

South Staffordshire College

General further education college

Inspection dates		15–19 April 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The proportion of learners achieving their qualifications at foundation and intermediate continues to rise at a rapid rate and a large majority of learners move on to higher-level courses or employment.
- The majority of lessons are good or better and develop learners' practical skills to prepare them well for employment.
- The college is inclusive, safe and friendly with supportive teachers who respect learners' views, particularly the most vulnerable.
- The college has strong partnerships and serves its wide community well with an extensive and appropriate range of provision.
- Strong strategic leadership, together with improved quality assurance arrangements, have improved the college's performance.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Learners on advanced-level courses and a minority on apprenticeship programmes do not make as much progress as they should.
- Not enough teaching and learning is outstanding.
- Assessment practice does not always support learners in improving their work in a timely manner, especially on work-based learning programmes.
- Curriculum management is not fully effective at improving all areas of the college.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and learning on advanced-level courses stretch and challenge learners sufficiently to achieve their full potential.
- Closely monitor the performance of apprenticeship programmes to ensure that the rapid improvements to the quality of provision continue.
- Develop subject management to raise rapidly the standards on the minority of underperforming courses.
- Increase the effectiveness of assessment on underperforming courses to ensure that learners receive support to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Outcomes for learners continue to improve, but remain too variable. While learners achieve well in the preparation for life and work and in the science and mathematics subject areas, on courses in engineering and sport, learners' achievement requires improvement. Most learners at foundation level make good progress and achieve well, but at advanced level, not all learners make the progress expected of them based on their starting points.
- The proportion of learners successfully completing and achieving their qualification continues to rise. Success rates on most courses have risen year-on-year and while high on many courses overall success rates remain around national averages. Success rates on foundation level courses and on most short courses are particularly high. At intermediate level, success rates are at or above national rates on most courses, whilst on advanced level courses success rates, although rapidly rising, are below corresponding national rates.
- Completion rates for apprentices on veterinary nursing and catering courses have increased substantially and are now high. The proportion of learners on work-place learning courses that successfully achieve the qualification on which they enrol is well above the corresponding national rate. Most learners develop good vocational skills relative to their course of study. Completion rates for apprentices on construction, motor vehicle and electrical installation programmes are low.
- Success rates on functional skills qualifications in mathematics are high. Learners develop good numeracy skills and can apply their learning to different contexts. Learners do not achieve as well in functional skills tests in English and the success rate for the small number of learners taking GCSE English is low. Opportunities for learners to take functional skills qualifications in both English and mathematics are limited.
- Managers and staff have been successful in narrowing the achievement gaps between different groups of learners. Those between male and female learners have reduced markedly. Learners from different minority ethnic groups mostly achieve in line with corresponding national rates. Success rates for adult learners have increased substantially from well below average to above average. Learners aged 16 to 18 achieve higher success rates than adult learners although the achievement gap has narrowed. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve at least as well as their peers.
- Most learners produce work of the standard expected based on their starting points. The proportion of learners achieving high grade passes is rising but remains below average,

especially on advanced level courses. Attendance rates are satisfactory. The majority of learners attend punctually and in-year retention rates have improved markedly compared to the same period last year. The college provides a friendly and safe learning environment and learners enjoy their time at college. Most learners develop good team working and communication skills that improve their employability prospects.

- Progression rates are high. Most learners successfully move onto higher level courses or into employment following the completion of their course. Progression rates from one level to the next are high and many learners gain employment following the completion of their course. A high proportion of pupils aged 14 to 16 that successfully complete college courses progress into full-time further education.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and contribute significantly to the sustained improvements in learners' outcomes. Most teachers have high expectations of their learners and provide useful support to help them make good progress. The most effective teaching is at foundation and intermediate level and in practical lessons. The best lessons are motivating and engage learners in interesting and meaningful activities that develop their knowledge and understanding. At advanced level, teaching is less effective because teachers do not always plan sufficiently well to meet learners' individual needs and ability levels.
- In practical lessons, especially on courses in animal care, construction and in hairdressing and beauty therapy, teachers use their vocational experience and expertise very effectively to make lessons more meaningful and relevant to current industry practices. Teachers use competitions well to motivate and encourage learners to produce work of a high standard. Work-experience significantly enhances the development of learners' practical and employability skills in several subject areas, although these opportunities are not available for all learners.
- The teaching in theory lessons, although good overall, is more variable. In the best lessons, teachers plan well and include a variety of teaching methods that engage and challenge learners. These lessons often involve group work, discussion and debate that deepen learners' knowledge and understanding while developing their communication and team-working skills. However, in a minority of classes, usually where teachers talk for long periods and where learners are inactive, lessons are not as motivating, engaging or enjoyable for learners.
- Teachers employ information learning technology (ILT) well in most subject areas as a useful and interactive learning tool. The virtual learning environment (VLE) contains useful resources to aid learners' progress and the innovative use of tablets and smart phones enables learners to access presentations and demonstrations outside the classroom. Teachers generally use ILT resources well to help learners develop their independent learning skills. Not all teachers use ILT to its full potential in all subject areas, with variations between the quantity, quality and accessibility of resources.
- The effectiveness of assessment and feedback in aiding learners' progress is variable. Teachers' questioning to check learners' knowledge and understanding is inconsistent. The marking and the return of assignments on a minority of courses are not always timely. The quality of marking and feedback on assessed work is good in several subject areas and the feedback informs learners what they need to do to improve. However, in a few areas teachers provide insufficient detail and learners are unclear how to improve and achieve higher grades. On work-based learning programmes, the limited availability of assessors to conduct assessments adversely impacts on the progress learners make.
- Initial advice and guidance is increasingly effective in placing learners onto the right course at the correct level. Diagnostic testing of learners' literacy and numeracy skills accurately identifies those requiring additional learning support. Learners value in-class support and this helps them

make good progress, but teachers do not always provide sufficient direction to learning support assistants to maximise their use in supporting learning in lessons.

- The development of learners' functional skills is good overall. It is more effective for learners' mathematical skills than their literacy skills. In the best practice, teachers incorporate the development of literacy and numeracy skills into vocational teaching and use activities that are relevant and meaningful to improve learners' confidence and competence. However, not all subject areas effectively embed the development of literacy skills into vocational teaching and on a number of courses staff lack the confidence or competence to do so.
- Progression coaches comprehensively monitor and frequently review learners' progress during tutorial lessons. Teachers mostly set targets which improve learners' progress, although a minority of targets are insufficiently specific. The majority of learners know their targets and have a clear understanding of their progress. On a small minority of courses, learners' progress is not effectively monitored and learners are unclear as to the extent of their achievement.
- The promotion of equality and diversity through teaching and learning is inconsistent. While much good practice exists across the college and learners do have an appropriate understanding of key equality and diversity themes, opportunities to further develop learners' knowledge and understanding, especially in the context of their course of study are often missed.

Animal care and veterinary science

Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+
Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Classroom teaching is mostly good. However, the high proportion of learners leaving their course before the planned end date without achieving affects learning and assessment. Completion rates for learners on apprenticeship programmes continue to rise, but remain below corresponding national averages.
- Teachers are mostly well qualified and use their experience and expertise effectively to motivate and engage learners in practical lessons. Learners are able to identify different species, observe behaviour patterns and handle animals safely. Practical teaching enables learners to develop a wide range of skills that prepare them well for employment.
- In theory lessons, teachers do not always plan lessons to meet the needs of individual learners. Activities are not always sufficiently challenging for the more able learners. Teaching for learners on advanced level courses is not as effective as teaching for those on lower level courses. Not all teachers plan their use of support staff to maximise learners' progress in lessons.
- Teachers use a variety of methods to motivate and engage learners and in the current year attendance and retention rates have increased. A growing proportion of learners are making the progress expected of them based on their starting points. Teachers are now using questioning techniques more effectively to frequently check learners' knowledge and understanding. However, learners are not always sufficiently challenged by the tasks set in lessons.
- The use of ILT to improve learners' enjoyment of lessons has improved and it is now good. Teachers use ILT creatively to engage learners in lessons, including the use of video clips from the Internet and the frequent use of tablets and smart phones to reinforce learning. The VLE contains useful information to help develop learners' knowledge and understanding, but it is not used as an interactive learning tool in all lessons.
- Initial assessment ensures the placement of learners onto the right course at the correct level. The identification of learners' support needs is prompt and those that require help receive it in a timely manner. Teachers frequently monitor and review learners' progress during timetabled

tutorial lessons. Learners are set targets to achieve, although these are not always sufficiently specific to aid learners’ progress.

- Assessment practice requires improvement. Checks on learners’ progress are infrequent on a minority of courses and they are not always clear about how to improve their work. Assessed work is not always marked in a timely manner and a few learners experience long delays in receiving their work back. Inspectors found incomplete assessment records which had not been identified by teachers.
- The development of learners’ functional skills requires improvement. Teachers do not routinely incorporate the development of learners’ literacy and numeracy skills into vocational teaching. They do not always correct spelling and grammatical errors in learners’ work. Learners are not given sufficient opportunity to develop their English and mathematical skills as a routine part of their course.
- Working relationships between staff and learners are good. Learning support assistants provide useful help and guidance that aids learners’ progress. Progression rates between one level and the next or into employment are rising. Learners receive appropriate careers advice and guidance that enables them to make informed choices.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Teachers miss too many opportunities to develop or challenge learners’ perceptions in vocational lessons. Reviews of work-based learners do not routinely check learners understanding of equality and diversity. Learners do have a basic understanding of key equality and diversity themes as developed through the useful tutorial programme.

<p>Construction crafts</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good as reflected by above average success rates on most courses. Outcomes for learners have significantly improved over the last two years and current learners are making good progress and achieve well. Learners produce practical work of a high standard on most courses, especially at foundation level.
- Experienced teachers use their good subject knowledge to engage learners in lessons. Teaching in practical lessons is particularly strong and enables learners to develop good vocational skills. Learners competently and confidently use hand and power tools and have a good understanding of industry health and safety practices.
- Practical demonstrations are informative and teachers provide good individual support to help learners achieve. Teachers use competitions to encourage learners to take pride in their work and to raise expectations and aspirations. Resources to support practical teaching are satisfactory and enable learners to undertake a wide range of beneficial training and assessment tasks. Opportunities for learners to undertake work-experience are limited.
- Teachers mostly plan theory lessons well and develop learners’ knowledge and understanding effectively. Clear links between theory and practical lessons enable learners to develop their technical understanding. Innovative use of ILT in the form of downloadable practical demonstrations enables learners to revisit topics and learn at their own pace.
- Teachers have good working relationships with learners and frequently check their progress. They use questioning effectively to check learners’ knowledge and understanding. Teachers employ a range of learning methods including group work, discussion and debate to engage learners in lessons. Lessons take place mostly at an appropriate pace. Practical lessons are more effective than theory.

- In a minority of lessons, usually in theory classes, teachers do not always challenge learners sufficiently to make enough progress. In these lessons, activities are not always well matched to learners’ individual needs or ability levels. In a few lessons, teachers do not engage learners in meaningful activity with learners passive for long periods.
- Assessment is frequent and fair. Learners understand the requirements of assessment and receive good verbal feedback following the completion of practical tests. Most portfolios of evidence are orderly and demonstrate learners’ practical competence. Staff frequently monitor and check learners’ progress and they routinely update assessment records.
- Initial assessment is increasingly effective at ensuring learners are on the right course at the correct level. It accurately identifies learners’ support needs and learning support assistants provide help and guidance that is valued by learners. Teachers do not always plan the use of learning support assistants to maximise their impact in aiding learners’ progress in lessons.
- The development of learners’ literacy and numeracy skills through teaching and learning is variable. While learners develop their mathematical skills through vocational learning effectively, and as a meaningful part of their course of study, teachers are not always effective at developing learners’ English skills. Spelling and grammatical errors in learners’ written files are not regularly corrected by teachers and learners do not routinely practice improving their reading skills.
- The promotion of equality and diversity through teaching and learning requires improvement. While learners have a basic understanding of important areas of equality and diversity, teachers frequently miss opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding in a vocational context.

<p>Hairdressing and beauty therapy</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+ Apprenticeships</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and enable learners to develop a wide range of practical skills that prepare them well for industry employment. Success rates continue to rise and are at or above corresponding national rates on the majority of courses. Learners make good progress, develop good client care skills and achieve a variety of useful additional qualifications that improve their employment prospects.
- Teachers are well qualified and use their up-to-date knowledge and expertise to help learners’ develop good practical skills. They plan teaching in practical lessons well and this enables learners to practice a wide variety of treatments. Learners are confident at completing body massage treatments and the careful styling and colouring of hair. Learners display a professional image and attitude in most lessons and demonstrate good client care skills.
- Teachers, in the majority of instances, plan theory lessons well and help develop learners’ knowledge and understanding effectively. In most lessons, the pace of learning is good and teachers skilfully use questioning to challenge learners to ensure they make good progress. The use of ILT is imaginative in a minority of lessons and includes the use of on-line games, Internet presentation systems and video clips. A few lessons do not enable learners to make sufficient progress because teachers do not plan sufficiently well to meet individual needs.
- Resources to support teaching and learning are good. College training salons are well equipped and learners have good opportunities to practice their skills in the modern commercial hair salon in Tamworth town centre. Resources at the Burntwood campus are outstanding and enable pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools to achieve qualifications in hairdressing and beauty therapy as part of their Key Stage 4 curriculum.

- Initial assessment accurately identifies learners starting points. Staff place learners onto courses at an appropriate level and identification of additional support needs is quick and accurate. Learners are set appropriately challenging targets to help them achieve and staff monitor their progress frequently. Assessment is fair and assessors design tasks well to test learners’ competence. Opportunities for learners to gain early accreditation for the skills and knowledge they develop are limited as most assessment takes place at the end of the course.
- Teachers provide useful feedback that details what learners need to do to improve. Verbal feedback following the completion of practical tasks is supportive and builds learners’ confidence. Learners appreciate the honest and supportive feedback that staff provide to help them improve. Teachers’ marking of learners’ written work is timely and they review evidence portfolios frequently.
- The development of learners’ functional skills in English and mathematics is good. Teachers use opportunities in vocational lessons to develop learners’ literacy and numeracy skills. Learners achieve well in functional tests and can apply their learning in a vocational context. Teachers pay close attention to correcting spelling and grammatical errors in learners’ written work.
- Working relationships between teachers and learners are good. Teachers and support staff provide useful guidance to help learners progress and achieve. Staff keep learners well informed about their progress during regular tutorial lessons. Progression rates from one level to the next are high and many learners successfully move to industry related employment following the completion of their course.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners are respectful and supportive of each other and work together well. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity and teachers promote equality and diversity through vocational teaching very effectively. Learners have a good understanding of the differing needs of clients from a range of cultures and backgrounds.

<p>Sport, leisure and recreation</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement as reflected by the significant variation in learners’ outcomes between different courses. Success rates are rising and are mostly high on travel and tourism courses, but those for sports courses are generally below average and are not rising quickly enough.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. In better lessons, usually on travel and tourism courses, teachers are enthusiastic and use their industry experience and expertise to motivate and engage learners in meaningful activities that deepen their knowledge and understanding. However, more typically, and especially on sports courses, teaching does not meet the needs of individual learners and consequently too many do not make sufficient progress.
- In too many lessons, the pace of learning is slow because learners are not actively engaged in activity or because the work set is insufficiently challenging. In too many lessons, teachers do not check learners’ progress often enough and in a significant minority of classes; they do not deal with low level disruption effectively. While some teachers skilfully use questioning to check learners’ knowledge and understanding in a minority of lessons, more typically, questioning fails to challenge learners to think for themselves.
- Resources for practical teaching in sport are limited. Neither of the college’s sites has an indoor area to enable learners to practice individual or team sports. While external facilities are hired to enable learners to develop practical skills and to practice their sports coaching techniques,

access to these resources is restricted. The limited resources adversely affect learners’ enjoyment of courses and inhibit the development of practical skills.

- Initial assessment is becoming increasingly effective at ensuring learners are enrolled on the right course at the correct level. Assessment routinely identifies learning support needs and learners that require additional support receive help. An increasing proportion of learners are remaining on courses and the progress by current learners is better than that made by learners in previous years.
- Assessment is frequent and fair. Assessors devise assignments well and use realistic vocational scenarios. Teachers frequently set assignments and they clearly define assessment criteria. Teachers mark assessed work quickly and they provide detailed feedback that informs learners what they need to do to improve. During regular tutorials, staff closely monitor and review learners’ progress.
- The development of learners’ functional skills requires improvement. Teachers frequently miss opportunities for developing learners’ literacy and numeracy skills in vocational lessons. Learners are not routinely encouraged to develop their English or mathematical skills as part of their main course of study. Teachers do not regularly correct spelling or grammatical errors when marking learners’ written work.
- The setting of targets to aid learners’ progress and achievement requires improvement. While learners are set targets to achieve related to their course, often these are not sufficiently specific to be useful in aiding learners’ progress. Targets are not always sufficiently challenging or time-bound to ensure learners make the progress they are capable of. Too many learners leave their course with an unknown destination and the proportion progressing to higher level study or to higher education courses is low.
- The promotion of equality and diversity through teaching and learning requires improvement. While the learning environment is mostly inclusive and learners have a basic understanding of the main areas of equality and diversity, staff often miss opportunities to further promote and develop learners understanding. Teachers do not routinely incorporate equality and diversity themes into vocational teaching.

<p>Independent living and learning skills</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+ Employability</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good as reflected in the good progress that learners make in improving their personal, social and independent living skills. Overall success rates have increased over the last three years and are high. Committed teachers help their learners to achieve and provide good levels of support both in and outside the classroom. Progression rates are high and many learners move onto higher level vocational courses or into employment.
- Teachers plan most lessons well and they use a wide variety of teaching methods to enthuse and engage learners in enjoyable and very useful activities. Teaching in practical lessons is particularly good and enable learners to develop their independence. Teachers use good coaching skills to challenge learners and encourage them to reflect and develop their thinking skills. Teachers use ILT imaginatively to improve learning and to make lessons more enjoyable.
- Care, guidance and support for students are good. Experienced teachers develop positive relationships with their learners and understand their needs well. Learners benefit from good individual and specialist additional support. Learning support assistants work well with teachers and ensure learners make good progress. Specialist staff support learners with more complex

and specific learning needs well. Signers working with deaf learners ensure they participate fully in learning activities.

- In the small minority of less successful lessons, teachers’ planning focuses insufficiently on the different ability levels or support needs of individual learners. Occasionally teachers set tasks that less able learners find too difficult or provide support that is too generic and not sufficiently focused on developing individual learners’ specific needs. In a very small minority of lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to work together to discuss and share information to extend their learning.
- Initial assessment is comprehensive and provides useful information about learners’ personal and social skills. Learners undertake an assessment of their English and mathematical skills, participate in taster sessions and attend site visits prior to enrolment. Staff use a wide range of information to ensure learners are on the most appropriate programme and have the individual support they require.
- Assessment is good. The large majority of learners are set challenging personal and course-related targets that teachers frequently monitor and review. Verbal feedback provided by staff is supportive and helps learners make rapid progress. Teachers do not always provide prompt written feedback and, at times, feedback lacks sufficient detail. During tutorials, staff closely monitor learners’ assessment results and progress.
- Teaching supports the development of learners’ English and mathematical skills very effectively. Teachers set learners challenging tasks that enable them to practice and improve their reading and writing skills. Teachers use opportunities in lessons to allow learners to work with numbers and to set meaningful and relevant tasks that improve literacy and numeracy.
- Learners receive timely advice and guidance to plan appropriate progression routes. Learners benefit from undertaking work-experience regularly through a good range of vocational activities including the college tuck shop and a community café. Progression coaches provide regular advice and guidance to ensure learners are well informed and prepared for their next steps. A high proportion of learners successfully progress to higher levels of study.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good and enables learners to integrate and participate fully in the life of the college. Working relationships between staff and learners are strong and create an inclusive and safe learning environment. Teachers promote equality and diversity in most lessons, although occasionally they miss opportunities to further promote and reinforce learners’ knowledge and understanding in different contexts.

<p>Foundation English</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Outcomes for learners, although improving, are not yet consistently good, with too much variation in the success rates achieved in different vocational areas. While teachers in several subject areas use vocationally relevant and stimulating topics to develop learners’ English skills, this is not consistently the case across the college.
- The effectiveness of teaching varies considerably across and between departments. In the best lessons, teachers skilfully devise tasks that enable learners to improve their reading, writing and communication skills in a meaningful and relevant context. However, more typically, the teaching of English is too generic and teachers miss opportunities to develop learners’ skills in a relevant vocational context.

- Teachers do not always plan lessons to meet the individual needs of learners. While the tasks set are motivating and engaging in many lessons they are not always well suited to challenge learners of different ability levels. Too often extension activities for the more able consist of an additional activity rather than a more challenging level of tasks.
- Teachers' confidence and competence to develop learners' English skills vary across and between departments. Teachers in several subject areas routinely correct spelling and grammatical errors in learners work and frequently incorporate the development of learners' English skills into vocational lessons whenever opportunities occur. However, this practice is not consistent across the college and in several areas teachers do not routinely correct mistakes in learners' written work.
- The use of ILT to enable learners to research information and extend their learning is limited. While teachers mostly use a variety of shared resources well, for example, images of misspelt body tattoos to emphasise the importance of correct and careful spelling, they do not use ILT to its full potential to improve teaching and to make learning more interesting, enjoyable and memorable.
- Initial assessment is thorough and mostly ensures learners are on the correct level of course. The quality and effectiveness of target setting and monitoring is variable. While the targets set in several subject areas are clear and useful in aiding learners' progress this is not consistently the case across the college. Too many targets are insufficiently specific to be useful in aiding or monitoring learners' progress.
- Assessment is frequent and fair. Teachers enable learners to undertake practice tests and generally provide useful feedback that informs learners what they need to do to improve. The quality of written feedback does vary between subject areas and ranges from the clear and concise that is useful to aid improvement to that which is more cursory.
- Learning support assistants mostly work well with learners requiring additional help. Learners that receive support achieve at least as well as their peers. Teachers do not always plan to use learning support assistants to maximise their impact in aiding learners' progress in lessons.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Teachers often miss opportunities to extend learners' understanding of the wider world or recognise or understand the rich diversity of employees in their chosen subject area. Although most learning environments are very inclusive with learners working well and cooperatively together, in a minority of classes behavioural issues impact negatively on learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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- The principal and senior managers provide strong leadership. Working closely with governors, they have successfully merged the former three colleges into a single organisation with a clear vision and mission focussed on improving outcomes for learners. Leaders and managers set challenging targets, have high standards, are ambitious and drive improvement through a rigorous and robust performance management system.
- Governors have a good knowledge of the college and the local community. Their valuable range of professional skills informs the work of the corporation well. They provide appropriate strategic direction, keep a good oversight of financial and academic performance and challenge senior managers rigorously. Most governors are closely involved in the validation of the accurate self-assessment report and this, together with their individual formal links to specific subject areas, helps them to develop their understanding of the college's work and performance.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is good. Managers have improved accommodation and resources to more effectively support learning. Arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning are good. The internal lesson observation process provides an accurate

picture of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. A comprehensive analysis of observation information clearly identifies strengths and areas for improvements in teaching and learning and this informs beneficial staff training.

- Self-assessment is highly effective and provides managers with a clear view of the performance of the college. Quality improvement plans have clear targets and the monitoring of progress towards these targets is rigorous and well focused. Success rates are rising, the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve and managers' actions to tackle areas of identified underperformance are increasingly effective in raising standards.
- Managers routinely collect and use learners' views to improve the quality of provision. A team of mentors and advanced practitioners provide useful coaching to support teachers to improve their practice. Teachers and learning support assistants can easily access a very good range of professional development activities. Performance management has significantly improved and effective procedures are now in place to ensure that underperformance is tackled.
- Managers have good access to timely data regarding learners' attendance and progress. Senior managers hold frequent meetings with faculty heads and their teams to challenge specific aspects of course or learners' performance. In many subject areas, these approaches to self-assessment have led to significant improvements, but in a small number of areas, improvements have not been sufficiently rapid. Curriculum management is not yet fully effective in all areas of the college.
- The good curriculum provides a broad range of courses across a wide geographical area that meets local needs. Strong links with key strategic partners has enabled the college to develop a wide ranging curriculum. A highly successful curriculum for pupils aged 14 to 16 enables around 800 learners to access a wide range of vocational courses. Governors and the principal are the driving force behind the creation of the new Rural Enterprise Academy at the college's Rodbaston campus. Managers plan access to community based provision across the area well.
- Employers, schools, local authorities, community organisations and local strategic business networks see the college as a very important partner. Employers and employer network managers are effusive in their support for the college's commitment to their work in extending training opportunities for employees across the area. The college now has over 500 apprentices on a wide range of programmes.
- The college is inclusive and provides a welcoming and respectful atmosphere that staff and learners clearly value. Managers closely monitor the performance of different groups of learners. No significant gaps in performance exist between groups. Managers make good use of equality and diversity impact measures to assess the effect of any new policies or strategic decisions however, not all teachers effectively promote equality and diversity in their lessons.
- Managers and staff safeguard learners effectively. The college meets its statutory requirements. Learners feel safe and they adopt safe working practices. Staff have a good understanding of the wide range of support that is available to keep learners safe. Staff and governors have received appropriate training. Designated staff, working closely with local agencies, deal effectively with child protection.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

South Staffordshire College

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	3
Outcomes for learners	3	2	3	3	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Animal care and veterinary science	3
Construction crafts	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Sport, leisure and recreation	3
Independent living and leisure skills	2
Foundation English	3

Provider details

South Staffordshire College	
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 3,964
	Part-time: 2,071
Principal/CEO	Mr Graham Morley
Date of previous inspection	July 2009
Website address	www.southstaffs.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	482	107	809	192	1,756	617	0	1
Part-time	139	395	92	569	30	268	0	89
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	138	250	168	427	0	2		
Number of learners aged 14-16	800							
Number of community learners	2,402							
Number of employability learners	19							
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"> ■ NitP ■ 3AAA 							

Additional socio-economic information

South Staffordshire College is a large further education college with five main campuses located in the south of Staffordshire. The college also supports delivery to learners aged 14 to 16 at several vocational centres and a number of outreach centres to offer community learning. The college provides courses in all sector subject areas apart from humanities. The curriculum includes courses from foundation to higher education level.

The percentage of learners from an ethnic minority background is low and in line with the local population. The percentage of pupils who leave school with five or more GCSE qualifications at A* to C including English and mathematics in Staffordshire is similar to that nationally.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Julie Ashton HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and eight 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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