

Rotherham College of Arts and Technology

General further education college

Inspection dates		20-24 May 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Managers have successfully reinvigorated teaching and learning across the college. Teachers are very effective in raising students' aspirations and use their good vocational expertise to motivate and challenge students to succeed.
- The proportion of learners achieving their qualification has risen significantly over the last four years as a result of well-planned management strategies. A strong upward momentum has been achieved. Achievement in much of the provision is at or above national averages and weaker areas are demonstrating significant improvement.
- The high quality of learning support ensures that all students have the opportunity to make good progress and achieve. Students engage with, benefit from and enjoy their learning.
- The Principal and senior leaders have successfully led and managed improvements to the college's performance. Governors hold senior managers to account by creating a collective drive to raise standards. Staff and students show high levels of respect for each other.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- A few areas of the college remain underperforming; in particular, success and retention rates on a small minority of courses are low. Not all apprentices complete all elements of their framework. Attendance needs to be further improved.
- Although most teaching, learning and assessment is good and some is outstanding, not all learners benefit from innovative and inspirational teaching. The most successful practice is not sufficiently shared across all areas of the college to ensure that more teachers know and understand what outstanding teaching looks like. The most able learners are not consistently challenged across all areas of the provision.
- Leaders have not yet fully established strategic objectives to ensure employers are fully engaged with the college to promote employability. Useful activities that the college already has in place are not fully evaluated and measured to ensure their impact.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates further and particularly in the small number of areas currently underperforming by:
 - maintaining and accelerating the focus on improving retention
 - continuing to improve attendance
 - ensuring that all apprentices succeed.
- Share and develop the best practice across the college so that all:
 - students benefit from high quality aspirational teaching and learning
 - staff know and understand the characteristics of innovative, outstanding teaching
 - staff are confident in the use of information learning technology to enhance students' learning.
- Further develop a systematic approach to setting and monitoring student targets, so that all students are fully challenged to succeed.
- Implement a clearer strategy for employer engagement by specifying measurable strategic objectives which link to the overall vision for the college.
- Accelerate the improvements to apprenticeship programmes by introducing improved arrangements to measure the quality of learning and the review process.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes for students are good. Over the last four years, the proportion of learners on college-based provision who complete their courses and achieve their qualifications has risen significantly. Learners succeed, despite many coming from areas in and around Rotherham that are characterised by relative economic deprivation. Many students aged 16 to 18 enter the college with below average prior attainment and many adult students have few qualifications on entry. ▪ The college has successfully tackled low retention rates. The trend of improvement has been significant and the current college data demonstrates that this has continued. However, there remains too much variability across a few subject areas. Students who complete their course do well and pass rates are high. ▪ Most apprentices benefit from their programme and develop useful work-related skills and the attributes of a good employee. Apprentices have performed consistently below the national average for several years. However, most apprentices who complete their framework do so within their planned time period. Significant improvements have taken place recently. College data for the current year indicate that the vast majority of apprentices are likely to succeed. However, apprentices in engineering still do less well than others. ▪ Success rates on functional skills programmes are high. The college has successfully tackled the previously poor performance in English and mathematics. Overall, students in all age groups develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. ▪ The standard of students' work is high and exceeds industry expectations. Students across a range of courses are now making good progress. The progress made by students with disabilities or special educational needs is good. Those who need extra help and those in receipt of additional learning support achieve as well as their peers and often better. 	

- Attendance rates have improved over recent years and are satisfactory. Attendance in the current academic year is similar to last year, but still needs to improve further. Students behave well in and around the college and demonstrate highly positive attitudes to their learning.
- Students increase their confidence to quickly develop a wide range of knowledge and practical skills. In most areas, students' development of independent learning skills is effective and helps to raise their career and future goal aspirations.
- All students develop good personal and social skills and most gain skills to support their progress into employment. External events, work experience and competitions have enabled students to gain useful additional skills and experiences. For example, hospitality students gained useful employment skills during the Olympic Games and media make-up students worked with the fire service to help create safety videos.
- Progression to employment and higher education is good for the majority of learners and many progress from intermediate to advanced level courses within the college. However the college recognises that its data collection on students' destinations requires further improvement.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching learning and assessment are good and have improved as a result of very good professional development and training for teachers. These improvements have contributed to the increasing success rates across the college.
- Students are motivated to learn as a result of the well-planned lessons. Teachers continually challenge students through effective questioning and helpful feedback. Apprentices develop their skills well through good on-the-job training.
- Students develop work-related skills well. In visual and performing arts and construction these skills are exceptionally good. In childcare, students apply their experiences in childcare settings well to arrange educational visits for nursery age children, public services students draw on their experience of training methods to identify the most effective ways of improving fitness.
- Teachers use their knowledge and skills from industry and apply the training they have received from the college's quality improvement team particularly well. Students benefit from learning activities that develop their vocational, social and communication skills.
- Teachers use technology effectively to enhance learning in a few areas such as the arts and electrical engineering. However, in most subject areas students have too little access to technology and web-based learning tools. Resources in classrooms are good and the college has an ongoing programme of improvement to ensure resources reflect the industries in which students aspire to work.
- In the lessons that need to improve, teachers do not fully consider the individual needs of students when planning their lessons. A small number of teachers do not ask enough questions that test students' knowledge and understanding.
- Students receive regular and helpful feedback to improve their work before submitting it for final assessment. In a small number of cases, students' assignments rely too heavily on essay writing rather than more vocationally relevant forms of assessment. Most apprentices receive good feedback. In construction, this helps a very high proportion to achieve their qualification on time.
- Students understand what work they need to complete in order to achieve their qualification. Teachers provide good guidance on how to best achieve this. As a result, students make good progress in lessons. Students meet regularly with their tutors but not all receive easily accessible information from their tutor about their overall progress.
- Discrete lessons for English and mathematics are good and a high proportion of students achieve a functional skills qualification. Teachers routinely correct students' spelling and punctuation errors. Teachers encourage students to use the specialist terminology for their curriculum area well. Initial assessments identify students' English and mathematics needs. However, in a few areas this information insufficiently informs target setting.

- The college provides good support for students, both on personal matters that affect their learning as well as in lessons. The Gateway Centre, a college specialist support centre, provides a good service for students who appreciate the benefits to their learning. Students' views actively contribute to the types of resources the centre provides. Effective support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities ensures that they succeed in their studies.
- The college has strong, beneficial relationships with external agencies which help students in transition from school into college. The local authority, care services and schools work with the college to ensure a well-managed and as seamless process.
- Before enrolling, students receive good information advice and guidance that ensure they follow an appropriate course. Students receive effective guidance that helps them move into further education or employment. Instances found in previous years of the college enrolling apprentices on the wrong courses no longer occur.
- Through effective nurturing by teachers and support staff, students develop a strong respect for each other's individuality. In many subject areas teachers set projects that help students develop their understanding of cultures and the world around them. Art and design students were commissioned by a local law firm to produce a calendar on the theme of equality and diversity; health and social care students' work in the local community to support groups of vulnerable people; and construction students are refurbishing derelict houses to provide accommodation for homeless people.

Engineering and Transport Operations Maintenance Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Teaching in practical lessons is often good but too much of the theory teaching requires improvement. This is reflected in the previously low success rates for apprentices. In previous years, too few apprentices completed their framework. Learners are now better motivated. College data for the current year indicate an expected improvement in success rates.
- In the better lessons, teachers use challenging activities and monitor progress well. Learners are successfully motivated and work well independently. For example, in an intermediate workshop, learners successfully manufactured a range of mechanical components with confidence, demonstrating the good skills they had developed. In fabrication, learners display good skills in creating horizontal welds using tungsten inert gas welding equipment.
- In the weaker lessons the pace of teaching is too slow. Learners' understanding of engineering concepts is insufficiently checked by targeted questions. In an engineering processes theory lesson all the learners took part in an identical activity, which failed to challenge the more able or help those who had fallen behind in their studies.
- Some assessment activities in the workplace take place too long after learners have completed theory elements and written work. As a result, learners do not know quickly enough if they have demonstrated the correct practical skills to succeed.
- Resources are satisfactory, with examples of good computer controlled machining equipment, electrical testing and a motor vehicle workshop. In the workplace, most resources are of a very good standard. In the college, most learners complete practical tasks in realistic environments and benefit from industry-standard tools and equipment which helps them develop good practical skills. Learners work to a high standard and develop the required employability skills.
- The college's virtual learning environment is well populated with electrical engineering resources. However, too few learners have access to good online learning resources to promote independent learning. Interactive learning technology is not used to good effect to support learning in the classroom.
- Assessors and teachers provide good feedback on the quality of learners' completed portfolio work and learners know what they have to do to improve. However, progress reviews do not sufficiently cover all aspects of the framework or what learners learn at work. Learners know

their targets, but these are not all sufficiently challenging. Progress reviews are helpful, but incomplete and do not support rapid success. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is not fully checked.

- Learners who need additional help in English and mathematics receive good support, following initial assessment. Teachers and assessors increasingly focus on developing learners' English and mathematical skills related to engineering during lessons and in most cases correct spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.
- Learners feel safe. Health and safety is given a high priority and learners demonstrate a good understanding of the procedures for minimising risks to themselves and others. The promotion of equality and diversity during lessons is satisfactory and is included in lesson planning. Learners are aware of the stereotypical portrayal of male or female occupations in engineering and how to tackle discrimination.

**Building and Construction and Construction Crafts
Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+
Apprenticeships**

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of their students, inspiring and challenging them to excel in their learning and to achieve outstanding outcomes. Students develop very high levels of skills. They complete highly complex models in the workshop and practical solutions in the workplace. For example, joiners use specifications taken from international skills competitions as the basis for end of year team challenges; a plumbing apprentice introduced new ways of producing pipework installations which reduced the employer's costs.
- Teachers facilitate well planned lessons, with an emphasis on fully stretching the students and helping them to become independent learners. For example, foundation students who have completed their joinery qualification move on to complete tasks at intermediate level. In brickwork and painting and decorating, advanced level students work alongside foundation level colleagues to provide support and mentoring.
- Assessment is rigorous and well planned which helps students to achieve quickly. Learners know what is required from them and what they need to do to improve. For example, in brickwork sessions students are set targets to complete tasks which clearly link to previously identified areas for improvement. Feedback to students, both orally and written, helps them make rapid progress. Tracking to monitor students' progress is simple but effective.
- The college has outstanding links with employers and over the past two years around 30 full-time students have gained apprenticeships. An innovative project with a housing trust gives full-time students the opportunity to gain experience renovating empty social housing to accommodate the homeless. Teachers use this project to enable apprentices who cannot achieve the full range of competences within their employment to complete their qualification.
- Resources are excellent and provide the setting for realistic experience for those students with no relevant work experience. For example, students construct large scale models under time constraints which promotes the development of their employability skills. Classroom resources provide visual inspiration, such as photographs of previous competition winners, samples of materials and exemplary work pieces.
- Students develop good English and mathematics skills. Tutors identify naturally occurring opportunities to develop functional skills, for example comparing the cost of surface finishes using different materials. Poster prompts help students recognise the correct spelling of technical terms, commonly misspelt words and the correct use of punctuation. Students with additional learning needs receive very effective additional coaching.
- Excellent advice and guidance for students results in them studying on the most appropriate course as evidenced by high rates of retention and very high progression between levels.

- The college provides outstanding support for students with a wide range of learning and emotional difficulties who study successfully alongside other students. Extra support strategies including in-class support from specialists, workshop support staff and additional sessions are very effective. For example, in a joinery session students with a range of learning difficulties and levels of vulnerability worked in small groups producing timber models.
- Staff place a very strong emphasis on health and safety and work areas are kept clean and tidy. Students feel safe and they show respect for others irrespective of gender or background. Many sessions start with "Think of the Day" for example "is it ever OK to bully a bully?" or "why is posture in the workplace important?" which reinforce equality and health and safety.

Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and contribute to the high percentage of learners who succeed in their qualifications. Students develop a professional attitude to learning and work hard to complete their set tasks using good commercial skills. Students develop good technical skills which underpin their good background knowledge. Attendance is satisfactory.
- Lessons are well planned and facilitated. Teachers make good use of challenging questions to help students develop their understanding and reinforce learning. Teachers set high expectations and help students develop good practical skills which improve their employability.
- Teachers make particularly good use of their previous and current experiences within the hair and beauty industries, which helps students to understand the relevance of their learning. Specialist experts such as successful professional hairdressers and media make-up artists inspire students, bring in realistic knowledge and set high aspirations. In a few instances, students are not fully engaged in learning, particularly in practical lessons when waiting for their clients to arrive for their appointments.
- Teachers question students thoroughly, using direct and probing questioning to check their understanding of their practical assessments. Detailed, accurate and constructive feedback highlights where students have done well and what areas they need to improve.
- Practical assessment of learning is good. Students are well prepared for assessment and teachers are flexible, ensuring learners progress quickly when they have developed the required skills. Detailed and accurate records of performance inform future assessment planning well. Students are very clear about the progress they are making and what they need to do to achieve their goals.
- Written feedback on students' written work is inconsistent and this reduces the impact of their development of English. Teachers do not always correct errors, such as spelling and punctuation to help students improve their work. Students do not always understand the relevance of functional skills to hairdressing and beauty therapy. Extension activities are available but they are not fully used.
- Effective use of the particularly high quality accommodation, resources and equipment inspires and motivates students to achieve professional standards in practical treatments. Students are enthusiastic and enjoy developing their practical skills to reflect realistic work practices.
- Students make good use of electronic resources to carry out research activities and take photographs of their work for their portfolio evidence. However, the virtual learning environment is underutilised. Too few students make use of online materials outside their timetabled lessons. In most lessons, insufficient use is made of information learning technology to stimulate students' interest. For example, in the commercial hairdressing salon the use of interactive technology situated at the work stations did not sufficiently promote independent study.
- Student support is very effective. Thorough testing of students' prior skills and learning needs and targeted support ensures students make good progress in both theory and practical sessions.

- Students have a good understanding of equality and diversity such as how to meet the needs of clients with physical and mental disabilities when carrying out treatments. Teachers use examples of Caucasian and Asian skin hair types, facial hair, skin functions and structure to help students celebrate cultural differences.

Performing Arts and Visual Arts

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Success rates, including those for functional skills, are very high and have risen steadily over the last three years as has the attainment of high grades. Retention, attendance and punctuality are excellent. Students make very good progress across all levels internally and externally to higher education and related employment.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers are demanding and have very high expectations of students. Assignments are bold and challenging and students respond enthusiastically. All students work towards ambitious public events which help them prepare for employment including productions, exhibitions and fashion shows.
- The standard of students' work is good and often excellent. Acting students can confidently portray the works of major historical writers such as Sophocles and Shakespeare. Fashion students design and produce garments with originality and visual arts students understand and present work that challenges conventional perceptions. Recently, drama students were selected to perform at the Royal National Theatre.
- The development of employability skills is excellent. Students recognise their increased confidence and independence. The relevance of learning is constantly impressed upon students who benefit from teachers who are current practitioners. Music students have their own record label which inspires them to produce professional quality music. Real projects, such as acting students touring with Theatre in Education projects highlighting issues such as bullying and road safety, provide outstanding opportunities for learning.
- Assessment is thorough, helpful and supportive and contributes well to students' progress. Students know exactly what they need to do in order to improve. Feedback in practical lessons helps students develop thinking skills and accurately reflects industry practice. Good use is made of recording work for reflection and subsequent improvement.
- Resources and accommodation are very good. All the rooms used have been adapted and refurbished to a very high standard and support learning well. The music provision has a particularly productive partnership with a national company which enables students to gain access to state-of-the-art equipment. Studios are inspirational learning spaces with students benefiting from good light and views. Information learning technologies facilities are particularly useful.
- A stimulating enrichment programme enhances learning. All students benefit from workshops and visits from performance companies, universities and visiting speakers. Students are inspired by visits to Madrid and Paris. Performing arts students benefit from a residential activity in London that enables them to work with leading practitioners.
- Information, advice, guidance and support for students are very good and help motivate them to succeed in their learning and progress. Students very much appreciate the help they receive. Although additional learning support is very good, occasionally teachers do not identify the needs when planning lessons.
- Students benefit from the effective integration of functional skills into the curriculum. However, some students, especially adults, resent attending discrete lessons. Teachers identify opportunities to highlight subject-specific aspects when planning learning and include tasks that require numeric analysis and awareness.
- Students learn from the active promotion of equality and diversity in lessons. Gender stereotypes are challenged in acting and music technology. Materials celebrate cultural

differences and the 'play as cast' company ethos enhances the sense of democratisation in performing arts.

Independent living and leisure skills and Foundation English

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Students succeed well in their qualifications as a result of good teaching, learning and assessment. Students enjoy learning and are achieving good standards of English, personal, social and work-related skills. Students use English well to write good application letters for possible employment or further study opportunities. Students attending independent and leisure courses produce a good standard of art, craftwork and plants to sell in the local market.
- Independent living and leisure students gain the confidence to become more independent in their everyday life. Adults develop the necessary skills to improve their job prospects or to take on more demanding roles within their existing employment.
- Students benefit from highly motivated staff. Teachers use a range of good and effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies to challenge students to achieve high standards of work. This is particularly effective in encouraging attendance for those students who do not want to attend functional skills lessons. Some staff use innovative activities to ensure that learning is fun and engaging. For example, in an adult functional skills class, students very effectively reviewed the use of apostrophes in sentences through an auction-type activity.
- Students fully understand their individual learning objectives and most receive good, instant feedback on work completed in the class. Assessment is good, students are fully aware of their personal learning targets and what they have to do to achieve a good standard of work. Those studying functional skills do not all benefit from consistent monitoring of their achievement and progress.
- Written work is marked regularly and teachers provide students with constructive feedback as to how to improve their work. Additional learning support is good in class and in the Gateway Centre. Functional skills students benefit from good individual or small group support for English skills.
- Enrichment activities such as visits to theme parks and the countryside promote wider learning. Work experience for independent living and leisure is in early stages of development. A small number of students benefit from work placements with the local council, a supermarket, MENCAP and the college farm and the luncheon club.
- Accommodation is good and used effectively for both teaching and additional learning support. Students with additional learning need who attend English and independent living and leisure courses make effective use of the Gateway Centre. At times, noise levels in the learning resources centre disrupt classes.
- Resources used for English are high quality and support learning well. Resources used for independent living and leisure are good and relate to specific work roles and issues that are current, such as recycling. In construction, teachers have produced a well-used English and mathematics social network page.
- Appropriate and timely information and guidance is effective for independent living and leisure learners. Students who are new to the college attend a good transition programme before they start. Functional skills adult learners receive good guidance and have a good understanding of how to use English skills to enhance their vocational studies. Some students receive insufficient advice and guidance before enrolling on an English qualification. However, many have made good progress and have improved their English. A very effective web-based marketing tool, developed by teachers and vocational students promotes English learning well across the college.
- Students feel safe. Vulnerable students, particularly looked after children, are supported well. Safeguarding processes are effective in ensuring the well-being of students.

Business Management and Administration
Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+
Apprenticeships

Good

- Success rates have improved and are now high on college-based courses. Retention has improved significantly this year and is now high, reflecting the good teaching, learning and assessment they receive. Overall success rates for apprentices declined in 2011/12 but have improved this year and many have already achieved. Learners produce high quality work and are making good progress. Students demonstrate good business skills and knowledge.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Most lessons are well structured and teachers use individual and group activities which interest and engage students. In a business communications lesson, learners selected items hidden in a box and developed an interesting story which developed both their verbal and listening skills.
- Teachers make lessons relevant by linking theory to practice, using students' personal and employment experiences. Students talk confidently about their learning, for example one apprentice explained how she was now able to prioritise, take minutes, and work with colleagues. Teachers use questions well to check knowledge and understanding particularly during group work when teachers support and challenge learners. However, in a minority of lessons questions do not stretch or probe sufficiently.
- Teachers make very good use of external visits and speakers to motivate students and develop their confidence, employability and enterprise skills. Advanced learners developed a marketing strategy, designed a website and delivered a presentation as part of the Rotherham Youth Enterprise Challenge. Intermediate learners presented their ideas for 'chocaberry' ice cream at a business enterprise final and each won a tablet computer.
- Accommodation and resources for learning are good. However, information learning technology is not used enough to develop students' understanding or help them to set their learning in context. For example, in a law lesson students were involved in a parliamentary debate on reducing the school week to four days, but were unsure of how a parliamentary debates works.
- Assessment on college based courses is good. Feedback on students' work is detailed and constructive and helps them to make improvements and to achieve higher grades. Teachers rightly focus on improving the quality of written work. Apprentices benefit from frequent, well planned assessments. Assessors support learners well. However, apprentices are not always encouraged sufficiently to identify evidence for their qualification.
- Initial advice and guidance is good. Students who find learning difficult receive very good additional support. Staff teams work efficiently to identify support needs and ensure that it is in place. For example, effective additional support has led to a student who did could not speak English quickly developing the necessary skills to progress to higher education to study business and economics.
- Individual tutorials help students to make progress and improve. Teachers use target setting and monitoring to focus on raising achievement. However, progress recording is repetitive and teachers place too much emphasis on completing qualification units and not enough on increasing knowledge or developing skills.
- Students feel safe and work well together in a friendly, inclusive environment. Teachers develop resources to raise awareness and promote discussions on equality and diversity. For example learners worked in small groups to solve a range of problems which could arise in the workplace, including sexual harassment and ageism.

The effectiveness of leadership and management**Good**

- Leadership and management are good. Significant changes and improvements have taken place since the last inspection. Governors, the principal and the senior management team provide highly effective leadership, prioritising students and their learning. Managers have significantly improved facilities and learning resources to benefit students. The college successfully raises students' aspirations by involving them in high profile events and external skills competitions, rubbing shoulders with successful people, and seeing high level skills in action lead to raised aspirations.
- Leaders, managers and staff have put good initiatives in place such as the 'five steps' process to promote successful achievement and progress. Leaders have clearly communicated their vision in a straightforward way, pointing at what the college needs to do and what part staff play in achieving change. Teachers have a strong sense of ownership of the improvement strategy.
- Governance is good. Governors have the capacity and information to challenge college managers effectively and lead on strategic direction. The Principal's reports to governors are very thorough and provide accurate data analysis and sufficient information to ensure that governors hold managers to account for performance. The college has a strong sense of unity of purpose and continuous improvement. Governors engage with staff and students and are involved in the work of the college.
- A well-executed strategy for improving teaching and learning and raising standards, including a rigorous performance management system has resulted in a major impact on students' progress and achievement. The process is effective and supported by managers and staff who recognise the need to face up to problems associated with poor teaching and to improve. Good staff development has improved teaching and learning. Staff enjoy and value initiatives such as an improvement toolkit and the flexible way they can gain access to support for their development.
- Self-assessment is good and along with effective and measurable improvement planning gives an accurate appraisal of what is required to continue improvement. The college uses a variety of effective methods, including the involvement of the two student governors, to collect learners' views and make improvements.
- Quality improvement arrangements work well and have had an impact on performance and on the quality of learning. The college has identified that some aspects of apprenticeship programmes require improvement and introduced actions to improve them. However, the full implementation of these initiatives has been slow.
- The college does much good work with employers to benefit learners. Employers' needs and interests are well considered. The college recognises that a more strategic approach to employer engagement would further enhance the colleges' apprenticeship strategy and bring benefits to students.
- Leaders and managers have set and mostly achieved challenging improvement targets. A steady improvement in success rates is evident in almost all areas including those identified as underperforming at the last inspection. Managers at all levels now use data effectively to set improvement targets. However, collecting employers' views and producing a clear analysis with actions for improvement remains underdeveloped.
- Effective use of Labour market intelligence, funding body requirements and local and national priorities supports the development of curriculum and learning programmes well. English and mathematics have a high priority. Partnership with a local high performing teaching school to develop capacity to provide high standards for English and mathematics teaching is beginning to impact on students.
- The college provides an inclusive environment for learning in which students make good progress regardless of their background. Managers have successfully tackled identified gaps in the performance of a few minority ethnic groups. The promotion of equality and diversity across the college is good, although in some work-based programmes insufficient reinforcement of learners' understanding takes place.

- The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding students. Arrangements are comprehensive and well managed with good use of data to evaluate and improve services. Staff training is comprehensive and kept up to date. Staff are able to identify quickly any students, or groups of students who are at risk. Support for these learners is good. Students feel safe. Staff promote health and safety effectively.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Engineering	3
Transportation operations and maintenance	3
Building and construction	1
Construction crafts	1
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Visual Arts	1
Performing arts	1
Independent living and leisure skills	2
Foundation English	2

Business management	2
Administration	2

Provider details

Provider name	Rotherham College of Arts and Technology
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: 2205
	Part-time: 7020
Principal/CEO	Gill Alton
Date of previous inspection	November 2010
Website address	www.rotherham.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	269	65	536	158	816	319	9	33
Part-time	562	1047	381	2409	358	987	27	293
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	186	153	39	154	N/A	9		
Number of learners aged 14-16	206							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	250							
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"> ■ Aspect Training Ltd ■ DECAT Ltd ■ MENCAP (Sheffield) ■ Enable (Sheffield) ■ Higher Rhythm ■ Rotherham United FC Community Sports Trust 							

Additional socio-economic information

Rotherham College operates from three main sites in and around the locality. Rotherham has a population of 257,000 and 7.5% are of minority ethnic origin. Unemployment is almost two percentage points above the national average and the average wage in the area is 10 percentage points lower than the national average. A significant proportion of the local population have no qualifications and only two thirds have achieved intermediate-level qualifications; only 40% hold qualifications at advanced level or above, 13 percentage points below the national average. In 2011 the proportion of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was just below the national average at 57%.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Ian Smith HMI
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Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the deputy principal performance and enhancement 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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