Learning and Skills inspection report

Date published: 12 November 2013

Inspection Number: 410603

URN: 130655



Kingston Maurward College Specialist college

Inspection dates		30 April – 3 May 2013		
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3		
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good-2		
Outcomes for students	Requires improvement-3			
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3		
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3		

Summary of key findings for students

This provider requires improvement because:

- Not enough teaching and learning are good or outstanding. Teaching and learning do not consistently meet the individual needs of students.
- Not all students develop the skill levels expected of them, particularly those on advanced-level diplomas.
- Provision in agriculture, animal care, and sport requires improvement and the provision in horticulture is inadequate.
- The impact of quality assurance and management actions on improving the quality of teaching and learning and students' outcomes is not yet effective.

This provider has the following strengths:

- An attractive, harmonious and purposeful environment for learning which students respect and enjoy.
- The outstanding success rates in functional skills qualifications.
- The very helpful informal support and guidance to students, which they value and which help them achieve.
- Good partnerships and links with industry which benefit students.
- A clear and ambitious strategy supported by governors.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the attention to health and safety in lessons and strengthen the risk assessments to safeguard students on the campus.
- Improve the quality of lessons and practical work so that it meets individual students needs to enable them to meet their full potential by completing accurate internal lesson observations that identify specific staff development needs and inform professional development.
- Increase the frequency, and improve the effectiveness, of tutorials by ensuring tutors record the support for students and set targets which enable students to understand the actions they should take to improve their success and develop their skills.
- Ensure that advanced-level students develop skills at the appropriate level.
- Improve the accuracy of management data and its use to set and monitor challenging targets to bring about improvements.
- Increase the rigour and improve the accuracy of the self-assessment report to provide governors and staff with a more accurate view of the quality of provision. Ensure that action plans are sufficiently clear and they lead to rapid improvement.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for students

- Success rates over the last three years have been variable. Whilst most students make satisfactory progress and achieve in line with their expected outcomes, students in some curriculum areas do not.
- Success rates for students on land-based courses, which make up over half of enrolments, have improved and are now in line with those of students in other specialist colleges. The college has revised its curriculum at advanced level, replacing two-year diplomas with two one-year courses. Success rates on these courses have improved.
- Students on foundation courses develop good vocational skills. The college has introduced a number of initiatives which are beginning to improve the outcomes of these students and narrow the achievement gap between age groups. Male and female students achieve equally well
- Most students develop appropriate vocational and personal skills that prepare them for their next steps into employment or further study; however, horticultural students do not demonstrate the skills expected of them. Students on the extended diploma courses are not given sufficient opportunity to develop the supervisory skills to enter the industry at management level.
- The achievement of additional qualifications, required by industry, enhances students' employability and career prospects. Success rates on some of these courses, many of which are short courses or at a lower level than the students' main qualification, are below national average.
- Students achieve very well in mathematics and English. Success rates on these courses have improved and are now outstanding. However, many students do not apply this learning to their course work and too much written work contains spelling and grammatical errors.
- The overall level of students' work is satisfactory. However, too many students have not produced the amount of course work required of them at this stage of their programme. Students are not always given the right opportunities to develop their independent learning skills.

- Overall apprentice success rates are good and most achieve within the target completion date. However, too many horticultural apprentices do not achieve in their planned time.
- Students develop their social and personal skills through fundraising events, membership of the student council, college ambassadors and course representatives. However, too many students who are non residents or studying part-time courses do not benefit from these opportunities.
- The proportion of students completing their courses is satisfactory. Progression to higher level courses within the college, to higher education or to vocationally-related employment is satisfactory.
- Students' awareness of health and safety, as demonstrated in lessons and crucial to employment success in land-based sectors, is weak.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- The quality of teaching and learning varies too much which means that some students, particularly those on diplomas, are not making as much progress as they should. While some teaching sessions are good, no outstanding lessons were observed and too many lessons were judged as requiring improvement or inadequate. The balance of practical and theory lessons is good, with little difference in the quality of teaching and learning which takes place.
- Teachers are very supportive of the students and have positive working relationships. In the better lessons they use their good subject knowledge and experience to link theory to practice, although this was not as obvious in animal care. Teachers use a variety of activities and tasks which motivate and interest students.
- In the majority of lessons where students' progress is at best satisfactory, teachers' expectations of students, particularly advanced students, are too low. In these lessons teachers talk too much and their use of questioning techniques to check learning and understanding is weak. They do not challenge students sufficiently to work to an appropriate or higher level.
- Assessors do not visit apprentices and their employers often enough and insufficient workplace assessment takes place. Employers do not always receive enough information to plan workplace activities to reinforce or enhance the off-the-job learning.
- Assessment is generally satisfactory. Teachers use real examples in the assignments. In too many cases, feedback to students is insufficiently detailed and does not help students to improve and, in too many cases, grammar and spelling are not corrected.
- Students are generally well supported and informal pastoral support is good. Foundation-level students, who have a wide variety of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enjoy their training and have good opportunities to learn and progress. Formal reviews of students' progress are sometimes infrequent and written records are weak. Tutors do not use targets to drive forward student success or to monitor students' progress effectively.
- Attention to health and safety practices in lessons requires improvement. In too many teaching and learning activities, teachers did not identify potential risks or act on identified risks with sufficient urgency.
- Teachers make good use of the college commercial enterprises and practical resources to enhance learning and enrich the students' experience. Plans are in place to improve the animal care facilities to support the large numbers of students in this area better. Teachers, especially those in sport and leisure, use their good industry contacts to ensure students have access to high quality off-site resources.
- Students and teachers make insufficient use of information and learning technologies (ILT) in lessons. In one subject area, football, the virtual learning environment (VLE) is developing very well to extend students' learning beyond the classroom. In most curriculum areas the VLE is underdeveloped, restricting students' opportunities for directed self-study and developing independent learning skills.

- Initial assessment is thorough. The information is used well to plan learning support, but is not used effectively to plan teaching and learning to meet the needs of all students. The allocation of learning support and appropriate adaptations is well planned and monitored to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Students develop their skills in English and mathematics well in subject-specific lessons, but do not always apply this to their work.
- Initial advice and guidance are satisfactory and allow most students to make informed choices about their courses; however, no students enrol directly onto two-year extended diploma courses. Only one member of staff is appropriately qualified in information, advice and guidance. Other staff are currently training to obtain qualifications but at too low a level. Few students progress to higher education.
- The college provides a good range of additional qualifications for students. These are carefully planned and in most cases meet the career aspirations of students. Enrichment opportunities within the course are satisfactory. Where appropriate, students develop practical skills through duties on the commercial enterprises or work with students from other courses. The group tutorials are variable in content and quality.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to advise students about future careers. Adult students make good use of a local recruitment agency and other visiting organisations to help with job search skills, careers advice and job opportunities. Students have good access to information about job vacancies, mostly local part-time opportunities that are displayed in the learning resource centre.
- While there is some planning to include topics on equality and diversity in curriculum areas, teachers do not systematically promote aspects of equality and diversity well enough during lessons or apprentices' reviews.

Agriculture and countryside

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

- Not enough teaching and learning are good or outstanding and students are not challenged to achieve their full potential. Overall success rates are satisfactory, and level 3 diploma students do not develop high level skills.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors use their subject knowledge and industrial experience well to link theory to practice. They make good use of the college farm and estate, and use routine and seasonal activities well to enhance learning; for example, agricultural students in a pig husbandry class assisted visiting student vets to take blood samples from sows.
- In the better lessons teachers use information and learning technology (ILT) well to enhance learning, and students are encouraged to share their views and evaluate previous activities. Teachers use appropriate questions to check learning and students develop new skills.
- In too many lessons teachers do not use questions effectively to check the starting points or learning of all students. Teachers ensure students complete tasks without checking sufficiently that students understand the related knowledge; for example, students injected livestock competently but did not know the product being used, its purpose or the risks associated with its use. Some practical skills, such as maintaining industry standard dairy hygiene, are not sufficiently developed for advanced-level students.
- Students participate and behave well in lessons. Attendance, punctuality and in-year retention are good and the majority of students are on course to achieve their primary learning aim.
- Risk assessment and the management of health and safety require improvement. Teachers routinely update risk assessments for practical activities. However, in too many classes, the

teacher fails to recognise the danger and control the risk effectively. For example, a teacher allowed students to enter a field without noticing that the cattle in the field included a bull. In some instances teachers did not ensure students used appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) or that they had sufficient supervision when using farm machinery.

- In several lessons teachers' use of ILT is limited to presenting information electronically. In some cases its usefulness is reduced by poor visibility because the text is too small or rooms are too light. Staff have not yet realised the potential of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to enhance and develop independent learning, and it is not well used by students.
- Informal support for students is good, but not all tutors follow the college's tutorial process. Too many tutors do not set targets that identify what the student has to do in order to be successful and to achieve their full potential.
- Assessment is fair and used well to monitor students' progress and attainment. Teachers' feedback is clear with encouraging guidance on what needs to be improved. However, too much written work for both students and apprentices contains uncorrected errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Students progress well on to other further education courses, higher education, apprenticeships or employment. Career advice and guidance are good; employers and organisations, including the National Trust and the National Farmers Union, assist with career talks and practice interviews.
- Teachers do not adequately reinforce the students' understanding of equality and diversity. Student behaviour is appropriate, but teachers and assessors regularly miss opportunities to raise awareness of working in a diverse community; for example, working with migrant workers.

Horticulture

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

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate. Too many lessons require improvement and do not support enough students, particularly apprentices, to succeed on their courses or enable diploma students to gain high level skills.
- In the few good lessons observed during the inspection, teachers engaged and motivated students and made regular checks on learning. In a plant science lesson, students worked independently and used their research skills to investigate how water loss affects plants in different environments. School pupils are challenged supportively to develop new horticultural skills
- In most lessons, teachers talk too much and do not involve students; for example, talking over students trying to share experiences from their work placements and their excitement for horticulture.
- Teachers do not check sufficiently on what students have learned and do not help students apply the theory of horticulture to practice; students completing visual tree inspections were not required to explore the reasons trees die.
- Students complete a range of additional courses selected by the college to enhance their employability. Students value the opportunity to train towards industry recognised qualifications, such as chainsaw use, but some qualifications do not meet the employment aspirations of the students.
- Teachers make good use of the well maintained, extensive gardens and grounds to develop students' practical skills to acceptable industry standards. Students complete seasonal tasks and maintenance of chainsaws with confidence and florists produce high quality funeral sprays.

- Protective equipment and teachers' risk assessment of practical lessons are usually appropriate, but there are too many lapses in safe working practices.
- Students at foundation level develop good skills, but too many intermediate- and advanced-level students are not operating at the expected level for their course. There are too few opportunities for advanced-level students to develop supervisory skills.
- Teachers make limited use of ILT to support learning. It is too frequently used for teacher presentations while students listen passively. Teachers are developing the virtual learning platform, in line with the college policy, but it is not yet well used.
- Teachers know the students well and provide good informal support. Formal support is less effective; tutorials are infrequent and not well recorded. Tutors do not set students clear targets which are linked to academic progress and challenge students to achieve their full potential. Monitoring of students' progress, particularly apprentices, is ineffective.
- Teachers do not use the information from students' diagnostic tests to plan learning to meet the needs of individual students. Learning support assistants are allocated appropriately to support learning, but in some lessons they are not briefed well enough to provide effective support for individuals or groups.
- Students' assignment work is of an appropriate standard, but many portfolios contain insufficient coursework. Work is marked, but too often teachers fail to correct errors in mathematics and English and their feedback does not provide sufficient guidance for students to improve. Teachers do not plan the assignment programme effectively and too much course work occurs at the end of the course. This limits the opportunities for students to learn from previous assignments and to improve their research and writing skills.
- Assessors do not visit apprentices in the workplace often enough or plan their learning and assessment effectively, and apprentices take too long to complete their course. Too much assessment takes place at college and assessors do not adequately communicate with employers to enable employers to support the apprentices' learning effectively.
- Teachers have good knowledge about progression opportunities within the industry and at the college. However, this support for students is not effectively coordinated.
- Specialist teachers teach mathematics and English effectively; however, vocational teachers do not routinely incorporate mathematics and English into their lessons, for example measuring and marking out vegetable plots or critiquing a floristry design.
- Teachers do not develop and reinforce students' understanding of equality and diversity. They do not plan to include equality and diversity in lessons, and opportunities to explore naturally occurring examples, such as challenging gender stereotypes within male dominated working environments, are missed.

Animal Care

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

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because lessons and assessments lack sufficient stretch and challenge for many students, especially those on advanced courses. Success rates are improving but, on many courses, have been below the national average for several years. Current students on foundation- and intermediate-level programmes are making good progress.
- In the best lessons, teachers use a good range of techniques to engage students and plan effectively to meet students' individual needs. Students are motivated and make good progress. Teachers' expectations of students on advanced courses are too low and teaching fails to challenge students sufficiently to develop the skills needed to progress.

- Teachers do not link theory to practice well. Practical duties sessions lack challenge with missed opportunities to reinforce learning or develop industry awareness. For example, advanced-level students were unaware of the types and purpose of brushes and equipment they were using when grooming ponies.
- Teachers' use of ILT in teaching is mainly for electronic text-based presentations. Staff and students use the VLE to access information and for communication; it is not fully developed to enhance learning.
- The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Feedback and marking of students' assignment work do not always identify how the student can improve, and at advanced level there is insufficient guidance on how to achieve higher grades.
- Students' attendance and punctuality are good, and most students are well behaved and diligent. Students at foundation and intermediate level make good progress in lessons. Work experience and routine duties, along with additional qualifications, enhance students' employability skills.
- Students work with a wide range of animals in the animal unit, college farm and Farm Park. The college has plans in place to modernise and extend the animal care unit to meet the needs of students better. Opportunities for students to work with dogs and cats are too limited.
- New pathways for level 3 courses allow the large number of students to achieve additional qualifications in agriculture and countryside, business administration or environmental studies alongside their main award to broaden their employment opportunities.
- Teachers have good vocational and industrial skills. They know their students well. Students receive tutorials on a termly basis, more frequently if necessary. The recording of tutorials is varied and few tutors set challenging targets to enable students to improve or achieve their full potential.
- Students receive good support to develop their skills in English and mathematics. Teachers integrate numeracy skills into their lessons well; for example, students completing tasks such as calculating stocking density of a fish tank or calculating animal feed requirements.
- Apprentices work in local animal care businesses. They attend class one day per week and enjoy their studies. Assessment is primarily college based, with insufficient work-based assessment. Portfolios contain little work-based evidence.
- Initial assessment and planning to meet students' identified needs are satisfactory. Students value the good individual support for literacy, numeracy and other specialist needs. Students' progression to other courses in the college is satisfactory, with a good range of options. Support and planning towards progression outside the college are limited and too few students progress to higher education courses.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching, learning and assessment is satisfactory. Equality and diversity discussions occur in group tutorial sessions, but aspects related to animal care are not always reinforced in some lessons.

Sport, leisure and recreation

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

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because they are not well planned to meet the needs of all students, particularly those on higher-level courses. Too few students on full-time advanced-level programmes successfully complete their qualifications.
- In better lessons, teachers plan and use a range of activities and methods, including video clips, to inspire and motivate students. Students make good links across the curriculum. For example,

in practical sessions they used the knowledge gained in cricket coaching and football sessions to inform leadership activities.

- In less effective lessons, teachers do not plan teaching and learning effectively to meet the students' individual needs, particularly in classroom sessions. Their use of technology is uninspiring and they do not check sufficiently on learning. Teachers do not support students to become independent in their learning or prepare them well for higher education.
- Students make insufficient progress. Some students do not develop the knowledge and understanding of, for example, anatomy and physiology or recreational impacts expected of them. Teachers do not challenge students' poor attendance sufficiently and, on many programmes, attendance is below the college target.
- Tutors are well qualified and use their experience well to develop productive relationships with local outdoor centres and sports organisations that enable students to access a good range of learning opportunities. Whilst some recent investment in campus-based resources has taken place, the availability of equipment, changing and practical training facilities does not meet the needs of the curriculum; staff overcome this deficiency by using outdoor and off-campus resources.
- Tutorial support is well structured and valued by students; however, not all students have received sufficient formal tutorials. Targets intended to help students improve often lack detail or are too specific and do not focus sufficiently on students' progress towards achieving their qualifications. Students value the informal support they receive from tutors, but tutors do not record or monitor the impact of this support. Apprentices receive useful frequent workplace visits to review their progress.
- Tutors and students on football courses make good use of virtual learning technology to share resources, including video and photographic records of previous learning activities, and promote interactive activities. Football students use the VLE to access tutors outside timetabled lessons and develop independent learning skills. For students on other programmes, the VLE is less well developed and used and mostly contains assignment briefs and lesson material.
- Students' written and practical work is satisfactory. Feedback on assignment work is accurate and prompt, directly linked to relevant grading criteria, and informs students how they can improve. Some feedback on students' work lacks detail and spelling errors are not always corrected.
- Students have good opportunities to take additional qualifications, including Sports Coaching and National Governing Body awards, which enhance their personal and employability skills. Tutors use their knowledge and experience well to raise students' awareness of progression routes into further study or employment. Many outdoor adventure students gain good jobs within the industry.
- Teachers encourage good working relationships and enable students to develop confidence in working with different client groups through organising a range of sports coaching events for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers promote equality and support diversity in accordance with syllabus requirements, but they do not reinforce and develop students' understanding of equality and diversity themes in other parts of the course.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

- The Principal and governors have recently produced a clear and ambitious strategic plan. They have revised the key priorities to focus on raising standards so that staff now understand how they contribute to the college's success. The plan has not yet had time to make an impact on the quality of the provision.
- Success rates have improved and most are now at the national average. The quality of curriculum leadership varies too much, with insufficient focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The management of work-based learning is ineffective and too many horticultural apprentices do not achieve their qualification.

- Governors are very supportive and use their good expertise and knowledge to intervene where they have been supplied with sufficient information about the college's performance. For example, they have enforced the implementation of the staff appraisal system. The data and reports that governors receive give an optimistic view of the college's current performance. Consequently, they are not able to identify accurately the areas where their intervention will be most effective.
- Not enough teaching is good. The college's evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is too generous. Lesson observers have not had sufficient training and do not always provide accurate feedback to teachers on what they need to do to improve their practice. Internal observation records do not clearly explain the grade awarded or identify priorities for staff development.
- Performance management is weak. Despite governors' intervention, too few appraisals have been completed so far this year. Managers do not set staff specific targets or help teachers improve their teaching strategies.
- Self-assessment and quality assurance processes are comprehensive and inclusive, but managers do not use accurate data to be sufficiently self-critical. Judgements in the selfassessment report are too generous and the evidence does not support the grades awarded by college managers. The college has not identified all key areas for improvement.
- Students' views are collected and acted upon as appropriate. The student council meets senior staff regularly to suggest improvements. The Principal encourages direct student feedback, for example the new initiative 'text the top'.
- The college offers a broad range of provision, including relevant additional qualifications, from entry level to higher education. The number of learners studying at the college has increased substantially over the last five years. The college's well-established, varied and successful links with external organisations and employers support the curriculum and benefit students. The effective partnership with Thomas Hardye School enriches and extends the curriculum of both organisations.
- Equality and diversity are a core value of the college. The college is inclusive. The experience of students with a variety of needs is monitored and good practice shared. The equalities committee ensures that it complies with legislation and considers how aspects can be promoted. The college works successfully with gypsies and Travellers in the local community.
- The college meets its statutory requirement to safeguard students. All staff and governors have initial safeguarding training and relevant staff have completed further training appropriate to their responsibilities. Students cover health and safety at induction, but safe working practices are not always enforced in lessons. Students receive insufficient guidance on safeguarding, particularly in relation to the large number of visitors on the campus, at induction.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

The effectiveness of leadership and

management

Kingston Maurward 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	2	
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	3	3	3	

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment		
Agriculture	3	
Horticulture	4	
Animal care	3	
Sport, leisure and recreation	3	

3

3

3

3

Provider details

Kingston Maurward College			
Type of provider	Specialist further education college		
Age range of students	16+		
Approximate number of all students over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 712		
	Part-time: 2109		
Principal/CEO	Clare Davison		
Date of previous inspection	June 2007		
Website address	www.kmc.ac.uk		

Provider information at the time of the inspection									
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or Level 2 below		Lev	Level 3		Level 4 and above			
Total number of students (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
Full-time	109	28	215	30	303	92	-	-	
Part-time Part-time	29	112	94	466	29	155	-	-	
				•				•	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		te	Advanced			Higher		
	16-18 19+)+	16-18	19+	16-	-18	19+	
	133	8	2	32	86				
Number of students aged 14-16	223								
Number of community students	N/A								
Number of employability students	N/A								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)								
At the time of inspection the	■ Side by Side Training								
provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	First Class First Aid								

Additional socio-economic information

Kingston Maurward College is a specialist land-based college set in 750 acres of farmland, parkland, gardens and conservation areas, and located two miles from Dorchester, Dorset. The college works with schools across the county to provide an increasing range of vocational options for pupils aged 14 to 16. The college has a well-established partnership with Thomas Hardye School.

The local area is largely rural with the highest concentration of population in the south east of the county. The area is characterised by a relatively low-wage economy, and the proportion of the population of retirement age is noticeably higher than the average for England. The proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is close to the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Bryan Davies HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on 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 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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