtG
- Johnson Cleaners Limited
- Mortimore Enterprises Limited
- Nugent Care
- Rotunda
- SB Training

## Additional socio-economic information

The college is the only general further education college in the city of Liverpool and was formerly known as Liverpool Community College. Liverpool has a population of around 465,000. The proportion of pupils achieving five GCSEs grades A\* to C has improved in recent years and in 2012 was slightly above the national average. The unemployment rate in Liverpool is much higher than the national rate and a significantly lower proportion of those of working age have an advanced-level qualification. Around 18% have no recognised qualification. The main employment in the city is public administration, health, and education, with a recent growth in retail, hospitality, and tourism.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Bev Barlow 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 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 collect 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 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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