

Epping Forest College

General further education college

Inspection dates		13–17 May 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for students		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for students

This college requires improvement because:

- Insufficient teaching and learning are good or outstanding; consequently, the progress made by students from their starting points is too limited.
- Too much teaching focuses solely on meeting the requirements of qualifications, with learning not taking sufficient account of individual students' needs and abilities, or providing them with sufficient challenge to ensure they reach their full potential.
- Students' and apprentices' employment skills and their ability in English and mathematics are underdeveloped and too few teachers develop students' and apprentices' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity sufficiently in lessons.
- Students' levels of success remain too variable between different subject areas.
- Management and quality assurance of the small work-based learning provision are weak.

This college has the following strengths:

- The development of students' positive attitude to their studies and how they work well in the college's harmonious atmosphere.
- The good support which pastoral tutors and learning support assistants provide students.
- Good accommodation and a high standard of resources, which staff use well to develop students' practical and theoretical skills.
- Committed and well-informed governors, who provide a high level of challenge to managers and staff.
- Senior managers who have significantly improved many students' success rates over the past three years.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Develop teachers' practice in challenging and inspiring students to ensure they make consistently good or better progress in lessons and increase their independent learning skills to achieve their full potential.
- Continue to support teachers to ensure their teaching matches closely individual students' abilities, and strengthen and consolidate their practice in providing written feedback and setting targets, which promote good or better progress.
- Ensure teachers challenge all students to develop and accredit their English and mathematical skills, at least up to intermediate level, and help them all to promote equality and diversity in lessons more consistently in the curriculum.
- Support students to develop good employment skills by making this a key focus for teachers during lessons, providing work experience opportunities, engaging more effectively with employers to inform the design of the curriculum and ensure teachers do not miss opportunities to develop students' high professional standards.
- Further strengthen management of work-based learning, especially in applying rigorous quality assurance arrangements.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for students	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2011/12, the number of students on college-based courses who successfully complete their qualification improved to just above the national average for similar colleges. Retention is high. However, the degree to which students successfully complete qualifications varies markedly between subject areas. For example, in business and secretarial studies success rates are high, while in health and social care and mathematics, success rates are well below national averages. Students on courses at foundation and intermediate levels achieve better than those who are on advanced-level courses. ▪ The proportion of apprentices, young people not in education and training, and those on work-ready programmes, who achieve their qualifications are below average. Half of all apprentices do not complete within the time allowed and make slower than expected progress. Recent changes in the management of work-based learning have placed greater emphasis on ensuring apprentices achieve their qualification on time; however, it is too soon to judge the impact of these changes. ▪ Inconsistencies in the achievement of different groups of students have reduced over the past three years and few remain. Students identified as requiring extra help with their studies achieve significantly better on courses based at college compared to apprentices and those on employer-based training. ▪ The progress students make from their initial starting points needs to improve further. On vocational courses, students achieve well, although those of higher ability do not always attain the high grades of which they are capable. Results and high-grade passes for A-level courses have improved, but remain inconsistent across subjects and too many students still do not make the progress they could achieve. ▪ The standard of students' work is at least satisfactory and, in a minority of areas, particularly in the arts, is good. Students on vocational courses develop current skills and theoretical 	

understanding that meet the expectations of awarding bodies. However, insufficient opportunities are available to practise and refine their employability skills through work experience or working directly with the public as clients.

- Most students are successful in functional skill qualifications at foundation level, but the small numbers of students who study at intermediate level underperform. Students who retake GCSE English and mathematics complete their qualification successfully. The number of students achieving high grades is good in English but low in mathematics. The development and improvement of students' skills in English and mathematics are not consistently good across the college.
- Students from diverse backgrounds develop a positive attitude to their studies, and behave well in the harmonious college environment. Improvements in students' personal and social skills are good. Most students enjoy the opportunities provided in 'The Street' to socialise, meet and compete, for example, in matches of table tennis and computerised media.
- Managers recognise the need to improve further students' attendance and punctuality in lessons that are no more than satisfactory.
- Most students complete their studies successfully and progress to advanced courses, employment or higher qualifications. Accurate capturing and recording data about student destinations are not well developed.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is improving as is reflected in the increasing numbers of students successfully achieving their qualification, but not enough teaching is consistently good and little is outstanding. Teaching fails adequately or consistently to consolidate students' knowledge and skills. It is not sufficiently effective in supporting students' future progression or in developing securely students' breadth of skills, particularly in English, mathematics and employability.
- In most subjects, too many lessons require improvement because teachers do not consistently extend students' knowledge and skills beyond the qualification requirements. In a minority of subjects, because of staff changes, new teaching teams are only just starting to work well together.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers use a challenging pace, clear and relevant objectives, interactive tasks and demanding questions well to promote students' good progress. In these lessons, teachers use tasks to motivate and interest students and give them good commercial experience; for example, briefs to produce a logo and strap line for a local residents' society. However, such lessons are the exception and most fail to engage students fully or promote excellent progress.
- Learning in less effective lessons focuses too much on meeting qualification requirements, and not on students' wider learning and understanding. These lessons often use whole group tasks, which do not take account of students' differing abilities and their potential for progress. Teachers use uninspiring tasks, do not always explain points clearly and fail to promote good and quick learning. They use a narrow range of questioning and sometimes allow a few students to dominate answers. They do not consistently correct spelling and grammar in the resources they use or in board work.
- Assessment of student written work is thorough and most teachers mark work accurately and promptly. They support students to revise and re-submit their work to raise their grades, which is helping improve current students' achievement. Teachers' written feedback in a few subjects, such as art, is precise and helpful, but these features are not consistent across all subjects. A new initiative to encourage students to respond formally to feedback provided by teachers is working well in a minority of subjects.

- Teachers are increasingly using initial assessment and previous qualifications more effectively to set targets for students to achieve fully. Most teachers set ambitious longer-term targets, including grades, but their use of shorter-term targets to promote progress is much less developed, in part because recording of these is superficial.
- Teachers' approach to ensuring that students develop a wide set of employment skills requires improvement. For example, although teachers make good use of real life tasks, such as designing and producing artistic work and providing hairdressing and beauty treatments to boost patients' spirits in local hospitals. Too few students have opportunities for work experience. Teachers do not consistently demand work and attitudes from students that meet industry requirements, for example during performance rehearsals or in the hairdressing salon.
- In a few subjects, teachers promote students' English skills well but, in others, too little development takes place. Teachers' correction of spelling and grammar is becoming more frequent because managers are focusing more strongly on this area. Teachers' promotion of mathematical skills is less effective and few students sufficiently improve these skills during their study programmes.
- Staff have improved the quality of advice and guidance and take great care to ensure that students are placed on the correct course. For example, following a comprehensive induction and a 'Right Course' week provides students with the opportunity to review carefully their ability and aptitude for their chosen course. Additional support is good and learning support assistants work well with teachers. Staff ensure that students who require help receive support. Students speak very highly of the help from staff and their commitment.
- Assessment in work-based learning is adequate. The most effective assessment is when students attend off-the-job training at college. In this setting, assessors use a range of methods to probe apprentices' knowledge, skills and understanding of their professional fields. However, not enough assessments occur in the workplace, in part because of insufficient numbers of assessors, which has compromised apprentices' chances of completing their qualifications.
- Teachers understand the importance of promoting equality and diversity, but few develop sufficiently students' knowledge and understanding of this area. Work-based assessors do not explore equality and diversity themes in sufficient depth to ensure apprentices have a good understanding.

Information and communication technology

Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Although success rates overall are high, marked variation exists between the performance of different courses. Most students achieve their qualifications, but teachers do not provide sufficient good and challenging teaching to allow them to achieve their full potential.
- In better lessons, teachers use effective questioning to extend learning and to build students' confidence. Students develop higher-level thinking skills and make good progress due to teachers careful probing and exploration of concepts. In one lesson, for example, the teacher grouped students together to research and investigate the application of legislation to an information and communication technology situation, and then managed a whole class debate to explore their findings and reach the learning outcomes intended.
- Most teachers plan activities to maximise learning and in the better lessons, teachers manage learning activities well. Consequently, most students in these lessons make good progress and

are very productive. A minority of teachers are skilful in explaining abstract concepts in familiar situations to enliven learning. For example, one teacher made excellent use of analogy to explain internet protocols by drawing similarities to a postage stamp.

- In weaker lessons, teachers are less successful in implementing their planned activities. Teachers do not always explain clearly or set sufficiently challenging timescales for completing tasks. Consequently, students tend not to start until the teacher gets round to them individually to explain the activity. Lessons then develop at a slow pace, with the teacher rushing students to complete their work on time. Teachers often allow a vocal minority to dominate discussions while other students become bored.
- Learning support assistants pay close attention to those identified as being at risk of not completing successfully or those who are falling behind. They take effective action to enable them to stay on their course. For example, in one lesson the learning support assistant identified a student who had missed an assessment, set up an opportunity for the student to take the practical assessment and asked another student to video it as assessment evidence. This timely and positive approach significantly improves students' ability to stay on course and succeed.
- The development of students' English skills varies from class to class. In a minority of lessons, teachers place a high emphasis on the correct use of spelling, grammar and punctuation. In other lessons, teachers focus is restricted to instructing students to proof read their work giving little or no direction as to how they should do this work. Teachers do not routinely develop students' mathematical skills.
- Teachers do not adequately develop students' employment skills. Students have limited opportunities to gain work experience. Very few links with employers exist to develop students' experience or provide vocational updating for staff. Students' have limited access to sufficient computer hardware equipment to practise their new skills, for example, in setting up and then breaking a network.
- The subject area has a diverse mix of students who feel safe and show mutual respect for both their peers and teachers. However, teachers do not always effectively promote equality and diversity in lessons resulting in students with an underdeveloped understanding, value and appreciation of difference.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Good teaching has resulted in most current students making good progress with their studies. Students' success rates are now above average with the exception of level 2 hairdressing. Retention is high and progression into salon and industry-related employment and on to higher-level courses is increasing.
- Enthusiastic teachers use their own industrial experience well to motivate and challenge students to develop high standards of technical and client skills. In the best sessions, students develop good creative and commercial hairdressing and make-up techniques. Students' imaginations are stimulated through participation in a good range of industry-related training and visits to exhibitions, shows and competitions. Attendance is good in most lessons.
- In the better lessons, teachers' planning and management of learning is good. Teachers explain theoretical concepts well and develop understanding through a good variety of fun, interesting, multi-sensory tasks. They employ directed questions well to check students' understanding and progress. Teachers use information and learning technology (ILT) satisfactorily to support

students in understanding new topics. Learning takes place in good quality modern and light salons and an adjacent, well-resourced theory and open-learning room.

- In the minority of less effective lessons, teachers do not sufficiently manage learning or monitor salon activities well enough. On these occasions, students waste time and are too slow in starting and carrying out treatments. An insufficient number of clients restrict learning opportunities in too many salon classes and not all students pay sufficient attention to their customer service skills. A few students have weak basic technical skills, such as control of hair while blow-drying, to provide consistently good hairdressing results for all clients.
- Students who require additional support do at least as well as their peers. Learning support assistants are highly effective in ensuring students develop strategies to overcome their weaknesses. Pastoral tutors accurately track and monitor students' progress and support teachers in ensuring students at risk of failing their studies, achieve well.
- Assessment of learning and skills development is largely adequate. The quality of verbal feedback, while always motivational, is variable in its usefulness in supporting improvement. The use of peer assessment is good in beauty therapy, especially when students work in pairs to practise and refine their technical skills.
- Employer links are under-developed and work experience opportunities for full-time students are limited. Opportunities for linking their college study to commercial activities where students have part-time employment in salons occur rarely. Employers' views and training requirements, to inform or improve the existing curriculum, are not used.
- Teachers' promotion of equality and diversity is too variable. Lesson planning too often only refers to standard equality and diversity themes. Teachers fail to make use of opportunities to highlight diversity or teach students how they should respond to a wide range of clients' requirements and expectations.
- The development of students' English and mathematics skills is limited to discrete subject sessions. Vocational staff lack the confidence, to support their students to develop further their skills when working with clients, in assessed work and in class when developing their theoretical understanding of their craft.

Sport, leisure and recreation

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

Requires improvement

- Teaching is improving, but too few students learn consistently well and make good progress. This is mirrored in their variable success rates, which reflect good retention but some low achievement. Students' attendance requires improvement as a minority have erratic attendance patterns and a few miss too many lessons.
- Teachers engage and interest students well in most lessons. They use short effective tasks, often with timed limits, to stretch students and keep them motivated. Teachers frequently employ a good range of activities supported by technology, which match well to students' different learning styles. For example, a group table tennis activity a teacher used to demonstrate the emotional consequences of sports performance.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers do not stretch students' knowledge and skills. For example, students often carry out the same activity, such as the naming of the major bones of the human skeleton, regardless of ability which results in some finding the work too easy and others struggling. Sometimes, teachers do not ensure that all students fully understand important points, such as how to use calculations to assess training zones.

- Students' learning and their progress in developing employability skills is often slow, as sufficient sports industry experience to reinforce their learning does not occur. For example, students have limited experience of coaching clients in a commercial fitness setting.
- Staff provide mostly good support. In particular, teachers' advice and guidance to individual students is helpful and valued by students. Learning support assistants work closely and mostly effectively with teachers and individual students.
- Teachers' written feedback to improve students' work varies in quality. Feedback from most teachers includes useful pointers as to how each student can improve their work, but a minority of teachers give few or no improvement points.
- Staff have improved arrangements for monitoring students' progress to ensure they remain on course to succeed and complete their assignments on time. For example, teachers are carrying out individual reviews more frequently. However, teachers do not consistently use the on-line monitoring system limiting their ability to assess students' progress quickly and effectively.
- Most students make insufficient progress in developing their English and mathematical skills. A few students struggle to write clear and accurate sentences and others are unable to do simple calculations. Teachers rarely reinforce these skills in lessons. For example, during inspection teachers did not check that students were writing down and spelling technical terms, such as mitochondria or anaerobic, accurately.
- Staff provide adequate information, advice and guidance. Their increased attention to ensuring that students fully understand the demands of courses has helped retention. They often provide timely advice, which is encouraging an increasing number of students to progress and study at a higher level.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity well using a wide range of resources covering different sports and different groups of sports people. They use discussions very effectively to promote equality and diversity themes, for example, when discussing the diversity within groups of children on coaching programmes.

Performing arts, media and communications

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this reflects good outcomes overall. Achievement is good on most programmes and recent initiatives to improve in-year retention have been successful. Attendance and punctuality are mostly good, but they are more variable in level 2 media lessons. Absence affects adversely a minority of collaborative learning assignments and presentations in performing arts.
- Teachers have a good command of their subjects and set high standards across all disciplines. Teachers prominently display objectives, tasks and assessment criteria and constantly refer to them during lessons to check students' knowledge and understanding. In almost all cases, teachers are demanding and have high expectations of their students. They make good use of nominated questioning to which students respond well and confidently contribute respected creative ideas. Students develop a deep understanding of their subjects.
- The varying tasks and activities in lessons engage and sustain students' interest. Most teachers integrate ILT well into their lessons and students make good use of ILT to support independent learning. While students manage their own learning, teachers place insufficient emphasis on them being responsible for basic learning materials, consequently, students often arrive for lessons without pens and paper.

- Teachers in performing arts have established and sustained a defined sense of identity. In all lessons, students are required to wear black T-shirts with the college logo and trousers or leotards, as are teachers. The teaching of dance, where the standards demanded are non-negotiable, is outstanding. The formation of a performance 'play-as-cast' company reflects best industry practice although script annotation requires greater attention to meet the standard expected from the profession.
- Students make significant progress in lessons, sometimes in a short time and skills development is good. Students have a better understanding of the demands of the industry through participating in the stimulating enrichment programme, for example working with the cast of *Les Misérables*. These activities prepare students well for work. Progression to higher education, including some leading institutions, is good.
- Students' work is good. Advanced rehearsals in theatre and dance productions demonstrate secure learning. Teachers are skilful in using dramatic texts and musical genres to provide students with opportunities to explore different cultures, faiths and beliefs. For example, female performers in popular music investigated the emotional context of 'Angel of the morning' and performed a plaintive reggae version whilst their peers expertly managed the recordings.
- Assessment is thorough and effective. Staff require students to be self-critical, aware of their own strengths and how to improve. Students are able to track their own progress easily. Teachers and students employ peer assessment well as a useful extension to learning.
- Additional learning support is mostly good, but in a minority of lessons additional learning assistants do not fully support individual students who need help most. Pastoral support students receive from tutors and teachers is good.

Independent living and leisure skills

Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, although success rates are above average, not enough students develop their personal, social and work-related skills fully and too few progress onto foundation level vocational courses. However, most make satisfactory progress from pre-entry onto entry level 3 courses. Staff do not sufficiently monitor or record students' long-term progress.
- The majority of teachers encourage students to become more independent. They use communication aids, including specialist assistive technologies, well to help students to develop their communication skills effectively. They ensure that students listen, follow instructions and participate enthusiastically in discussions.
- Students learn well when teachers organise activities which ensure that all are sufficiently challenged to build on the skills they have already learned. In these lessons, students make good progress against their short-term learning targets. Teachers use specific projects successfully to engage students. For example, students gained confidence and were highly involved whilst producing a publicity video and photographs, including their own commentary, about their college experience.
- Students enjoy lessons enlivened by the use of information and technology, which teachers use effectively. For example, teachers motivated students well in dance sessions by allowing them to select videos of their favourite artists.
- Teachers do not consistently take into account students' different levels of ability. Teachers' resources are not always adapted well enough to ensure students work at an appropriate pace.

Teachers sometimes struggle to create a productive learning environment, in particular when teaching large student groups with wide ranging ability levels.

- Too often teachers hamper students' ability to use their initiative and solve problems because they intervene too quickly, are overly directive and on occasions complete tasks on students' behalf. For example, teachers tend to tell students what to write, where to put something and what they need to do next.
- Students improve their basic work-related skills. Teachers help them learn how to present for interviews, to be punctual and how to work co-operatively with others. However, students rarely develop comprehensive work-related skills due to the lack of work experience opportunities.
- Teachers do not focus enough on developing students' numeracy skills. For example, teachers did not develop students' use of numbers related to understanding the shapes of different items when students found it difficult to describe a square or rectangle. On the other hand, teachers do routinely ensure that students practise their writing and use of grammar.
- Teachers provide good pastoral support. Students benefit greatly from the safe and secure learning environment and the commitment shown by teachers to ensure their welfare and well-being. Teachers are very skilled at helping students to improve their behaviour and in supporting their integration well into college life.
- Teachers use initial assessment well and clearly identify students' starting points and their support needs. However, they do not use this information to set long-term aims or to guide students' progression. Most teachers monitor and record students' progress against short-term learning targets adequately. However, a minority set targets that are too task-orientated or insufficiently focused on students' progress in their wider skills. Teachers' monitoring of students' longer-term progress is insufficient.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity well. They provide students with the confidence to voice their opinions and to raise issues about college life, which teachers take forward positively. For example, students in wheelchairs recently voiced concern about access inside the building, which the college subsequently improved to their satisfaction.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The Principal and senior managers ensure that students are at the centre of the college mission and values. Managers have high expectations of students, in particular in developing their behaviour, attitudes and personal skills, which are good. Senior managers clearly communicate ambitious strategic aims, which teachers share and understand well. Progress towards meeting these is largely positive, success rates have increased significantly in recent years and are now above the national average, but progress towards students achieving their full academic potential still needs improving.
- Managers and teachers work closely with local and regional agencies, such as London Anglia Growth Partnership, and a high number of schools to develop the curriculum to meet local and regional needs. Managers have strengthened the college's links with industry, although these have yet to secure a good range of work experience opportunities for students to develop their employment skills thoroughly.
- Governors set challenging targets for a range of performance indicators, the large majority of which were met in 2011/12. They have an accurate and well-informed understanding of most of the provision, but their oversight of work-based learning is underdeveloped. Governors provide a high level of challenge to managers.
- Rigorous performance management arrangements are in place and managers tackle teachers' underperformance robustly to bring about improvements in teaching and learning. In a few

subjects, recent changes to teachers, including at manager level, are not fully embedded but are already contributing to much improved teamwork and quicker and more effective implementation of improvement actions. Managers' use the outcomes of lesson observations appropriately in appraisals, but their evaluations do not always include full consideration of teachers' skills development needs.

- The college has a well-developed management structure which supports learning. The role of non-teaching pastoral tutors is well established; it contributes considerably to retaining and supporting students and frees teachers to concentrate on developing their practice and resources. Learning coaches are working constructively with teachers who need support to improve learning further in their classes.
- Managers use self-critical evaluation well to produce detailed and accurate improvement plans. However, overall grades in self-assessment reports are over generous. For example, managers' mostly satisfactory judgements from observations and other aspects of learning do not support the quality of teaching and learning as being good in 2011/12.
- Managers use quality assurance arrangements extensively to identify areas for improvement, for example, in the rigour and effectiveness of marking, and to inform the well-developed, valuable and well-resourced weekly teachers' development activities. Managers employ a wide range of data effectively to inform their work, but the capacity to produce succinct analysis of the in-year position, particularly relative to progression and destination data is underdeveloped.
- Regular and unannounced lesson observations as well as a large number of other evaluations of learning activities provide reasonably accurate findings that form a sound enough basis for improving teaching. For example, the focus on improving assessment is highly relevant and having a rapid impact. Observers are developing their skills well, but their evaluations of learning require further development. At times records of observations are overgenerous, in particular for lessons assessed as requiring improvement or outstanding. Although work to support less effective teachers to improve is largely effective, more is required to enable students' to make better individual progress.
- Management in several subjects, such as business and the arts is consistently strong. It is improving rapidly in hairdressing and beauty therapy and sport, but it is less effective in a minority of other subject areas. Managers have been successful in reducing the variance between a few but not all subjects.
- Management and quality assurance of work-based learning is weak. Systems used to ensure the regular monitoring of apprentices' progress and the use of data is not sufficiently accurate to support improvement. The monitoring of partnership work is not strong enough and the implementation of quality assurance arrangements is limited.
- Governors, managers and teachers place high priority on and are very effective in promoting equality and diversity in most ways although teachers' development of themes in the classroom is inconsistent and sometimes insufficient. Teachers promote high participation from students from diverse backgrounds and cultures and work with them to create a safe and productive learning environment. Managers have successfully narrowed achievement gaps between different groups of students.
- Managers and staff protect students' health and safety well including very careful analysis of incidences and effective actions to promote students' health and well-being. The college meets its statutory duty to safeguard students. Day-to-day management is highly efficient. The standard of resources across the well-maintained campus is extremely high.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Epping 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	Apprenticeships
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3	3
Outcomes for students	3	3	3	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	3	3	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2	3

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
ICT for practitioners	3
ICT for users	3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Sport, leisure and recreation	3
Performing arts	2
Media and communication	2
Independent living and leisure skills	3

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

- Training Skills Academy Group
- West London Vocational Training College Ltd
- Pentland Assessment Centres Ltd.

Additional socio-economic information

Epping Forest College is located in the district of the same name, on the fringes of Greater London. Four of the six local secondary schools have academy status. Almost two thirds of students live locally to the college, with the remainder commuting from east London. The minority ethnic population of Epping Forest is 9%, although the proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is substantially higher at 25%. The number of pupils attaining five GCSE at A* to C including English and mathematics is slightly above the regional and national average. The proportion of residents in Epping Forest qualified to intermediate level is in line with national averages. The unemployment rate is lower than the regional average, but comparable to the national average. The main areas of employment are in the service sector including wholesale, retail, and social care.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Julie Steele HMI
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Three 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 students' 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 students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. Inspectors 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 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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