

Aylesbury College

General further education college

Inspection dates		13–17 May 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-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:

- Effective governance and leadership have created an environment which strongly supports learning.
- The college is working effectively to meet local needs through the development of an integrated campus with providers of other types and levels of education.
- A wide range of routine quality improvement activities are used effectively to raise standards.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good or better in most instances.
- Students have a very positive attitude to learning, their behaviour is very good and most make good progress in lessons.
- Teachers and learning development advisers provide good support to students in lessons and through tutorials.
- Good resources, including in the learning centre, help students to develop their independent learning skills.
- Students receive good advice and guidance to help place them on the correct course.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- A small minority of lessons requires improvement or is inadequate, and too few are outstanding. Teachers do not support students sufficiently in developing English skills during lessons and in written work.
- More able students are not challenged adequately to achieve high grades and exceed their target grades.
- Students are not provided with enough opportunities to undertake work placements to prepare them for employment.
- The proportion of students gaining qualifications on vocational courses provided at the college requires improvement. Too much variation exists in the performance of different groups of students.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Through staff training, the work of advanced practitioners, and the better sharing of good practice, ensure that a higher proportion of lessons are more interesting, and include a proper emphasis on improving students' skills in the use of English during lessons and in their written work.
- Develop teachers' understanding of how to challenge the more able students to achieve high grades and exceed the grades expected of them, for example through additional activities during lessons, and setting targets in tutorials related to the achievement of high grades.
- Provide more work experience across a wider range of vocational subjects and ensure all students adhere to professional standards of conduct to prepare them for future work.
- Identify more clearly the college-wide areas of under performance, and draft improvement plans so that actions at all levels are specific, with clear success measures that relate to student performance.
- Monitor the performance of different groups of students more closely throughout the year, in order to implement actions more quickly to ensure that all students perform at an equally high level.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over the past three years the proportion of students achieving qualifications on long and short courses has risen slightly, but still requires improvement. Although a large majority of full-time students completes their qualifications successfully, too many courses remain where success rates are low, and the average rate of improvement since the last inspection in 2010 is slower than that for similar colleges nationally. The number of college-based students gaining qualifications on vocational courses at all levels of learning is too low. However, the success rates for students completing functional skills and A-level courses, where public examinations were taken in January this year, are significantly higher than for examinations taken in the same period last year and are good. ▪ In a number of areas students perform very well. Apprentices make good progress; success rates have improved and are good. A very good proportion of students completing intermediate and advanced level vocational courses in the workplace achieve their qualifications, with almost all of them completing within the predicted time. The pass rate for A-level students has improved significantly and is now good. Progress made by foundation level students on the 'Pathways' programme is excellent. Students who receive extra help with their studies also perform very well. The achievement rate for 14 - to 16-year-old students on link programmes with local schools is very good. ▪ The majority of students achieve the grades expected of them relative to their attainment before coming to college. However, the proportion of students achieving high grades is too low. At advanced level, too much variation exists between subjects in the proportion of students who achieve or exceed their target grades. The results for January A-level examinations in 2013 showed the proportion of students exceeding their target grades to be much improved and now good. ▪ Student attendance has improved on the vast majority of courses and punctuality is good. The percentage of students who have remained on courses in 2012/13 has also improved since the previous year and is good, and this is reflected in sustained improvements in retention rates over a three-year period. 	

- The college successfully helps students to improve their personal, social and employability skills. Students have a positive attitude towards learning, work diligently during theory and practical sessions and produce work that is of a good standard. In the majority of vocational subjects, they gain the practical skills necessary to support them in future employment. The majority of students participate in projects which develop their skills in meeting industry standards of work, and gain wider employment skills such as customer service skills, presentation skills and the ability to work to deadlines. For example, art students are creating a graffiti 'art wall' for the Henley Festival, and students on cookery courses cater for a wide range of commercial clients.
- Closing the gap in performance for different groups of students is an area for improvement. Success rates for adult students and 16 - to 18-year-olds are similar at all levels of learning. However, a higher proportion of female than male students achieve their qualifications, and White British students achieve at a slightly higher rate than those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students who receive extra help with their studies are more likely to succeed than those without additional support.
- Students make reasonable progress in the development of their use of English and mathematics, although in a minority of subjects opportunities to develop these skills beyond the requirements of the course are not taken. The proportion of students achieving high grades in GCSE mathematics is good, and for English language it is satisfactory.
- Students' progression between levels of study is satisfactory, although it is very good for 14 - to 16-year-olds progressing to full-time courses. The college has started to collect information about students' destinations when students finish their courses. Over half has continued in education and over a third progressed to employment. Progression rates to higher education are satisfactory for students completing advanced level courses.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and have been a contributing factor to the improvement in retention and achievement at the college over the last year. College managers, teachers and support staff have worked successfully to improve the quality of teaching and learning and this has ensured that a large majority of lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all students. The behaviour of students is exemplary; they are well motivated and enjoy their studies. Students benefit from good pastoral and academic support.
- Although the quality of teaching and learning is variable in some subject areas, a good proportion of lessons contains elements that are inspirational and outstanding. These lessons are exciting and fun, and teachers set and demand high standards from their students, using a good range of strategies to explore their understanding effectively. Teachers in areas such as catering, visual arts and bricklaying motivate students to produce high standards of work, develop and improve their skills, and become ready for employment.
- In lessons where improvement is required, teaching is insufficiently captivating, learning objectives are often unclear and lessons lack sufficient pace and direction to challenge the more able students. Subsequently, too few students are challenged to exceed their target grades.
- Most teachers have become proficient at using technology such as interactive whiteboards to enliven their lessons. In several sessions students were encouraged to use tablet computers or their own mobile phones to record aspects of the lesson, or research the internet to stimulate discussion and extend their knowledge.
- The modern and well-designed accommodation supports the creation of a good learning environment and resources are good in most areas. Teachers are well qualified and use their occupational expertise effectively in the majority of lessons, particularly in business studies and motor vehicle engineering.
- Tutorials are well structured and contribute to the development of good personal, social and independent learning skills. Teachers make effective use of information about students to plan lessons and provide appropriate levels of support. Tracking of students' progress is good and

most students are aware of how much work they have to do to achieve. However, in the weaker sessions, students are sometimes unclear of targets and expectations, and teachers’ checking of progress is poor.

- The college’s learning centre provides good, spacious study areas and is very well used. Computers are used effectively to support independent learning. Students in the majority of subjects use the college’s virtual learning environment (VLE) well to continue learning outside the classroom and improve their research skills. Teachers make effective use of the VLE in the majority of lessons to enhance learning, but not all subject areas provide a sufficiently wide variety of on-line resources.
- Assessment practices are good. Most teachers plan and manage assessments well and they ensure students have a clear understanding of the arrangements and requirements for assessment. Teachers provide timely and detailed feedback on students’ work which ensures students are clear about what progress they are making. However, in a small minority of subjects teachers provide insufficient guidance to help students make improvements to their work.
- Students participate in a good variety of cross-college enrichment activities and many subject areas provide their own additional activities to enhance learning. Competing in local and national competitions provides suitable challenge and motivation for those who need it. Teachers make good use of talks by outside speakers, trips to employers, and residential field trips to extend students’ learning.
- Teachers and support staff accurately assess students’ abilities prior to the students coming to college in order to place on them on appropriate courses. They quickly identify those requiring additional help with academic or personal support needs. The use of learning development advisers to help students in need of extra support is highly effective on most courses.
- The development of students’ skills in mathematics is good in the majority of subject areas. However, the development of students’ skills in English is less well developed. Teachers do not adequately use opportunities in lessons to improve students’ skills, for example in spelling key words. They also do not routinely correct spelling and grammar mistakes in students’ written work.
- The variety of information, advice and guidance provided for students is good and ensures they are able to make well-informed choices about their future education, training or employment. The college makes satisfactory use of its employer links, the National Careers Service and Jobcentre Plus to place students into jobs and promote its apprenticeships. However, for college-based students, the use of work experience to expand students’ knowledge, understanding and skills is underdeveloped.
- The college promotes equality and diversity well through a wide range of activities, including an annual cross-college competition and diversity promotion week. A strong culture of mutual respect is demonstrated across the college. In some lessons, teachers explore topics that relate to their subject area well to further students’ understanding of equality and diversity. However, in a small minority of classes, teachers miss opportunities to explore fully and develop equality and diversity themes.

**Health and social care
Early years and playwork**

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

Good

- The proportion of students achieving qualifications in health and social care, early years and playwork is good. Teachers have high expectations of their students and this contributes to students’ motivation and achievement. They plan lessons with well-paced tasks that challenge and motivate students of all abilities.

- Teachers encourage discussions in class using care sector vocabulary to develop students’ confidence and effectively link theory to practice. They use effective strategies to check students’ learning in class. For example, in a tutorial session, students assessed their peers’ presentations on issues of personal hygiene, which developed their self-esteem and confidence, enabling them to make good learning progress. However, in a small minority of lessons, teachers do not plan sufficiently challenging activities, or provide enough time for students’ reflection and evaluation.
- Teachers and learning development assistants plan sessions well so that students in need of extra support make good progress. Teachers make good use of high quality and readily available resources. These impact positively on learning and facilitate the creation of effective study environments where students work diligently and calmly.
- Students demonstrate a good ability to work on their own through well-organised class activities, homework and directed self-study, often using materials located on the VLE.
- Teachers monitor students’ progress closely and provide timely support to those who fall behind in their work. When planning courses, teachers take into account the ability of individual students and, through well-planned one-to-one tutorial support, help students meet their individual targets.
- Teachers make good use of work placements so that students develop good vocational skills and transfer their academic knowledge into practice. Students take responsibility for assignments in the workplace and for collating the feedback on tasks from their employers. A high proportion of students gain jobs with these employers.
- The guidance for students applying for courses is good. Before students arrive at college teachers assess their skills in the use of mathematics and English, and prospective childcare students undertake a pre-course research task. The findings from these assessments are used effectively to help students set targets for achievement.
- Teachers provide written feedback which is clear, supportive and developmental, and helps students to improve their work. Teachers help students to develop their English skills in most lessons and through corrections on marked work. Students appreciate the importance of improving literacy and mathematical skills.
- Students are well supported with advice and guidance on their next steps in training, education and employment. They value the support given with job and university applications, curriculum vitae writing, and interview preparation. Students value the ‘preparation for work’ days and gain confidence from very useful mock interviews.
- Students’ achievements are celebrated well, with motivational speakers invited to lead celebrations for students and their families to recognise their success.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well. Teachers use topical news items effectively as starting points for discussions in class to broaden students’ understanding of social issues. Students have a good understanding of the sensitivities that can exist for health and social care professionals when working with different groups of people.

ICT practitioners and ICT for users Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this is reflected in the high proportion of students who achieve qualifications, in particular at foundation and intermediate levels, for ICT practitioners. Although a minority of advanced level students do not make the progress expected of them, recent improvements in the support for students have been effective in ensuring that more of them stay on courses and are on track to achieve qualifications with high grades.

- The proportion of students progressing to the next level of learning is very high. Examples also exist of students progressing to other courses within the college after gaining confidence in learning and acquiring good ICT skills. Some students have been very successful in local and national competitions.
- Students develop high levels of skill in using application software, and many produce work of a standard that would be expected from those in commercial positions. For example, both intermediate and advanced students develop web pages that are interactive, attractive and promote themselves and the college well.
- Teachers and learning development advisers provide very good support to students who need extra help in lessons. Staff are very sensitive to their students’ needs and are skilful in ensuring that students participate in lessons and develop self-confidence.
- Knowledgeable teachers use their good industry-related skills to plan and provide teaching sessions that allow students to develop and consolidate relevant ICT skills. Students work diligently on the tasks set and take pride in their attainment. However, some sessions at advanced level are insufficiently challenging for the more able students, focusing more on meeting assessment criteria than on increasing the variety and complexity of tasks, thus limiting the development of higher-order skills.
- Resources are good and provide an appropriate professional learning environment. Good use is made of the VLE to support students’ independent learning. The feedback teachers provide for assignments is an area for improvement. Teachers do not always provide students with information on how work can be improved.
- Teachers integrate the development of mathematics into many of the topics and reinforce these skills effectively during lessons as opportunities arise. The development of English skills is less well integrated in teaching sessions. Teachers and students place too much reliance on the spelling and grammar correction built into software applications. Subsequently, teachers do not always correct errors on students’ written work. Teachers do not sufficiently encourage students to make notes in class and this reduces the ability of students to review and consolidate what they have learned.
- Information, advice and guidance are good; students are clear on the course requirements and the demands of assessment. Students receive very good support in moving on to the next level of learning or to university. Good use is made of visits to IT companies to enhance students’ understanding of the workplace and of career options. However, the further preparation of students for employment, through work experience, requires improvement.
- Teachers integrate an awareness of issues related to diversity within taught sessions, for example through a discussion about the cultural differences between formal and informal occasions such as Christmas, Diwali and Eid, and a discussion about the difficulties of installing broadband in remote communities. However, this is not consistent throughout the teaching team.

Hairdressing Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+ Apprentices	Requires improvement
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- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. In 2011/12, success rates on hairdressing courses were low and declining, and varied too much between individual courses. Success rates for apprentices training in the workplace were also low and require improvement. Despite much good teaching at the time of inspection, the standard of provision is not yet good enough to influence outcomes for the better.
- Teachers have taken part in training to develop their teaching, learning and assessment techniques and, more recently, this has had a positive impact on standards in the classroom.

Managers have made good use of advice from external trainers to develop teachers’ confidence and ability.

- Students enjoy their work and make adequate progress. They develop good practical skills, and intermediate level apprentices work to professional standards. Students on barbering courses develop good skills. However, too few students develop adequate employability skills owing to: an insufficient number of clients at the college salons; the lack of focus by teachers on working to commercial timings; limited retailing opportunities; and the lack of work placements. Attendance in lessons has improved significantly and is now good. Students adopt good health and safety and hygiene practices when performing chemical treatments on clients within practical sessions.
- Teachers are knowledgeable, well qualified and enthusiastic about their subjects. In the best lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and appropriately challenging, and teachers interact very well with students, acting as role models to inspire them and to extend their learning. During one class, learners engaged in an imaginative card game activity which effectively tested their understanding of the main cutting techniques. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan activities sufficiently to involve all students, and opportunities to develop students’ English and mathematical skills are missed.
- Assessment of students’ learning is good and teachers plan assessments very well. In the workplace, assessments are adapted to meet the needs of apprentices and employers. This is resulting in more students gaining qualifications within the planned time. Assessors and teachers provide apprentices and college-based students with positive feedback on written and practical work which helps to build their confidence and supports them to make good progress. However, teachers do not use a sufficiently wide range of assessment methods to enable all students to achieve their targets.
- Teachers provide good academic and pastoral support. They encourage students to learn independently and extend their subject knowledge by setting research activities that are undertaken at weekly directed study sessions. The majority of teachers plan lessons that are detailed and closely linked to the learning outcomes for the course. Teachers make good use of high quality learning resources to provide a stimulating learning environment.
- Teachers accurately assess students’ skills prior to the course to place them on the correct level of learning. However, their knowledge of students’ achievements prior to starting at college is not used sufficiently well in planning learning activities to suit all students. Subsequently, a minority of students does not make the progress expected of them. Students who need extra help are very well supported to achieve their qualifications.
- Teachers support students well in the development of their mathematical and English skills during lessons. For example, teachers incorporate the use of percentages, proportions and fractions well when teaching colour theory. However, teachers do not adequately provide corrections to mistakes in students’ written work.
- Teachers incorporate the celebration and promotion of equality and diversity well into lessons. However, the development of skills and knowledge in Afro-Caribbean hair techniques and product knowledge requires improvement.

Sport Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+	Requires improvement
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- The proportion of students achieving qualifications in sport since the last inspection is low and this is reflected in teaching, learning and assessment that require improvement. However, quality improvement activities implemented in the past year are being applied rigorously. This has had a positive impact on students’ experience and on their progress in achieving their qualifications this year.

- In the better lessons, teachers use current sporting examples to make the learning relevant. For example, a study of an Olympic athlete’s pre-race preparation was used to reinforce students’ understanding of goal setting in a sports psychology lesson. In another lesson, the use of interactive technologies was highly effective in creating a student-centred session exploring the impact of drugs in sport. Students demonstrate good communication and social skills, and work well in groups.
- Teachers understand the needs of their students well, and pastoral support is good. Students are well motivated by their teachers, who make themselves available both in and between sessions, enhancing the students’ capacity to achieve to the best of their ability. Students facing challenging personal circumstances benefit from excellent care and guidance from the college’s support services.
- The way in which teachers monitor students’ progress has improved in rigour, and a tracking process is now used effectively. Students at risk of underperforming are identified early, and teachers put in place appropriate support. Attendance has improved and is now good. Target setting at advanced level is an area for improvement and teachers do not challenge students sufficiently to achieve at higher levels.
- Teachers provide timely and helpful feedback to students, who are well informed about the progress they are making and how to improve further. Assessment scenarios capture students’ interest and have a focus on roles within the sports industry. However, teachers rely too heavily on written work; students would benefit from being allowed to present their work in a wider range of formats that are more relevant to the practical nature of the subject.
- The development of employability skills requires improvement. Teachers do not adequately enforce employment-related standards in practical sessions and students are given limited exposure to sport outside of their lessons. Teachers make insufficient use of work experience and additional coaching and leadership qualifications to improve students’ job chances.
- The development of English and mathematics is satisfactory. Teachers do not always plan and provide learning sufficiently well to make use of, and reinforce, naturally occurring opportunities to improve students’ skills.
- Advice and guidance are now good. Students are accurately guided to the correct level of qualification and staff make clear to them at interview their expectations of performance and conduct.
- Teachers are skilful in extending students’ knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity. In a circuit training session, students were given target audiences to plan for, based on gender and age, and they made good observations on the needs of these groups and applied the principles of training well. Students demonstrate high levels of mutual respect for each other and their teachers.

Foundation mathematics Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and reflect the improved in-year success rates, where the proportion of students achieving their qualifications has returned to the high level of two years ago. Students are positive about their experience of foundation mathematics and are gaining useful employability skills such as problem solving and communication.
- Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that students are practising and developing mathematics skills, and that activities are matched to the different abilities of all students. Good starter activities are used effectively, to check prior learning and to interest students quickly in lessons.
- The majority of students demonstrate appropriate knowledge and application of mathematics concepts such as scale drawings, properties of shapes, fractions, percentages and ratios. Students like the way that teachers break topics down into easy stages, and the majority of

students now feel more confident in using their mathematical skills. Students have benefited from learning how to break problems down into smaller steps, and now apply this method in their other subjects.

- Students receive good support in lessons from teachers and learning development advisers and, as a result, all are able to participate and make progress in lessons.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers adapt resources well to make them relevant to vocational subjects or to preparation for examinations, and therefore more understandable for students. For example, percentages of metals in solder were used for plumbers, whereas percentages of care types were used for health and social care students. Teachers make good use of visual and interactive resources to involve students in lessons, for example through the use of cards to match statements to answers. In the better lessons, students learn well from each other through pair and group activities.
- Teachers use questioning effectively, and as a result all students are able to explain their workings out or give examples of uses of mathematics in real life. Teachers check students' learning well; for example, one student was asked to rearrange cards with units of measurement in reverse order to check what had been learned.
- In the weaker lessons, teachers rely too much on worksheets, some of which have not been updated, thereby reducing their relevance to students. In a small minority of lessons, teachers are not correcting inaccurate mathematics and inefficient mathematical techniques, and subsequently opportunities to develop students' skills are missed.
- Independent learning is encouraged by most teachers. Students benefit well from using the college's VLE with its good range of resources, including practice examination papers and short video clips explaining mathematics processes in clear and manageable stages. Classroom management is good; teachers use praise and encouragement well to build students' confidence so that students are able to ask questions and explore solutions.
- Teachers provide adequate advice and guidance about mathematics functional skills. They accurately assess students' skills at the start of the course in order to establish the level of qualification that students will study. However, students on advanced level vocational programmes are not routinely offered the qualification.
- Teachers' feedback on marked work is good. Teachers provide clear feedback on what students have done well and the areas they need to develop; students also practise self-evaluation. However, in a small minority of cases, teachers' feedback is limited to providing the correct answer and does not explain to students how to improve. Students make good use of, and like, the online resources which enable them to see how well they have done and on which topics they need to improve.
- Teachers guide students well in setting targets which focus on their areas for improvement. However, teachers do not monitor these sufficiently, and in a minority of cases miss opportunities to provide feedback on progress.
- The learning environments are inclusive; all students are able to participate equally and teachers plan sessions effectively to meet the needs of different groups of students. However, the active promotion and celebration of diversity through classroom activities are underdeveloped.

<p>Accounting, finance and business management</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, and this is reflected in the significant improvement in retention, achievement and progress students are making in-year. Students' current performance is demonstrably better than that in the previous year. Students are encouraged and inspired by very experienced, and commercially aware, teachers who plan lessons well and give students excellent individual support during and after lessons.

- Students are developing good personal and business skills such as presentational skills, timekeeping, team working, research, and analysis through a range of stimulating group and individual activities. Teachers make good use of direct questioning, provide extra help to students who need it and provide more challenging tasks for more able students. Most lessons begin with short starter activities which capture students’ attention and focus them on learning. In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not test knowledge and understanding sufficiently, or the pace is too fast to allow students time to reflect on the information presented.
- Students gain very good skills in accounting and management. Students in employment are improving their performance at work by using skills gained in managing budgets, team leading, and personnel practice. Students gain useful insights into business from workplace visits and guest speakers, and achieve success in national business competitions. A minority of students develops good employability skills through work experience, but opportunities are limited and this is an area for further improvement.
- Students make good progress. Teachers make effective use of close monitoring of students in relation to targets which help them to raise their aspirations. Targets are reviewed regularly, so that students at risk of falling behind quickly receive extra support. In a small minority of cases these targets are too vague and needed to be more clearly defined.
- Students use the extensive online business and accounting resources well to work independently. However, the use of technology in the classroom to enliven lessons is underdeveloped.
- Teachers and specialist staff provide good support to students who need additional help. Learning development advisers liaise effectively with teachers so that support is well planned and contributes to students’ achievement. Where necessary, good use is made of adaptive technology for students with disabilities so that they can participate fully in lessons.
- Assessment practices are good. Assignments are well written and have clear criteria which students understand. Good use is made of peer assessment, where students evaluate their colleagues’ presentations. Most teachers provide written feedback of a high quality which clearly informs students what they need to do to improve their grades. However, a few provides only cursory comments.
- Students develop their English and mathematical skills well through activities such as business report writing, and use business and accounting terminology confidently in lively debates. However, teachers do not always correct spelling and grammar in students’ written work. Students use calculations effectively for analysing and interpreting data and calculating sales, costs and profits.
- Teachers provide good guidance to students about course options and levels of learning. They prepare students well for their next steps when they leave. A good proportion of students progress into further education and employment.
- Students work well together in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Teachers plan lessons sufficiently well to help students understand aspects of equality and diversity. However, they do not adequately facilitate discussions among students to challenge stereotypical thinking further.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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- Aylesbury College’s senior leaders and governors are very effectively translating an impressive strategic vision for the college into a practical reality. Prudent financial management, combined with good strategic planning and active partnerships, means that this relatively small college is evolving within a larger learning campus which meets many local needs. Modern facilities range from pre-school to higher education, with appropriate provision for those with moderate to severe learning needs. The college is a partner in well-established plans to provide a co-located university technical college to complement its offer. A good and continually expanding relationship with local businesses and community interests is bringing benefits to the locality by providing a trained workforce with skills relevant to local requirements.

- Senior leaders set a positive example to the college in terms of their enthusiastic search for improvements in the student experience. This is reflected in the positive and dedicated staff who are inspiring most of their students to learn, achieve, and enjoy their experience at college.
- Governors are very clear about their role and carry it out well. They use their considerable and appropriate experience effectively to help the college achieve its strategic objectives, whilst offering a proper degree of monitoring and challenge.
- A refreshed approach to performance management means that a rigorous system effectively ensures that poorly performing members of staff are promptly helped with their development, or leave the college.
- A well-managed continuous professional development programme leads to improved performance, notably in teaching, learning and assessment. Development activities range from effective individual coaching by internal or external staff, through to interesting whole-college training. The latter includes well-received sessions on teaching strategies such as the use of technology in the classroom, and 'putting the fun back into functional skills'. However, the lack of systematic industrial updating for teaching staff is undermining the adherence to employment standards in a minority of subject areas.
- Continuous self-assessment and review contribute well to raising standards. All levels of staff are fully involved in a wide range of improvement activities which include regular and effective reviews, extensive involvement of students, improved use of data, constructively critical 'mock inspections', action planning and individual interventions by managers. Good management of courses has resulted in many improvements now being well established; for example, much better tracking of student progress now ensures quicker support being provided when necessary. Although the focus is on learning, all support areas of the college are also expected to improve their service to students and staff. However, managers do not sufficiently examine further potential for improvement and reflect too much on limited examples of success. Action planning targets are, in too many cases, linked with changes in processes rather than being judged against the impact on students.
- The system for observing teaching and learning is proving very effective in driving up standards. The system provides a good mix of graded observations for management purposes, and developmental work more helpfully aiding personal improvement. The work of advanced practitioners and designated staff with skills in using learning technology has had an impact on improving standards in teaching, learning and assessment. Analysis of observations clearly identifies themes which are then used for continuous professional development.
- The provision of courses across the college, based on effective analysis of local information, is well planned and routinely adjusted. The majority of curriculum areas are well managed. In a very small number of cases, where management and planning have not been as strong, this has led to disappointing outcomes for learners and the areas for improvement highlighted in this report. In underperforming areas, senior leaders have clearly identified causes, in personnel or processes, and are taking appropriate actions to raise standards.
- The college's programme of work-based learning has been carefully and successfully expanded. The area is satisfactorily managed, although improvements are needed in aspects such as the observation of assessors and quality assurance with subcontractors.
- The college is a safe and welcoming environment. Students and staff treat each other with courtesy and respect. College activities, such as recruitment and performance management, are carefully scrutinised to ensure that indirect discrimination does not take place. Students who require extra help are very well supported in reaching their goals. Managers collect information on the performance of different groups of students, but do not adequately use these data to take steps to ensure that all students perform at equally high levels.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners, with rigorously maintained records and thorough formal procedures. College staff, including senior leaders, teachers and support staff, are well aware of their role in safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults. Potential cases are properly referred to specialists, where appropriate, and supportive action is promptly taken.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Aylesbury 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
	Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2
Early years and playwork	2
ICT for practitioners	2
ICT for users	2
Hairdressing	3
Sport	3
Foundation mathematics	2
Accounting and finance	2
Business management	2

Provider details

Aylesbury College	
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	14+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1812
	Part-time: 812
Principal/CEO	Pauline Odulinski
Date of previous inspection	March 2010
Website address	www.aylesbury.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)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	264	25	345	47	657	168	0	0
Part-time	259	284	324	736	57	279	0	173
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	179	148	100	225	0	2		
Number of learners aged 14-16	183							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Training Event Safety Solutions Limited ■ Smarter Training Group Limited ■ Barrett Bell Limited ■ John Laing Training Limited ■ Show and Events Security Limited ■ Aspire Sporting Academy Limited ■ Hill McManus Limited ■ Haddon Training Limited 							

Additional socio-economic information

The college serves the population within the Aylesbury Vale and also attracts learners from the wider community of Buckinghamshire and into the neighbouring counties of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire. The minority ethnic population of Buckinghamshire is 11%. The proportion of pupils in Aylesbury schools attaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics is above the South East and England averages. The proportion of qualified residents in Aylesbury Vale is higher than the South East and England averages, and at foundation and intermediate levels is above these averages. The unemployment rate in Aylesbury Vale is equal to that of the South East and lower than the national rate. The 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Aylesbury Vale to have low levels of deprivation. Employment in the area reflects that of the South East and is highest in the service sector including distribution, hospitality, finance and business, public administration, education and health.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Rieks Drijver

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), and six additional inspectors, assisted by the vice principal for learning and quality 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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