Waltham Forest College

General further education college

Inspection dates		13–17 May 2013
Overall effectiveness	**This inspection:**	**Requires improvement-3**
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This college requires improvement because:

- Outcomes for adult learners at foundation level, and for full-time learners taking English and mathematics, are poor.
- Teachers do not ensure that learners understand the relevance to their vocational courses of gaining qualifications in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good enough.
- The provision in foundation English is inadequate.
- Observations of lessons focus too much on what teachers do and not enough on the learning that is taking place.
- College managers do not ensure that self-assessment at curriculum level is sufficiently critical or evaluative, particularly in respect of teaching and learning.
- Staff at all levels are not consistent or rigorous enough in ensuring that improvements are brought about sufficiently rapidly in key areas of provision.

This college has the following strengths:

- A safe and calm working environment that fosters mutual respect and celebrates the wide diversity of the college community.
- The proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications has improved significantly in several vocational areas and is now high.
- Productive collaborations with employers and other agencies widen participation and provide training opportunities for a range of disadvantaged groups.
- Very good pastoral support, especially for the most vulnerable learners.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes further by more rigorous action focused on the progress made by individuals in lessons in order to ensure all learners achieve their full potential.

- Develop strategies to improve the quality of English and mathematics lessons, and ensure that all staff work cooperatively so that English and mathematics qualifications are an integral and relevant component of the vocational curriculum.

- Improve the quality of learning in all lessons by ensuring that both teachers and lesson observers focus more deeply on assessing the impact of teaching on learning.

- Set more ambitious and clearer targets to help learners to improve their work, know what they need to do to make further progress and achieve their full potential.

- Ensure that self-assessment, particularly of teaching, learning and assessment at curriculum level, is more rigorous and leads to precise and measurable actions for improvements.

- Through further effective staff training and performance management, ensure that all staff participate in, and are held accountable for, raising standards.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement

- Learners' achievements improved sharply in 2011/2012 and are now around the average for similar colleges; however, outcomes are too variable across curriculum areas. In some areas, such as information technology, construction, business and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), learners achieve well, but in others, such as arts, foundation English and foundation mathematics, many learners do not achieve their qualifications.

- Although learners make satisfactory progress, too many who are based on the college campus do not achieve their full potential. Advanced-level learners on vocational courses achieve at expected levels given their prior attainment. Learners in the workplace, in particular, enjoy their learning, and the standards that they achieve are high.

- College data indicate that learners' attendance rates and punctuality in lessons continue to improve, and are now satisfactory overall. However, inspectors still observed examples of disruption to learning caused by learners either being absent or arriving late to lessons. Not all teachers challenge these learners with sufficient rigour.

- College managers have not sufficiently ensured that all groups of learners are achieving equally well. While there are no imbalances in achievement relating to gender or ethnicity, adult learners studying for foundation-level qualifications are frequently not successful. Managers have clear strategies for improvement in this area, but these are yet to have an impact.

- Outcomes for learners with additional learning needs are good. Learners aged 14 to 16, often with poor prior experiences of education, are supported well to develop skills. The majority either progress to higher-level courses at the college or into further education, training or employment. The smaller group of learners in the care of the local authority also achieves well on a variety of different courses.

- Learners benefit from a rigorous induction to their qualifications. Once this induction is finished, the vast majority of learners stay at college until the end of their courses. However, significant numbers of learners drop out of courses during this induction period; managers do not have a sufficiently rigorous process to inform them of the reasons, or destinations of the majority of these learners.

- Managers do not consistently collect sufficient information on the destination of learners after completing their course. This results in managers not being able to analyse adequately the

effectiveness of courses in preparing learners for employment, further education or training. A significant minority of learners who apply to higher education do not secure a place.

- Learners' achievements on courses in English and mathematics are inadequate. Many learners do not achieve these qualifications and do not appreciate how these subjects are relevant to their vocational course. Full-time learners are not able to study GCSE English and mathematics and this restricts potential employment opportunities for a minority of learners.

- Learners develop satisfactory employability skills. College managers have responded well to local and national employment requirements. For example, apprentices in rail track maintenance and meat processing achieve well and enjoy working with 1stinrail and Morrisons respectively. They progress to full-time employment on successful completion of their training.

- Learners benefit from industry-standard resources in many areas and links with local businesses are increasing both in number and effectiveness. These raise learners' awareness of future employment possibilities. However, in some subject areas such as business, engineering and construction, learners do not always have access to the work placements that would allow them to gain greater understanding and experience of their chosen careers.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Although much of the teaching is good, the college recognises that this good practice is not sufficiently consistent across the college. This is reflected in the variability of outcomes for learners. Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have focused on improving teachers' skills through a wide range of staff development and training activities which are beginning to have a positive impact in several areas.

- Teaching and learning in many lessons are good. Teachers apply their professional experience skilfully in planning learning activities, so that learners enjoy their lessons, gain confidence and develop strong academic and practical skills that help them to progress and gain employment. Most lessons in the college are carefully planned and teachers use a variety of activities to maintain learners' interest. Learning support assistants work effectively with teachers to provide support in lessons for learners who need extra help, for example those with hearing or visual impairment.

- In better lessons, learners work together productively, gain independent learning skills and make often satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. Many teachers introduce lively activities and use questioning techniques very effectively to consolidate learning and to extend learners' understanding. Teachers make very good use of individual learner contributions to encourage wider understanding and make learning more stimulating and relevant. Some teachers use information and learning technology (ILT) very imaginatively to encourage greater participation in lessons.

- Less successful lessons often involve the teacher talking too much and this does not stimulate learners' interest effectively. In these lessons, teachers do not build sufficiently on the previous assessment of learners' achievements, and do not challenge more able learners to achieve their full potential. In some instances, teachers miss opportunities to use ILT creatively in lessons to make learning more meaningful, relevant or interesting. In a few lessons, all learners complete the same tasks irrespective of their ability.

- Teachers are suitably experienced and well qualified. They care about their learners and give them good personal support. Learners feel confident that they can approach staff at any time to receive help, and this creates a secure environment for learning.

- Most teachers assess learners' work regularly and provide learners with encouraging feedback. The results of assessments and learners' progress are routinely recorded on the college's virtual learning environment (VLE). Teachers meet frequently with individual learners to review their progress and to agree targets for improvement. However, many of these targets are not sufficiently specific to be helpful to the learner, and do not always make clear for the learner

what they need to do to improve. Only a few teachers make use of target grades to challenge learners and raise their ambitions.

- The development of learners' English and mathematics skills is inadequate. Managers have introduced a new language policy this year that focuses attention more closely on the assessment and development of learners' skills in English, but this is still to have an impact. A similar policy is still to be developed for mathematics. A growing number of teachers across the college now pay good attention to correcting punctuation, spelling and grammatical errors in learners' written work.

- Much teaching in English lessons is uninspiring and college leaders recognise that support for the development of learners' functional skills requires improvement. However, in some vocational areas, teachers involve learners successfully in a range of carefully devised, practical activities and tasks in English and mathematics that are directly relevant to their main programme. These lessons help learners to develop their skills effectively and show them the importance of these subjects for their chosen career. Teachers based in the college's skills centre provide good support to individual learners.

- Learners receive guidance that is effective in helping them to choose the right course. A team of expert advisers provides good initial and on-going information and advice for learners, including for those with specific learning needs.

- Managers have put in place very good pastoral support arrangements. These provide carefully planned specialist advice for individual learners facing a very wide range of personal matters, such as domestic or financial concerns, or with mental health or behavioural issues. Learners value very highly the support they receive, and this helps them to make further progress.

- Learners at the college come from very diverse cultural heritages. They work very well together and learn collaboratively in a positive atmosphere of mutual respect. Teachers generally plan their lessons effectively to promote equality and diversity in a way that is directly relevant to the learners' area of study. However, many teachers miss naturally occurring opportunities in lessons to encourage discussion and better understanding of equality and diversity.

Health & social care and early years **Learning programmes for 16-18** **Learning programmes for 19+**	Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. On early years courses most learners complete their programmes successfully. However, on health and social care programmes the number who successfully complete is low and on access to higher education courses it is satisfactory. Too few learners achieve high grades.

- In better lessons, teachers use well-chosen interactive activities that confirm and extend learning and understanding; as a result, learners make good progress. In one lesson, learners developed good first aid skills, applying a support and an elevation sling for a suspected fracture. In weaker lessons, teachers do not allow learners to develop the ideas introduced in sufficient detail. Their notes are too brief and not properly filed and this hinders the learners' subsequent progress with their assignments.

- On most courses, teachers support learners well and provide thoughtful and effective learning and pastoral support. However, on the health and social care courses, frequent staff changes have led to a lack of continuity for learners, and support has been less effective.

- Teachers ensure that learners make good links between theory and vocational practice. Work placement activities are well managed. Learners, particularly on childcare programmes, draw on their work placement experience to illustrate issues raised in lessons. In one lesson, learners applied an appropriate piece of theory to children's play. However, on other courses, although meeting qualification requirements, learners have insufficient access to workplace practice to strengthen their skills and support university applications.

- Teachers do not plan effectively for learners to use technology in lessons and make little reference to the use of the college intranet as a learning resource. As a result, learners do not develop the confidence in using new technologies that they are likely to need in their future careers.

- Teachers assess learning in lessons effectively and use questioning well to confirm and extend learning and understanding. They manage group work well and learners provide thoughtful and detailed feedback to each other. However, more able learners are not routinely challenged by the tasks set.

- Teachers ensure that learners work well towards passing their assignments and that they develop higher-level skills of analysis and evaluation. However, teachers do not use information from learners' previous work sufficiently well to set individual targets that would allow learners to improve and achieve high grades.

- Learners' work is assessed very carefully and written feedback is detailed, clear and encouraging. Learners understand what they need to do to improve. Teachers correct errors in punctuation, spelling and grammar. On health and social care programmes, however, teachers do not return learners' work quickly enough, and this has contributed to slower progress.

- Learners receive appropriate and timely guidance and support. Teachers use learners' previous achievements to ensure that they are placed on the right course at the appropriate level. Teachers support learners' applications to university, or employment, very well.

- Teachers promote equality and diversity very effectively. Learners discuss confidently strategies to ensure that services are available to all, and that barriers are tackled. In childcare lessons, learners read and use children's stories from a wide range of cultures. For example, in an effective lesson on learning through nursery and action rhymes, an African learner sang a Swahili children's song for the benefit of other learners.

ICT for users and ICT for practitioners **Learning programmes for 16-18** **Learning programmes for 19+**	Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, resulting in the vast majority of learners achieving their qualifications. Learners develop good computing skills, such as a familiarity with operating systems, and this prepares them for gaining relevant employment. Learners widen their knowledge and understanding and develop good independent learning skills.

- Learners enjoy their studies. They benefit from computing projects for animation that improve their understanding of welfare issues such as smoking and substance abuse. Learners have high ambitions, and the majority of second-year learners progress to higher education.

- Teachers have high expectations of learners and support them well through weekly tutorials. Learners make good progress and produce a high standard of work. Teachers use questioning effectively in these support sessions to deepen understanding of complex programming concepts such as systems analysis.

- Teachers use a variety of methods in well-planned lessons to interest learners. These include computer-based crosswords, and the use of computer graphics and photo editing. By accurately identifying learners' starting points, teachers ensure that the more able learners work on suitably challenging tasks. For example, in an exercise involving spreadsheets, learners explained the purpose of cost-benefit analysis. Others completed complex tasks such as computer system configuration and using word balloons in animations.

- Target setting is good. Teachers set challenging targets and encourage learners to set their own ambitious targets. However, teachers are sometimes slow in updating targets centrally, and learners are then unaware of their progress and what they need to do to improve.

- Teachers use learning resources well. Learners have access to well-equipped, industry-standard hardware and software that promote progression choices. Wall posters introduce learners to aspects of computing outside their programme, such as coding from Babbage to Gates. Learners are able to use the VLE away from the college, ensuring that they have access to all their learning materials. Teachers identify learners at risk of failing their qualifications using the information contained on the VLE and then target these learners effectively for further support.

- Teachers use regular assessment to give thorough, detailed and constructive feedback. Learners grade each other's projects and give helpful written feedback on improvements necessary to raise the grade. This is often very effective; but, on occasion, groups work at the pace of the slowest writer leaving a few learners with nothing to do. Teachers ask challenging questions in order to confirm learners' understanding. However, in some cases group, rather than individual, questioning leads to a few learners losing interest.

- Teachers use the VLE to set steadily increasing targets to improve attendance and punctuality ranging from one week to a month of full attendance and punctuality. Learners use daily updated registers to view their progress towards their target. However, during the inspection, attendance at many classes was lower than the college's own targets.

- English and mathematics are insufficiently integrated into the computing curriculum. While qualifications in English and mathematics are not necessary to gain a computing qualification, the slow progress of some learners towards improvement of these skills is having a negative impact on their employment or higher education opportunities.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is adequate. Learners' understanding is supported by well-produced handouts. Teachers are developing computer-related resources, such as cyber-bullying exercises, that will further improve learners' awareness of important considerations surrounding emerging technologies.

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

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Although most learners complete their qualifications successfully, their progress in achieving their full potential is hindered by weaknesses in assessment.

- Teachers plan lessons well and learners who require additional support are identified and targeted appropriately. The standard of learners' work is often high. For example, more able intermediate learners demonstrated skills required at advanced level. Teachers know their learners well and carefully place learners into small groups to support effective learning. Teachers promote the high standards expected by the industries.

- Learners develop good skills across all disciplines and demonstrate sound knowledge, clearly linking theory to practice. For example, as a result of an effective make-up lesson taught by a learner, her client was able to replicate successfully the creative techniques demonstrated.

- Although some learners have the opportunity to carry out hair and beauty treatments at a local hospital, many have insufficient access to structured work experience. This impedes the further development of their employability skills and professional practice.

- Whilst assessment is valid and fair, some learners are making slow progress towards completing their qualifications. For example, barbering learners still have too many haircuts to complete in the remaining time. Teachers sometimes have too narrow an assessment focus, limiting the number of assessments that can be completed on one client. Teachers track learners' practical skills well, but many learners are unsure of the theory tests they have yet to complete.

- Teachers do not use assessment to support further learning well enough, and use insufficiently challenging questioning. Most teachers use too limited a range of techniques to confirm the

extent of learners' knowledge. For example, assessment techniques that develop learners' skills of self-refection to identify and implement areas for improvement are not widely used.

- Teachers do not always place learners onto appropriate courses based upon their creativity or prior experience. While there have been recent improvements to the induction process, some learners are repeating work they have previously done, or are placed on programmes that are insufficiently motivating.

- Most learners receive feedback that allows them to progress, but occasionally this feedback is restricted to comments that are too basic for the more able learners to know what they need to do to improve. Learners do not routinely provide feedback to each other while they are working in pairs in beauty therapy, and this results in the learner who is acting as a client often not being involved in the activity.

- English and mathematics are not routinely promoted in lessons. Although teachers plan lessons well to help learners improve their English and mathematics, they do not always reinforce skills adequately during lessons, and learners remain unaware of the relevance of these skills to their vocational work. However, spelling and grammar are routinely corrected in learners' written work.

- Teachers use taster programmes as an effective means of recruitment for mainstream hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes. Learners benefit from 10-week sessions that provide an insight into the expectations of a programme before they commit to a course. Learners are clear about their next steps in training.

- Teachers promote equality and diversity well in lessons. Learners have a clear understanding of how the diversity of clients has an impact on treatments, and how to adapt them for a wide range of client circumstances. For example, learners work confidently on a variety of hair types as well as a wide range of skin tones, and they can adapt their hairdressing techniques and make-up application accordingly.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) **Learning programmes for 16-18** **Learning programmes for 19+**	Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. As a result, the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications has improved significantly and is high.

- Learners complete work to a high standard and they make good progress. Many learners are working above the standard expected for their stage and level of programme. For example, in a lesson for entry-level learners, they were accurately using a range of rich and complex vocabulary to develop a comprehensive list of the key characteristics required to work as a childcare assistant.

- Teachers provide good care and support to motivate learners and create a positive atmosphere in which they enjoy learning. This supports the acquisition of language skills, as well as building confidence and employability. Teachers ensure that learners have a safe haven in which they develop language skills effectively as a foundation for their future success.

- In many lessons, teachers use their skills and expertise well to plan a range of relevant and contextualised activities. Teachers craft these activities effectively to build on learners' strengths and interests and to develop learners' linguistic prowess. For example, in one lesson, teachers discussed job skills using advertisements personalised to the learners' intended job roles. Teachers with another group explored different ways of presenting statistics by involving learners in the use of the interactive whiteboard.

- Characteristics of the very small number of weaker lessons included language errors by the teacher and learners all doing the same work, which was too easy for some and too hard for others. Teachers talked for too long with the result that learners did not have to think for themselves.

- Teachers are adept at preparing learners for their examinations. They give learners relevant hints and tips in order to ensure they perform at their best. For example, in a lesson on report writing, the teacher worked through a series of cartoons that showed a specific incident as a means of prioritising the key elements of a report, and to provide a framework from which the class could develop an exemplar report together.

- In many lessons, learners benefit from information technology being used well to reinforce their understanding of key language points. For example, in one lesson, learners collaborated very well in using technology to replicate the process, structure and words used when writing a message to a friend.

- Teachers assess carefully learners' abilities at the start of the course and ensure that learners are on the right level of programme. However, often teachers do not ensure that learners know exactly what they need to do to improve their English language skills, as they have not agreed clear or precise targets with the learners.

- Teachers give good verbal feedback and use question and answer effectively. However, in written feedback, many teachers annotate learners' work with brief and insufficiently helpful comments.

- Learners from a diverse range of cultures collaborate well and support one another in their learning. Teachers show a good understanding of the need to celebrate diversity and promote equal opportunities. For example, in one lesson, the teacher developed the learners' understanding of equal opportunities in work by carefully planning an exercise to provoke a discussion with the learners that questioned the gender stereotypes associated with different career choices.

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

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate. As a result, large numbers of learners do not achieve their qualifications. Although adult learners are highly motivated and make good progress at entry level in gaining basic literacy qualifications, the majority of younger learners on vocational courses make slow progress in lessons and the standard of their work is poor. They do not attend classes regularly. Many arrive late for lessons, and the teacher often allows this to disrupt learning for other learners.

- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of learners. In many lessons, they use a limited range of learning activities with few links to learners' vocational courses. Learners at different levels of ability work on the same tasks; inattention to room layout and the ineffective management of poor behaviour also hinder learners' progress.

- Teachers often set lesson objectives that are not sufficiently detailed or well planned to be challenging for all learners. In these lessons, teachers do not use a wide enough variety of resources to suit the varied abilities of all learners. Most resources are paper based and of poor quality. Learners become quickly bored with completing a series of worksheets. The use of interactive technologies is limited and uninspiring.

- In a minority of lessons, teachers use their skills well to ensure that learners work enthusiastically in pairs or small groups on relevant, carefully-planned activities that challenge learners to develop their understanding. Teachers make effective use of individual coaching and open questioning techniques to extend learners' language and problem solving skills, and to develop their proof-reading abilities.

- Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners make good use of the skills centre for additional help with their English. In lessons, less able learners benefit from additional help from learning support assistants. However, support staff do not always give learners the skills that they need to work independently.

- Teachers assess learners' aptitude in English adequately at the start of the course to ensure learners are working towards an appropriate level of qualification. However, they do not use this information well enough to plan lessons to meet the specific skill gaps identified. Learners are not set clear enough targets to improve particular aspects of grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and reading comprehension.

- Teachers do not give enough detailed feedback to learners. They make good use of general verbal feedback to motivate learners to achieve their tasks. However, learners do not often receive detailed written feedback on the progress they are making and the specific grammar points or spelling needing improvement. Learners do not develop the skills needed to track and monitor their own progress.

- Coherent planning on most programmes is not sufficiently developed to support learners in improving their English. Teachers do not promote functional English clearly enough. Younger learners, particularly, do not recognise how improving their English supports their progress towards their long-term goals, or improves their employment prospects. Vocational teachers do not make enough use of opportunities in practical lessons to reinforce and practice these essential skills.

- Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily in lessons. Learners work well in diverse groups and support each other effectively. Teachers recognise and celebrate the differences and range of experiences learners bring to the classroom. In one lesson, learners had to reassess their communication skills by completing an interesting, deceptively simple test, which illustrated well to learners the risks of making cultural assumptions based upon their own experiences.

Foundation mathematics **Learning programmes for 16-18** **Learning programmes for 19+**	Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. As a result, too few learners achieved their qualifications in 2011/12, although there is evidence of rapid improvement in 2012/13. Many learners lack confidence at the start of their course, but subsequently make good progress. In particular, adult learners are well motivated and enjoy improving their mathematics. Attendance rates and punctuality for younger learners are low.

- Learners make satisfactory progress in their lessons. They develop their ability to apply concepts such as percentages, and to calculate correctly areas, perimeters and volumes. They explore these aspects in whole group work, and practise their skills well in small groups and individually. Revision to prepare for examinations is good; this is contributing to the improved outcomes in the current year. Learning support assistants provide appropriate support for learners who need additional help.

- Teachers use good questioning techniques in class to check how well learners are acquiring skills. These techniques ensure that learners grasp new aspects of mathematics and consolidate their understanding. Learners receive regular feedback on their work, with some good written advice that helps them to develop their skills further.

- Teachers do not use a wide enough range of resources to ensure that all learners are motivated to achieve their full potential. Online resources for mathematics are being made available on the VLE, and learners use these resources well to practise the skills that they have learned. However, teachers mainly use paper-based worksheets in lessons and these fail to capture learners' interests.

- The integration of mathematics learning into their vocational courses for younger learners is poor. Resources often lack the vocational context that the learners need to understand the importance of improving their mathematics. Staff are not working together sufficiently well to create a learning experience which brings together both the mathematics and the vocational dimensions.

- Support for learners is good, particularly for those who attend the skills centre. A significant proportion of learners attend and most receive effective guidance. Some learners have access to weekly support, others drop in and work on their mathematics as the need arises. Teachers keep records that ensure that learners' progress in these sessions is well monitored. Pastoral support is good and valued by learners, particularly those with additional support needs.

- The use of assessment, both on entry and during the course, requires improvement. Not all teachers make sufficient use of the outcomes of assessment to plan appropriate lessons or set individual targets for learners. The recording of progress reviews is frequently poor; as a result, learners often have no reference to what they need to do to improve.

- In some lessons, teachers are unable to plan for learning effectively. The range of learners' needs and skills in these lessons is too wide for teachers to be able to ensure that all learners can make suitable progress. This has a negative impact on learning, with the stronger learners being insufficiently challenged and the weaker learners struggling to cope.

- Teachers promote equality and diversity adequately and teaching methods foster good relations. Learners from a wide variety of backgrounds treat each other with respect and work well together.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the local social and economic environment and the impact this has upon learners' aspirations, progress and achievements. The strategic plan is effective in setting a clear direction for the college, and it has been effectively communicated to learners, governors and staff.

- Following the previous inspection, the Principal and senior managers have put in place suitable strategies to strengthen quality assurance and curriculum management in order to improve teaching and learning and outcomes for learners. However, learners' success rates, although significantly improved in 2011/12, were no better than national averages. In addition, the proportion of lessons requiring improvement remains too high.

- Governors provide adequate oversight of the college and challenge to senior managers. They now bring sharper focus and support and receive detailed reports and data analyses. Governors have a wide range of appropriate skills and experience. Despite efforts to recruit new members, the proportion of women on the board remains low.

- Managers have recently put in place new performance measures for staff. Roles and responsibilities are clearer and teams across the college now work more effectively, focusing on developing their skills as teachers, assessors and administrators. Appraisals for senior managers are evaluative and successful in setting challenging targets. However, those for teachers are sometimes superficial and do not focus enough on improving teaching and learning.

- Recent initiatives to develop and support staff have improved the quality of learning in some curriculum areas. However, too much variation still exists in the quality of teaching, and a substantial minority of lessons requires improvement. Not all lesson observations result in sharp, helpful, critical analysis of areas for improvement. Too many lesson observations focus on teaching rather than learning. Following observations, managers provide good support for teachers to make sure they take part in the wide range of training opportunities available. Managers acknowledge that some part-time agency staff need more support to improve their practice.

- The college's self-assessment report is evaluative but overly optimistic. The report and the quality improvement plan are too generous in their judgements on outcomes for learners, the effectiveness of leadership and management and the progress made in bringing about agreed improvements. Some curriculum self-assessment is superficial and does not focus enough on evaluating teaching and learning. As a consequence, action plans to bring about improvements do not address specific, identified weaknesses, resulting in slow progress.

- Managers are well aware that more needs to be done to act upon the views of learners. They are now using regular surveys, focus groups and learner council meetings to discuss and consult with learners. This has allowed managers to gain insights into learners' views of how to improve provision; but, as yet, this is having insufficient impact.

- The college offers a wide range of subjects. Most areas provide good progression routes from entry level to advanced level and sometimes beyond. The education and training needs of the local community, and the wider region, are well served by the extensive vocational courses for young learners and adults.

- Managers have continued to develop the college's long-standing relationships with other organisations. Unemployed people, and those who are traditionally under-represented in further education, have gone on to employment or training through the well-developed partnerships with local employers. The college is a valued partner of Waltham Forest Borough Council, public and private enterprises, and local charities. It plays an important role in the development of apprenticeships and training, especially in work with unemployed adults and young people not in education, employment or training.

- All staff have successfully created an atmosphere of respect and dignity that is evident across the college. Teachers benefit from a good range of training and updating on equality and diversity. In health, care and early years and hairdressing and beauty therapy, teachers and learners recognise and celebrate diversity in the curriculum throughout the year. However, in other subject areas teachers do not routinely promote equality and diversity in lessons.

- Managers and staff are successful in ensuring the safety of learners. Appropriate safeguarding employment checks are in place and all staff and governors have completed relevant induction and safeguarding training. Learners and staff work safely in classrooms, workshops and studios. The health and safety manager, together with other staff, carries out extensive risk management reviews each year. Security staff are highly successful in making sure that the college is safe and secure and they work well with support staff and other agencies.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Waltham Forest 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	**3**	3	3
Outcomes for learners	**3**	3	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	**3**	3	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management	**3**	3	3

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	3
Early years and playwork	3
ICT for practitioners	2
ICT for users	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	3
ESOL	2
Foundation English	4
Foundation mathematics	3

Provider details

Waltham Forest 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: 1695
	Part-time: 6932
Principal/CEO	Mr Robin Jones
Date of previous inspection	June 2010
Website address	www.waltham.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	366	203	359	58	329	379	0	0
Part-time	154	2210	277	1500	120	226	0	47

Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	23	120	0	1	0	0

Number of learners aged 14-16	138
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:	▪ Care First Training Ltd ▪ MTC Learning ▪ Prospects Training International Ltd ▪ Adult Training Network Ltd ▪ DTK Business Services Ltd ▪ Learning Works ▪ Threshold Training Ltd ▪ Skillsbank Ltd ▪ Ebenezer Community Learning Centre

Additional socio-economic information

Waltham Forest College is a large general further education college within Greater London. The Borough of Waltham Forest is diverse; nearly half of the population identifies itself as being from an ethnic minority heritage. There are areas of relative prosperity in the north, but other wards are amongst the most deprived nationally. The proportion of adults in the borough having at least GCSE or equivalent qualifications is significantly lower than the London average, as is the number of young people passing with high grades at least five GCSEs, including English and mathematics. Unemployment in the borough is high, particularly amongst young adults. The largest proportion of employment in the borough is in the service industries.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Stewart Jackson HMI

Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the Vice Principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the college. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012

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