

John Ruskin College

Sixth Form College

Inspection dates		1-4 October 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding-1
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding-1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings for learners

This college is outstanding because:

- The college's overall success rates have improved rapidly and are significantly higher than the national average for similar colleges.
- Learners make good, and often excellent, progress from mostly low starting points.
- Learners develop a positive attitude to learning. They are consistently punctual for lessons, attendance rates are high and behaviour is consistently very good.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are excellent. Teachers focus well on the needs of individual learners and are highly effective in motivating them to achieve their potential.
- The development of learners' knowledge and skills is outstanding as reflected in the high quality of their written work, well developed practical skills, their competent use of specialist vocabulary and ability to work independently.
- Support and guidance are excellent and are valued by learners who consequently make good, and often excellent, progress.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is highly effective, resulting in an inclusive learning environment which supports individual learners' needs exceptionally well. Achievements gaps have been eliminated.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding at all levels and has transformed the college, providing excellent opportunities for learners to achieve.
- The Principal and senior leaders maintain a constant focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Curriculum managers and teachers work together very well and are highly proactive in finding solutions to bring about improvements.
- Quality assurance arrangements are rigorous and performance management is highly effective in raising standards.
- The Principal and managers actively seek the views of learners to inform developments and regularly involve learners in decision making.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Develop learners' skills in English and mathematics further and ensure learners gain qualifications.
- Continue to share good practice to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently of a high standard and meets the needs of all learners on all programmes.
- Develop links with employers further to maximise opportunities for learning and for developing learners' employability skills.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Almost all learners attending the college follow vocational courses and teachers and managers have been highly successful in raising standards. Overall success rates have improved rapidly since the last inspection and are well above the national average for similar colleges at all levels. The support provided for learners is excellent and they make good or better progress from their low prior achievements when they join the college. Those following advanced vocational courses make much better progress than expected, with almost half achieving high grades where this is possible.
- Improvements in success rates have been consistently high for 16- to 18-year-olds and adult learners at foundation and advanced levels. Success rates at intermediate level declined slightly in 2012/13 for 16- to 18-year-olds, but more significantly for adults, and are below the national average for similar colleges for the latter age group. With the exception of hairdressing and beauty therapy, success rates are well above the national average for similar colleges in all the subject areas offered.
- Gaps between male and female learners have narrowed well due to much improved success rates for 16- to 18-year-old male learners, who now do slightly better than females. Success rates have improved very well for all Black and minority ethnic groups since the last inspection and gaps have been eliminated.
- The proportion of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending the college and requiring additional support is high and their success rates are much higher than the national average for similar groups of learners in similar colleges. Rates are also higher than for other learners attending the college, although the gap is narrowing.
- Learners consistently produce work of a good or better standard. Attendance rates are consistently high across the college and teachers and managers are particularly effective in ensuring learners are punctual. By far, the majority of learners are diligent in their work and the number of learners who withdraw from foundation level courses is very low.
- Only 7% of learners have GCSE passes at grades A* to C in English and mathematics when they enrol. Thorough assessments of language, literacy and numeracy skills by the college indicate that learners make good progress in developing their skills in English, although less so in mathematics. Despite making progress, learners are not gaining qualifications in these subjects; success rates in functional skills were poor the year prior to the inspection and learners were not entered for GCSE examinations.
- The college is very successful in raising the aspirations of learners. Progression to higher levels of study within the college or other institutions is high and progression rates to university are good and improving.
- The numbers of learners following work-based apprenticeships have been low, but almost all achieve within the allocated time. Enrolments had increased significantly at the time of the

inspection, in line with the college's aim to develop work-based learning opportunities further. Across the college, learners develop excellent work skills which prepare them for employment and they have good, and improving, opportunities to gain work experience.

- Learners enjoy their time at the college and make highly effective use of opportunities to develop their social and personal skills through well-planned tutorial and enrichment activities, mentoring schemes, skills weeks and work within the community. Learners work together well and support each other. They increasingly adopt leadership roles and are supported and encouraged extremely well by the college. The wide-ranging opportunities provided by the college are highly effective in building learners' confidence and self-esteem.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding, as reflected in rapidly improved and very high success rates and the good and often better progress made by learners. A clear and unwavering focus on improving teaching and learning by the Principal and managers at all levels is fully supported by teachers. Teaching practice has improved markedly through the initiative of Supported Experiments that encourages new teaching approaches and a culture of 'trial and no error' which has been highly effective in developing the confidence and professionalism of teachers to improve their practice and outcomes for learners.
- Teachers are passionate about helping their learners to achieve, they know their learners very well and provide high levels of individual support. In by far the majority of lessons, exemplary group profiles are used very well by teachers to plan and tailor activities to engage all learners. Teachers motivate learners very well, use resources and high quality activities creatively to support learning, and learners make at least good and often better progress.
- Teachers manage varied group activities admirably. Learners show high levels of interest in their work and concentrate well. Group activities are carefully planned and promote equality and diversity very well, resources are highly inclusive in terms of the use of language and terminology. In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not use information and communication technology fully to enhance and enliven learning.
- Attendance rates are consistently very good and learners are almost always punctual. Teachers are very effective in helping learners develop good habits early in the year and learners consistently arrive for lessons ready to work.
- The assessment of learners' work is rigorous and highly effective in promoting learning. Teachers mark assignments promptly and provide detailed and constructive feedback to individual learners, ensuring they know what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers question learners carefully to assess their progress. Different approaches, such as the use of quizzes and mini whiteboards, add variety and make learning fun. Targeted questioning is used very well during lessons to stretch and challenge, ensuring learners achieve their potential.
- Learners are set challenging academic targets in addition to short bite-sized personal improvement targets which are reviewed regularly through the tutorial process. Teachers and personal tutors monitor learners' progress very closely and frequently review and update targets to ensure learners are working to their full potential. Learners at risk of not achieving are identified promptly and action taken swiftly. The college recognises that targets are not always measurable and is working on improvements.
- Half the learners attending the college receive some form of additional learning support and the initial assessment of needs and the support provided are excellent. It is prompt, highly effective in helping them learn and the in-class support assistants work well with teachers. Teachers understand the barriers faced by their learners and respond quickly and effectively, sometimes in partnership with other organisations, to ensure learners get the personal support they need. The impact of support is monitored carefully by managers, who also visit classes to assess the effectiveness of support.

- Learners are encouraged and inspired to fulfil their ambitions through well-planned activities such as job fairs, work skills events, work placements and visits to prestigious universities and blue chip companies. Progression rates to higher levels of learning are high. Learners value the enrichment and wider learning activities which help them plan their careers and develop employability skills. Guidance and support to help learners apply for university are highly effective.
- Teachers plan and develop learners’ skills in English through vocational lessons well. Spelling and grammar are corrected and learners are encouraged and supported effectively to improve their confidence in the use of language. The teaching of English in separate lessons is good. The development of learners’ mathematics through vocational lessons is not as well developed.
- A new strategy for improving the achievement of English and mathematics qualifications was being implemented at the time of the inspection, providing more opportunities for learners to improve their mathematics through workshops. The progress of learners in English and mathematics is monitored carefully by teachers and managers.
- Equality and diversity are promoted extremely well and permeate all aspects of college life across a very diverse body of learners. Promotion is an integral part of most lessons and tutorials. In area such as science, however, teachers are not sufficiently creative in developing opportunities for reflection and the promotion of equality and diversity. Learners are respectful of each other and their teachers and behaviour is very good. A ‘buddy’ system has been very successful in helping new learners integrate into the life of the college quickly.

Health, social care and early years	
Learning programmes for 16-18	Outstanding
Learning programmes for 19+	

- Outstanding teaching, learning and assessment are reflected in consistently high success rates and the high proportion of learners who achieve high grades. Learners make outstanding progress compared to their starting points and develop very good practical vocational skills.
- Teachers have very high expectations of their learners. Attendance and punctuality are excellent. Learners have a very positive attitude and arrive for lessons fully prepared for learning. Lessons are very carefully planned. Activities including group work, paired work, role play and the development of practical care and child care skills stretch and challenge learners well. Information and communication technology is not used consistently to its full capacity to promote learning.
- Learners make excellent progress and use specialist vocabulary confidently early in their courses when discussing vocationally-related topics. In a first year early years lesson, learners set up a range of creative activities for use with pre-school children and were able to describe accurately the opportunities the activities provided for cognitive development as well the development of gross and fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. They were able to discuss how the activities could be adapted to ensure the inclusion of children with differing needs and/or disabilities.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and very wide vocational experience. They are passionate about their subjects and this generates an enthusiastic response from learners who participate in discussion and debate confidently. Advanced-level social care learners prepared and participated fully in a debate about the value of three different psychological perspectives, attachment theory, the humanistic approach and psycho-dynamic theory in addressing the needs of the young man in their case study.
- Teachers develop learners’ ability to link theory to vocational practice extremely well and consistently encourage learners to do so. Work experience is very well managed and carefully monitored. Visiting speakers from the health and care services enrich learners’ understanding of

the workplace. The college nursery and the practical health care suite are used effectively to develop practical skills. Teachers use role play very well in, for example, developing learners' communication and counselling skills.

- Excellent initial advice and guidance, together with a highly effective induction programme, ensure that learners are able to settle into their courses quickly and confidently. Learners who have specific additional learning needs are identified early in their programmes and the timely and well-considered support provided contributes significantly to their success. Teachers and personal tutors monitor learners' progress very carefully through the tutorial programme. Individual targets are clear and learners understand the progress they are making. Teachers know their learners very well and their support in addressing personal and learning needs is, rightly, greatly valued by learners.
- Learners' written work is very carefully assessed. Feedback is prompt, very detailed and students fully understand what they need to do to improve. Teachers carefully correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and consistently ensure good development of literacy skills in lessons. Opportunities to develop mathematical skills, however, are sometimes missed. Almost all learners progress to higher education or to employment and receive excellent support when applying.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The needs of minority and marginalised groups underpin the curriculum and learners are alert to barriers which prevent services being inclusive. Very diverse groups of learners work together harmoniously and productively in all lessons.

Science and mathematics	
Learning Programmes for 16-18	Good
Learning programmes for 19+	

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is reflected in success rates which have improved well and are significantly above the national average for similar colleges. All learners achieve their qualification, but relatively few progress to higher education.
- Lessons are planned well by teachers and learners are motivated to learn. Teachers use directed and probing questions effectively to check learners' knowledge and comprehension. Teachers are careful to ensure learners are actively involved in learning, as illustrated by a lesson where they worked well on circuit simulation using new software to test out results of a previous experiment on diodes.
- Teachers are successful in encouraging learners, especially at advanced level, to work independently. First year learners set up their own experiments to test for starch, protein and glucose in food products. In another lesson learners carried out their own risk assessment for the preparation of salicylic acid.
- All learners have detailed profiles which indicate their level of ability and support requirements, as well as target grades. In better lessons teachers use this information well to group learners to maximise the support they can provide each other as well as prepare challenging questions or activities to stretch the more able. In a small minority of lessons, however, teachers do not use their knowledge of learners consistently to inform lesson planning and delivery.
- Learners make good use of the college's virtual learning environment to upload assignments and to gain access to lesson-based materials. Good use was made of laptops in an electronics lesson and in a tutorial to enable learners to judge each other's targets. However, the use of computer-based interactive learning is generally underdeveloped.
- Teachers plan assessments well and learners appreciate the valuable and detailed feedback provided on written work. This helps them to improve and make good progress. The quality of

assessment and internal verification is good and learners' work is of a high standard and appropriate for the level of the qualification.

- Learners greatly value and appreciate the support provided by teachers, both in and out of class. Teachers make themselves readily accessible to learners, either individually or at workshops which start later in the autumn term.
- Learners also benefit from good enrichment opportunities to motivate and enhance their studies. This includes talks by a visiting forensic scientist, a visit to an in-vitro-fertilisation clinic, taster days at a hospital and a National Aeronautics and Space Administration residential course at Imperial College. However, little relevant work experience is available and links with industry require further development.
- Teachers develop learners' English well. They correct spelling and grammatical errors methodically, while tutors encourage learners to give presentations in tutorials where, for example, one learner spoke about how he learnt the Koran. Other than in tutorials, however, there is little explicit promotion of equality and diversity in lessons, although learners work together well.
- The development of learners' mathematics is less effective. Outcomes on functional skills in mathematics have been poor and, until the current year, no learners took GCSE mathematics. This has now been remedied and lower ability learners work towards a foundation level mathematics certificate. Learners who are not yet studying GCSE mathematics follow an online mathematics development programme.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding. Since the previous inspection and the decision to discontinue GCE advanced level courses, the college has been transformed into an organisation with high ambitions and standards. The Principal and senior leadership team have been highly successful in initiating and managing a significant programme of culture change which, together with a relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning, has brought about rapid and significant improvements in outcomes for learners with success rates well above those of similar colleges. Finance is managed well, enabling improvements to accommodation and resources.
- Governors are highly effective in monitoring the performance of the college and in challenging and supporting the senior leadership team to drive up standards. They know the college extremely well and are actively involved in developing solutions where improvement is required, for example the college's new English and mathematics strategy which was being implemented at the time of the inspection. Governors recognise their overall attendance is too low and they are taking appropriate action.
- Curriculum management is very good. Managers are very well supported, challenged and encouraged by senior leaders to try out new ideas and take radical action to improve outcomes for learners. Curriculum managers work very well with the teachers in their teams, ensuring a sustained focus on the quality of teaching and learning and on the effectiveness of the support provided for learners.
- Performance management is robust and highly effective in raising standards and improving outcomes rapidly. Staff benefit from coaching programmes and targeted and engaging continuous development which enable most teachers to improve their performance. Under performance is identified swiftly, effective support is provided to help teachers improve, but where improvement is not forthcoming, managers take prompt and appropriate action.
- Managers at all levels have a detailed understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The use of management information to identify concerns to bring about improvement is outstanding. Self-assessment is comprehensive. Judgments are realistic and are acted upon promptly. Improvement targets are ambitious and stretching, monitored carefully

and intervention by senior leaders is prompt where performance is not improving. Almost all areas for improvement from the last inspection have been effectively eliminated.

- The college makes excellent use of the views of learners in improving the quality of provision and in informing decision making. Innovations such as the Hot Seat approach adopted by the college are particularly effective in enabling learners to challenge the Principal and senior leaders. The student partnership board is highly effective in eliciting the views of learners and in ensuring college managers resolve issues of concern.
- The college's curriculum now meets the needs of learners very well. Almost all learners follow vocational courses and increasing numbers are enrolling from the local community. Employer links to inform curriculum change are less well developed, although themes relating to leadership, employability and good citizenship are actively pursued across the college and reinforced through the highly effective tutorial programme. Extra-curricular activities are extensive and are especially effective in developing learners' skills and confidence.
- The management of equality and diversity is excellent and teachers are vigilant to underperformance by individuals or groups of learners. Effective use of data and robust action have been highly effective in narrowing achievement gaps between different groups. Learners from disadvantaged backgrounds develop their confidence and skills extremely well. The involvement of learners in reviewing concerns and in devising interventions has been effective in addressing achievement gaps and in helping all learners feel part of the college community. A Chaplain and Imam attend the college weekly to help groups of learners integrate.
- The college provides a safe and welcoming environment for learning. Learners are exceptionally well supported and rightly report that their safety and security are given high priority. Links with local agencies to safeguard learners are good. Formal arrangements for safeguarding are comprehensive and the college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Health and safety arrangements are managed well.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

John Ruskin 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	1	1	1
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	1	1	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1	1	1

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	1
Early years and playwork	1
Science	2
Mathematics and statistics	2

Provider details

John Ruskin College	
Type of provider	Sixth Form College
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 760
	Part-time: 157
Principal/CEO	Mr Tim Eyton-Jones
Date of previous inspection	May 2011
Website address	www.johnruskin.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	181	24	147	23	294	41	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	11	13	18	3	-	-		
Number of learners aged 14-16	102 (77 fulltime, 25 part time)							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kruger Associates ■ RST ■ Marathon Sports ■ Green Inc 							

Additional socio-economic information

John Ruskin College is a small vocational sixth form college situated in South Croydon. It is one of the three colleges in the borough; the 27 secondary schools all have sixth forms. The local authority has encouraged the growth of academies to combat low performance at Key Stages 3 and 4 and standards are rising. The north of the borough includes areas of high deprivation which contrast markedly with the relatively affluent south. Employment opportunities in the commercial and retail sectors are good in the borough and the proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training is relatively low at 5.6%. The mission of the college is to 'respond to the employability needs of local learners, business and the community by providing outstanding inclusive educational programmes'.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Kenneth Jones HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Vice Principal, Transforming Learning, 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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