

The Building Crafts College

Specialist college

Inspection dates		3–5 February 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- All apprentices successfully complete their training and most complete on time.
- Employability and vocational skills development is particularly good.
- The standard of work is particularly high.
- Progression rates into further learning and employment are high.
- Enthusiastic and passionate teachers demonstrate their expertise in their craft which is used to good effect to plan and enhance learning.
- Assessment practice is good, accurate and fair.
- Initial assessment is used effectively to plan learning and is underpinned by good support.
- Students' behaviour and attitude to work are very good.
- Clearly presented core values, used to influence and inform all strategic decisions, are highly effective.
- The college demonstrates flexibility of arrangements for training and assessment to suit the needs of learners and the business community and has successful and productive relationships with employers.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is effective and enables high profile value added activities for students such as the Women into Construction project's work in Africa.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The qualification success rates for classroom based learning require improvement and the progress of 16- to 18-year-old students is slow.
- Teachers are not routinely correcting poor spelling and grammar in learners' work and written feedback does not always provide students and learners with clear guidance on how to improve further.
- The observation of teaching and learning process has been insufficiently successful in raising the standards of teaching and learning, as a result too few lessons observed are as yet outstanding.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the course selection and recruitment process to place younger learners on the right course, at the right level, so they can all succeed.
- Further enhance students' English skills by ensuring teachers routinely correct poor spelling and grammar.
- Provide written feedback on students' work to reinforce their personal development points identified in lessons.
- Raise the standard of teaching and learning by:
 - strengthening the college's observation of teaching and learning process
 - sharing good practice
 - providing staff training.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The proportion of students who completed their courses successfully in 2011/12 was high and above the national rate for all providers. Data for 2012/13 show a decline, but this is due to data recording errors. More accurate data still show a decline, but to around the national average. The vast majority of adult students complete their courses successfully, and short courses are more successful at just below the national rate for all providers.
- Almost all apprentices successfully completed their training in 2012/13. This is a significant improvement on the previous year. At intermediate level, in 2011/12, only a small minority was successful; but in 2012/13, apprenticeship achievements had risen to 100%. However, only two thirds of learners completed their training on time. Advanced apprenticeship completion rates have improved from 2011/12, with all learners successfully completing in 2012/13. Intermediate level older learners and advanced apprentices all completed their frameworks on time.
- Apprentices make good progress; however, some students on classroom-based learning courses make slower progress, particularly those aged 16 to 18 years.
- The college works hard to enable learners with learning difficulties to succeed. Students with dyslexia aged 16 to 18 years perform better than their peers, and adult students with dyslexia all successfully achieved last year.
- Students from minority ethnic groups aged 16 to 18 years achieve well and success rates for this group are well above their peers. There are no significant differences in the success of adult students from minority ethnic groups and their peers.
- Learners develop particularly good skills in their vocational subjects and the skills to help them into employment. For example, in practical work settings, safe working practices are prioritised and learners have a very good understanding of health and safety arrangements and how to protect themselves at work. They work well together on collaborative projects and challenge each other to achieve very high standards. Team projects enable learners to develop good social skills through cooperation and negotiation. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is effective and attendance rates are high.
- Learners' and students' work is of a high standard. Students relish the exacting demands made of them to produce very high quality work. The opportunities to work with skilled craftsmen and women are particularly of benefit to learners who are enthusiastic and excited about their work. Apprentices demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of specialist crafts such as

stonemasonry. They are able to make clear links between their skill development and sustained employment within a niche skill area.

- Progression rates are very high. The routine monitoring of learners' destinations to higher level courses and employment is effective. High numbers progress to further learning. There are good progression rates into foundation level courses from the alternative education provision for young people aged 14 to 16 years. Of the seven learners in the group last year who completed the programme, four in Year 11 and one in Year 10 progressed to a foundation level carpentry and joinery course.
- Of the 492 students and learners that were enrolled last year, a very large majority continued in learning or progressed into employment, of these just over a third entered higher education. Links with employers are very effective and lead to sustainable employment for many learners. The demand for very specialist stonemasonry and carpentry skills is high and employers value the bespoke and specialist training provided at the college.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and support the high levels of vocational and employability skills attainment, the achievements of adult learners and the high number of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship on time. Teachers and employers move students and learners onto more challenging work in different settings as soon as they are ready. While the college recognises, and inspectors agree, that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, there is little that is outstanding. Securing the highest quality learning for students and learners is one of the biggest challenges facing the college.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and passionate about their subject and this inspires students and learners. Teachers provide astute guidance and support which allows students to make significant progress in their practical work. They provide constructive encouragement and, as a result, students and learners acquire the confidence and skills to work independently and achieve. Frequent assessment, using a learning/planning diary and monitoring charts in the workshops, contributes to a weekly employer and parent report. This approach reinforces learning and helps students and learners develop good practical skills and have a clear understanding of the progress they make in their learning.
- Teachers use their expertise and good planning very effectively to develop a range of activities and tasks that constantly challenge students and learners to learn by doing, thinking and evaluating. For example, in a very good masonry lesson, students assessed each other's work and provided detailed and timely advice on how they could improve and develop skills further. Most students and learners make good progress and produce work of a high standard. For example, in joinery, intermediate level students and learners worked independently and methodically to produce sash windows and staircases which were accurate, well finished and produced on time. When questioned, they confidently articulated a clear understanding of the supporting theory they needed to know for each task.
- Assessment practice is thorough, accurate and fair. Most teachers, assessors and employers provide supportive and encouraging feedback to students and learners. In many lessons, the teacher's awareness of individual students' progress and the effective assessment strategies make students and learners ambitious to do better. Teachers are constantly challenging them to think how they can enhance their products. However, much advice, although very helpful, is verbal and written feedback does not always reflect what teachers say.
- At work, apprentices demonstrate good employability and practical skills, reinforced by undertaking independent tasks which are well supervised and assessed in college. Many are developing creativity and independence in their approaches to learning. Learners frequently work on prestigious heritage and restoration projects that enhance and refine their skills to a very high degree.
- The results from initial assessment of learners' and students' English, mathematics and free writing skills are carefully identified and well recorded, providing good information to staff to

plan teaching and learning strategies to meet individual needs. The development of mathematics in lessons by continual interpretation of working drawings and reinforcement of accuracy is good. Learners appreciate the importance of mathematics in sustaining employment. Dedicated lessons are improving students' English; however, teachers are not routinely correcting poor spelling and grammar in their work, as a result this slows the development of skills that will enhance their job prospects.

- Support is good. Teachers help foster good working and social relationships in classes. They give students valuable individual support and encourage good participation and dialogue about construction techniques and accuracy. Staff are very good at tackling the challenges experienced by some students in their everyday lives and have an appreciation of the difficulties they face. Robust initial advice and guidance are placing students on the correct courses. Course induction clarifies the expectations of the college, the demands of the qualifications and the workplace.
- Behaviour and attitudes for work are very good and the representation of women as teachers and students at the college is a positive feature. Staff are good role models due to their in-depth knowledge of their respective crafts and close links with industry. Teachers exploit naturally occurring opportunities to challenge stereotypes. However, they sometimes miss broader diversity themes. For example, when working alongside migrant workers where English may not be their first language, they miss the opportunity to explore the potential for miscommunication.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Working closely with a wide range of strategic partners, the college has been a key player in the provision of qualified tradespeople to the building industry. It has made good use of an interesting and challenging period due to significant local building undertakings, such as the 2012 Olympic site and London Crossrail projects. The governors, senior managers and staff successfully work with a broad range of partners to train people in building crafts.
- The college has a simple, yet highly effective, set of core values that it uses to influence and inform all strategic decisions. Clearly focused on retaining traditional skills, yet being responsive to meeting the needs of the modern building industry, the college successfully engages with local people to train and then find employment for many individuals. All staff and learners are fully aware of the values and traditions that are held so highly by all involved in the college.
- Senior managers were initially slow in identifying and remedying issues responsible for low success rates for some parts of its provision. Since 2013, however, data are being gathered and scrutinised more robustly. Staff now carry out a detailed analysis of information highlighting the progress learners make and managers use data effectively to manage the performance of learners. According to the college's own data, there is a clear trend of improvement in the successful completion of specific parts of courses in the first few months of the current year.
- Strategies to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment at the college have yet to have the impact desired by senior managers and, as a result, too few lessons are outstanding. For example, lesson plans do little to encourage learners to use independent learning skills or information and communication technology to research relevant topics. The college has recognised this and has made changes to the observation of teaching and learning process and commenced staff training to remedy these issues.
- The attitude to learning and behaviour of learners is very good. Careful attention to the attendance and punctuality of learners has improved attendance rates significantly and all employers are fully aware of any issues that may arise. Parents of 16- to 18-year-old learners are kept fully informed of the attitude and performance of their child whilst at the college.
- A range of highly effective meetings inform staff and managers about all aspects of the college's developments. The college appropriately gathers learners' and employers' views at different stages of the learning programme. Responses to annual surveys to obtain feedback are

overwhelmingly positive, and issues raised by learners and employers receive an appropriate response from the college.

- College staff conduct a detailed review of provision as part of the self-assessment process. A comprehensive evaluation of the learner journey takes place, providing a useful and accurate view of the quality of the provision which informs the self-assessment report. The review effectively focuses on identifying issues that impact on the learning experience and has led to clear, measurable and time-bound improvement targets.
- Relationships with employers are excellent and college staff demonstrate a high degree of flexibility for training and assessment to suit the needs of the learners and employers. There is a well-established approach to working with employers. College staff have a particularly good understanding of the sector's training requirements and expectations. This is due to the high level of knowledge and experience of the carpentry and stone masonry crafts amongst staff and managers.
- Arrangements to promote equality and diversity are good as a result of a very detailed equality and diversity policy and action plan containing objectives and monitoring measures for the continuous advancement of equality themes. The college learner profile broadly reflects the demographic profile of the communities it serves. A wide range of specialist projects promote a global perspective on human rights and the value of cultural diversity, such as the Women in Construction initiative. This provides the opportunity for students and learners to visit Africa to train women in construction skills, enabling them to help themselves.
- All learners spoken to during the inspection reported that they felt valued and safe within the college and their work environments. The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. The safeguarding policy is extensive and updated regularly in order to reflect any changes in legislation. Staff receive appropriately detailed annual training on safeguarding arrangements and all staff are routinely vetted to work with vulnerable adults and children. Clear and accurate records of any incidents or referrals, and the outcomes of interventions made, support the safeguarding procedures. The college maintains good links with the appropriate support and referral agencies.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

The Building Crafts College

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	-	-	2	-	2	2	-	-
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	2	-	2	2	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	2	-	2	2	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	2	-	2	2	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Building and construction	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Specialist further education college							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 200							
	Part-time: 17							
Principal/CEO	Mr Len Conway							
Date of previous inspection	June 2009							
Website address	www.thebcc.ac.uk							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	50	66	24	42	6	12	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	-	-
	5	6	3	2	-	-	-	-
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
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"> ■ N/A 							

Contextual information

The Building Crafts College, founded by the Worshipful Company of Carpenters in 1893, has two adjacent sites located in the London Borough of Newham, an area with high levels of deprivation and social disadvantage. The college offers a range of construction courses from foundation level to higher education, including highly specialised courses such as historic building conservation studies, stonemasonry and fine carpentry. The college is also contracted by the London Borough of Islington to provide alternative education for children aged 14 to 16 years, and is a subcontractor for construction skills apprenticeships on behalf of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and classroom based learning on behalf of Five Counties Training. These areas of provision were out of scope for this inspection.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Rosy Belton HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Deputy Principal 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 relevant 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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