

North West Kent College

General further education college

Inspection dates		10–14 February 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- A high proportion of students of all ages, on courses at all levels and durations successfully complete their qualifications.
- Students have a good work ethic and acquire skills that enable a high proportion to gain employment or move on to higher levels of study.
- The majority of students produce work of a high standard. Students' work in performing arts is outstanding.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers plan lessons that are varied and interesting and students make good progress.
- Students benefit from effective pastoral and academic guidance. Students who need extra help to achieve their qualifications receive good support.
- Teachers make excellent use of the high-quality facilities and resources, including the use of information and learning technology, to enliven lessons and provide good resources to help students to continue learning outside the classroom.
- Leaders and managers have a strong focus on raising standards of teaching, learning and assessment and this, coupled with prudent financial management and continual updating of the college estate, has improved students' experiences at both campuses.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Students do not develop their mathematics and English skills sufficiently. The proportion who gains GCSEs at grades A* to C is not yet high enough.
- In engineering and construction, too few apprentices achieve their qualifications, and only a small minority completes their courses within the planned time.
- Not enough teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and a very small minority of lessons are inadequate.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of students who successfully complete qualifications in English and mathematics by improving the use of initial assessment to place students on the correct level of study. Ensure that planning for individual students provides a clear pathway to gaining GCSEs at grades A* to C in mathematics and English, where this is a realistic goal.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in functional skills lessons and ensure that vocational teachers have the necessary skills to include English and mathematics in their lessons and do so systematically.
- Increase the extent to which staff monitor the progress of apprentices and ensure that interventions for individual apprentices are timely, robust and lead to sustained improvements in performance.
- Increase the proportion of teaching and learning that is good and outstanding by building the capacity of college observers to provide precise guidance to individual teachers on their areas for improvement.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18 and for those studying long courses, success rates are high and, at advanced level, very high. For adults studying long courses, success rates are high. The number of students on short courses has risen markedly in the past year and the proportion that successfully completes their qualifications is high.
- Students make better than expected progress given their starting points across most subject areas. In a few subjects, such as performing arts, they make outstanding progress. Teachers expect students to perform to a high standard and, as a result, students' work often exceeds the requirements of their programmes. In a few subject areas, students participate in skills competitions and these motivate them to excel. In a small minority of subjects, including foundation mathematics, students make insufficient progress.
- The proportion of apprentices that successfully complete their programmes is in line with the national average, but the proportion that completes their qualifications in the planned time is very low. This is because too few engineering and construction apprentices complete their programmes on time. Managers have taken decisive action to address the problems in these areas. They now monitor the progress made by apprentices more closely and college data indicate this is having a positive impact.
- The college is welcoming and inclusive and students' conduct is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Students enjoy their studies and work in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Managers track the performance of different groups of students carefully and actions to address any disparities have been effective. The performance of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is around the average for all students, and students who need extra help with their studies perform as well as those who do not. Students aged 16 to 18 perform better than adults, but the performance of both groups is high.
- The proportion of students who successfully complete qualifications in functional mathematics and English has improved slightly over the past three years, but remains just below the rate for similar colleges. The proportion that gains GCSEs at grades A* to C in these subjects requires

improvement. Although staff carefully assess students' existing skills, they have not paid enough attention to this information when selecting an appropriate level of study for them. Managers are aware of the need for improvement and have taken appropriate actions, but it is too early to see their impact.

- Teachers work successfully to ensure that students develop their skills in realistic work situations. For example, performing arts students work as a theatre company and stage frequent productions, and computing students run a computer repair workshop for staff and the public. Teachers use the college's realistic working environments well to develop students' practical skills, for example in hairdressing salons, a business centre and training kitchens.
- On completion of their studies, a high proportion of students progress to further study, higher education or relevant employment. Staff have developed a range of contacts that help students progress into relevant work. For example, a careers academy in business studies provides students with a six-week paid internship that helps them develop the skills they need for employment; accountancy students undertake additional qualifications in computerised book keeping, which helps make them more attractive to potential employers.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Managers have prioritised raising standards of teaching and learning and good strategic planning has resulted in sustainable improvements since the last inspection. These include the introduction of senior teaching and learning practitioners, who coach teachers who need to improve, the establishment of small groups of teachers who work together to improve their own teaching, and much improved continued professional development for all teachers. This, alongside regular assessments of teaching practice, has led to lessons that hold students' attention and help the students learn more quickly.
- Students are motivated and encouraged by the high expectations of most teachers, who use their teaching and vocational expertise to great effect. For example, performing arts students are assembled into companies of actors and dancers, which replicate working methods used in the industry. Through highly skilful teaching, direction and choreography by staff, students produce work of an extremely high standard and develop the skills and work ethic necessary to progress to professional training and employment.
- Teachers plan very effectively and this results in well-structured lessons with appropriate learning activities and approaches. Most teachers expertly use directed and probing questions to support and challenge each student and to confirm knowledge and understanding. In a small minority of lessons, weaknesses in both learning and assessment lead to slow progress by students.
- Teachers' ability to support and track the progress of apprentices is too variable and teaching, learning and assessment are not consistent across all apprenticeship frameworks. As a result, too few apprentices complete their framework on time.
- The widespread use of learning support assistants ensures that students progress well. For example, in a public services map reading lesson the teacher and learning assistant worked very effectively to develop students' skills in navigating around the Dartford campus.
- Staff identify most students' needs by assessing thoroughly their academic and personal support requirements. As a result, teachers know their students well and most plan lessons to ensure that students make good progress.
- Many lessons include a broad range of approaches and learning activities that help to keep students interested so that they progress well. Activities include well-designed quizzes, using tablet computers or personal telephones, practical activities and, in most subject areas, the use of a well-developed virtual learning environment. For example, beauty therapy students upload pictures of their work for future group reference and performing arts students make very

effective use of a social media site to submit work for assessment and plan projects, and through which teachers provide useful and detailed feedback.

- Teachers set regular homework, which helps students develop independent learning skills. Teachers’ frequent assessment and detailed feedback, in most subjects, ensure that students know what they need to do to improve to reach their learning targets. However, a small minority of teachers do not assess and review students’ progress often enough. Most students are highly motivated to succeed and all benefit from good pastoral and academic support.
- Although staff identify students’ English and mathematics needs well, they do not use this information sufficiently to ensure all students study these subjects at an appropriate level. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in these subjects requires improvement. College leaders have given this a high priority and taken appropriate action to improve the development of these skills. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these actions.
- Teachers make excellent use of the high-quality facilities and resources for most subjects on both campuses. These include outstanding early years, sports and theatre facilities, and good hair and beauty salons, in which students learn to work to industry standards. However, the construction and engineering rooms at Dartford are cramped and make it difficult for teachers to support students effectively. Good use of a range of additional activities broadens students’ experience and helps students continue their development in a different context. Activities include national competitions, visits from external speakers, and a broad range of visits and trips.
- Students receive good quality information, advice and guidance that help them choose appropriate programmes of study. High quality ongoing advice and support from teachers and well-trained careers advisers, coupled with good links with local employers, the National Careers Service and Jobcentre Plus help prepare students for progression on to higher-level courses or employment.
- Staff have created an inclusive culture with strong mutual respect and very low levels of inappropriate behaviour. The vast majority of students have a clear awareness of their responsibilities and respect their fellow students. Most teachers ensure that they are well prepared for employment within the diverse broader community.

Health and social care	Good
16-19 study programmes	
19+ Learning programmes	

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Consequently, the proportion of students who successfully complete their qualifications is high and above the average for similar colleges.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students, of whom the majority are progressing well. A large majority of students on advanced level courses progress on to health care related degree courses at university including nursing, midwifery and psychology.
- Well-qualified teachers use their subject knowledge and professional expertise well to enliven learning and, consequently, students develop good skills. They also provide students with positive practitioner role models. Teachers make excellent use of high-quality learning environments to support collaborative learning and, as a result, students develop good team working skills.
- Teachers organise and plan lessons well, incorporating a range of creative activities to ensure students are fully involved in their learning. Consequently, students develop a range of relevant skills that prepare them for jobs including team working, problem solving and researching. For example, in one lesson, students participated in a child protection conference role play, taking on the perspectives of different agencies such as a health assessment team. In another lesson,

students reinforced their learning about white blood cells through digital research, student presentations and microscope work.

- Most teachers use questioning skilfully to check students’ understanding and to encourage students to explore topics more thoroughly and increase their knowledge. Students develop strong skills of analysis and evaluation and lessons are challenging. However, teachers do not always plan and use learning activities appropriate to the level of each student, and a small minority makes slower progress than expected.
- Teachers provide frequent and timely feedback on students’ assignments through a web-based assessment system. This enables teachers to track students’ progress closely and provide support where it is needed. However, teachers do not always provide students with enough information to help them achieve high grades.
- Teachers successfully help students to improve their English skills. In marked work, students receive useful feedback on their spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students use technical terminology confidently and accurately. For example, in one lesson, students explained the link between consuming high levels of unsaturated fats, cholesterol levels in the blood, and cardiovascular disease. However, students do not develop their mathematical skills sufficiently because teachers often miss opportunities to include the development of these skills in lessons.
- High-quality information, advice and guidance help students choose appropriate courses and, as a result, a high proportion of students complete their programmes. Teachers conduct frequent one-to-one tutorials with students that successfully help them to review their progress and make improvements. Teachers and learning support assistants work closely to ensure that individual support plans help students make good progress. A well-planned programme of additional qualifications in, for example, fire evacuation, food safety and basic first aid, prepares students well for work placements.
- Teachers are effective at developing students’ understanding of themes relating to cultural diversity using well-chosen activities in lessons. For example, in one lesson, students researched different religious food customs. During this activity, the teacher skilfully raised students’ awareness of how such customs relate to the care of service users.

Early years	Good
16-19 study programmes	
19+ Learning programmes	

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and the high level of success students have in achieving their qualifications reflects this. Students develop the skills and knowledge to become good employees in childcare settings.
- Teachers plan their lessons well. They make frequent checks to ensure students fully understand the content of their lessons. They use a range of activities to ensure all students develop their skills and knowledge and to challenge the most able. Most lessons are good and a few are outstanding. Students respond with enthusiasm, exemplary behaviour and obvious enjoyment of their lessons, and make good progress.
- Teachers successfully encourage students to develop their ability to work independently. In an advanced level lesson, groups of students designed a game to help early years professionals learn about the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Through this highly effective activity, students were able to measure their own progress in gaining knowledge of the framework, as well as developing leadership and team working skills.
- The integration of work experience with classroom learning is particularly effective. Employers, workplace assessors and teachers work together successfully to help students apply the skills and knowledge they learn at college to their work placements. Students link their experiences in

work placements to their classroom activities to make excellent connections between theory and practice.

- Teachers have a good understanding of students' individual needs. The arrangements for identifying students who need extra help are good, as is the level of support provided in lessons. Teachers and learning support assistants work together closely and their support is very effective in helping students to achieve their goals.
- Accommodation and resources are outstanding. Learning centres are well designed and equipped with an excellent range of resources to help students learn both theory and practical skills. Teachers make excellent use of the nursery at the Gravesend campus. Students on this site develop their professional skills quickly because of frequent opportunities to work with children.
- Teachers check learning regularly during lessons, and successfully develop students' skills in assessing their own work and that of their peers. Students understand the progress they are making and where they need to fill gaps in their knowledge. Teachers mark students' assignments promptly and provide helpful guidance, focused on what they have done well and how they could make improvements in future work.
- Students improve their skills in the use of English and mathematics because teachers appreciate the value of these skills to early years students. In one lesson, foundation level students fed back their research into risks involved in creative play with young children by typing directly on to the interactive whiteboard; other students in the group supportively identified and corrected errors in spelling and punctuation. However, the arrangements for students to gain qualifications in mathematics and English are insufficient.
- The arrangements to provide advice and guidance are supportive and rigorous. Students applying to study early years courses undertake ten days' work experience which ensures they arrive at the college with a good understanding of working with children. Teachers' ongoing advice and guidance, including tutorial support, are equally thorough and help students develop professional standards of behaviour, attendance and skills in reflecting on their development.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is embedded throughout early years courses. Teachers successfully encourage students to respect different cultures. For example, students confidently discussed the range of attitudes among different social groups to breastfeeding older children. In many lessons, teachers place a strong emphasis on students being non-judgemental about childcare practices within different communities.

Engineering

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes
Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and the low success rates for students on intermediate and advanced level electro-technical courses reflect this. Success rates for students on advanced level mechanical engineering programmes are high. Few apprentices complete their qualifications on time. The low attendance of students on intermediate and advanced level electro-technical courses adversely affects their progress.
- In electronic and mechanical engineering lessons, teaching and learning are good. Teachers use their vocational expertise well in linking classroom work to industry standards, and this improves students' work-related skills. For example, following workshop demonstrations, the teacher expertly used probing questions to develop students' understanding of the concepts of case hardening, which equipped them with the practical knowledge to complete their written assignment.

- Teaching and learning on intermediate and advanced level electro-technical courses require improvement. Teachers do not plan sufficiently challenging activities and, as a result, students make slow progress. In electro-technical theory lessons, teachers do not use strategies that allow students to evaluate technical concepts for themselves and this limits their understanding of key topics.
- Students work safely in practical workshops and understand their responsibilities towards health and safety. Students at the Gravesend campus benefit from high quality workshops and equipment that enable them to work to industry standards. However, equipment and materials in the workshops at Dartford are not of the same standard and students at this campus make slower progress. The low attendance of students based at this campus reflects this.
- Students receive good support in lessons and in the workplace. Teachers and assessors manage assessments well to meet students’ and apprentices’ individual needs. The standard of most students’ work is good and meets industry standards.
- Students who study mechanical and electronic engineering benefit from regular and precise feedback through the virtual learning environment and this helps them develop their skills and achieve high grades. However, teachers’ assessment practice on intermediate and advanced level electro-technical courses requires improvement. Managers are aware of this and recent staff development activities have taken place, but it is too early to judge the impact.
- Teachers ensure that students develop satisfactory skills in the use of mathematics and are competent in applying these to a range of tasks. For example, students on an advanced level mechanical course improved their mathematical skills by analysing a complex technical drawing of a camshaft lobe and calculating its dimensions. However, teachers often provide students with answers to mathematical problems and do not allow them the opportunity to discover solutions for themselves.
- Teachers do not make effective use of opportunities to develop students’ use of English and often do not comment on spelling, punctuation and grammar in written work.
- Students receive good advice and guidance before coming on a course to ensure they make good choices about their learning and employment goals. Teachers have strong links with the industry and use these to help students secure employment. As a result, for those students who successfully complete courses, the proportion that progresses into employment or on to further study is high.
- Apprentices’ and full-time students’ understanding of equality and diversity is limited to their individual life experiences. Reviews at the workplace and teaching in college do not address diversity sufficiently and have failed to change or extend students’ and apprentices’ values and opinions, for example to challenge industry values and stereotypes.

<p>Building and construction</p> <p>16-19 study programmes</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Success rates for carpentry and joinery programmes are high, but success rates at foundation level and for apprenticeships are low and below those of similar colleges. Attendance on some foundation level courses is poor.
- On many courses, teachers have high expectations of students and apprentices and their participation in a range of prestigious competitions, such as the regional skill build competition and the paint suppliers’ apprentice of the year, is a reflection of this. Most students develop high quality practical skills. For example, carpentry students have built staircases and installed them

in college buildings, joinery students set out scale drawings of complex work carefully and accurately, and brickwork students roll and spread mortar with dexterity.

- Teachers plan lessons to include a variety of learning tasks and the pace of learning in most lessons is brisk. However, teachers do not take sufficient account of students’ starting points or the results of on-going assessments to plan for individual students’ learning needs. In a few lessons, teachers’ presentations fail to interest students. This results in a loss of concentration and slow progress for those students.
- Managers and assessors have implemented robust new procedures for tracking the progress apprentices make. Recently acquired software helps managers and assessors check progress and record apprentices’ targets. However, it is too early to judge the impact this will have on apprenticeship outcomes.
- Assessors provide guidance to apprentices that helps them improve their work. However, assessors often provide guidance to less able apprentices that is too directive and does not challenge them to develop solutions for themselves. As a result, these apprentices do not develop the skills they need to learn on their own.
- Teachers and assessors provide frequent and detailed verbal feedback to students and this helps them to improve their skills. Although teachers’ written feedback usually helps students recognise their own strengths and weaknesses, in a few cases feedback lacks sufficient detail for them to know how to improve. In a very small number of cases, teachers do not provide formal written feedback.
- In a few cases, teachers do not plan formal assessment activities well. As a result, students do not have sufficient opportunity to practise their skills beforehand and lack the confidence to complete these assessments to the best of their ability.
- Teachers do not systematically incorporate the development of mathematics and English into their lessons. As a result, students make only satisfactory progress in developing these skills. Written feedback does not consistently address errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Staff have improved the information and guidance students receive before joining their courses. This has reduced the number of early leavers to a low level. The introduction of a multi-skills trade course has given students the opportunity to try a number of different trades before specialising. Although it is too early to assess the impact of this, current retention suggests this has helped.
- Work experience is not sufficiently widespread and, as a result, students lack opportunities to develop some employability skills and learn about available employment opportunities.
- Staff have developed good displays in most work areas that promote equality and diversity, and teachers foster high levels of respect between student groups. In reviews, apprentices demonstrate a sound knowledge of key topics. However, teachers often do not plan lessons to address these subjects in the work context. As a result, students lack awareness of how the differing needs of their customers will affect their work.

Independent living and leisure skills

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and, as a result, success rates have remained high for the past three years. The large majority of students achieve their main objectives and progress on to further training. They develop good communication and social interaction skills that will help them to integrate into society. Students on the vocational preparation course gain a thorough understanding of a number of vocational areas, as well as transferable skills needed for employment such as personal presentation and customer service.

- Teachers have high expectations of students and successfully motivate them to continue to improve the standard of their work. Students receive very good support that enables them to increase their confidence and achieve their goals. In most sessions, teachers successfully encourage students to take responsibility for their learning. For example, in an entry level class, teachers helped students use dictionaries to check spellings as part of developing proofreading skills.
- Teachers provide well-planned and well-structured activities to develop learning in carefully defined stages during sessions, enabling all students to learn well. They relate activities and tasks to everyday life and students are prepared to live independently as far as possible. These activities include visits to local places of interest to provide experiences beyond students' daily lives and require them to travel safely and to socialise. Students enjoy and benefit from a range of extra events such as sport and health-related activities.
- Teachers assess students' existing skills and support needs to draw up personal learning plans with clear individual targets. They monitor students' progress well and regularly review and update the targets with students. As a result, students quickly develop their skills and understanding. In most sessions, teachers skilfully plan activities that help students of all abilities to gain new skills. Most teachers use resources well including some very good use of technology to research and present information and to record progress. Learning support assistants provide highly effective support to individual students, and give helpful feedback to the teacher to identify any further needs and enable monitoring of progress.
- In most classes, teachers accurately assess learning and provide constructive feedback that helps students to recognise their progress and what they need to improve. Most students are able to identify what they have learned during classes and, in one example, measured this on a timeline to provide a visual picture of their learning.
- Most students increase their knowledge and develop skills that will help them to function in society and, in some cases, to gain and sustain employment or a voluntary placement. These include functional skills of English and mathematics and the skills needed for social interaction. However, they do not provide enough focus on helping students on the vocational preparation course to apply their skills to those subjects.
- Arrangements to provide information, advice and guidance to help parents and students select the right courses are highly effective. A strong feature is that advisers interview prospective students in their homes or schools to make the move into college easier for them. Teachers use the first few weeks of courses to prepare students well for the remainder of their programme. This period is also used very effectively to ensure that students have made the right choice and, where necessary, to help them move on to different courses. Students benefit from well-planned progression routes within the Gateway to Learning provision and to other courses where appropriate.
- Teachers are skilful in helping students to understand how to conduct themselves in different circumstances and to enable them to integrate socially in a range of settings. Students show respect and tolerance to their peers and to staff. Teachers draw effectively on current events and topics of interest to students to broaden their understanding of cultural diversity and to develop their awareness of the needs of people with a range of abilities.

Foundation mathematics

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation mathematics require improvement and success rates reflect this, having declined to slightly below the national average. Not enough students gain GCSEs at grades A* to C.

- Most teachers successfully encourage students to see the value of mathematics in the context of their vocational subjects. As a result, students are attentive, participate well in tasks and make progress. Learning support assistants are highly effective in helping students to complete activities and develop their understanding. However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the college and teachers do not share good practice sufficiently.
- Less confident students overcome an initial reluctance to attempt to solve mathematical problems. For example, childcare students, using job advertisements to calculate rates of pay, tax and expenditure, developed their understanding of a number of mathematical concepts and expressed surprise at how much things cost. Students work well together and help each other to solve problems.
- A minority of teachers do not plan lessons sufficiently well. Too often students of differing abilities do the same work. As a result, the pace is too slow for the more able students, and a few students become bored. Teachers do not adequately plan activities that will challenge all students to extend their knowledge and skills. In a few cases, teachers’ unclear instructions and explanations of the mathematical concepts or activities result in students being unable to complete tasks.
- Teachers accurately assess students’ skills at the start of the year, but they do not use this information adequately to place students on the correct level of qualification. Examples exist where students are on courses that they find too easy or too hard. Few teachers use the results of assessments sufficiently to inform lesson planning to meet individual needs.
- Assessment of learning requires improvement. The majority of teachers use questioning well to check individual learning in lessons, and verbal feedback is positive and encourages students to check their work. However, teachers do not always mark written work promptly and make insufficient use of written feedback to help students know what they need to do to improve.
- Monitoring of students’ progress is underdeveloped. In a few lessons, students keep learning logs, but these record activities completed rather than skills developed. Most teachers do not keep sufficiently detailed records of individual progress within lessons, nor do they set sufficiently challenging targets to help students develop their mathematical skills.
- In the majority of vocational lessons, students demonstrate appropriate knowledge of mathematical concepts and processes. For example, construction students applied a range of mathematical techniques when designing a bungalow, including drawing to scale, measuring perimeters and calculating the quantity of materials they would need. Art and design students converted their measurements of features in the classroom to a 1:25 scale for making a model in set design. However, the development of students’ English skills within mathematics lessons is limited. This results in those students with poor English skills finding it difficult to interpret examination questions.
- Good examples exist where teachers relate mathematics to equality and diversity topics. For example, in a functional skills class, sports students discuss and analyse the amount of newspaper space allocated to women’s sport. However, teachers’ skills in promoting equality and diversity in mathematics are underdeveloped. In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not challenge inappropriate behaviour.

<p>Business management and accountancy</p> <p>16-19 study programmes</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this is reflected in good outcomes for students on accountancy and vocational business, and excellent outcomes on advanced level business management courses.

- Teachers have high expectations and encourage all students to aim for high grades. As a result, many students produce work to a high standard and college data for this year indicate that most students are achieving or exceeding their target grades. Staff help students remain on track through challenging and supportive individual tutorials and provide effective guidance to students to help them overcome obstacles to their learning.
- Teachers plan lessons in which they successfully use individual and group work and a range of innovative approaches to maintain students’ interest. As a result, students remain focused on their work and make very good progress. For example, teachers make good use of electronic quizzes to check understanding and use mobile phone applications to support learning. In many lessons, students develop their personal and social skills by collaborating in teams to deliver business presentations. Teachers skilfully draw on the experience of their students to make clear links between theory and practice. One result of this is that several students have started their own businesses because of ideas generated on their course.
- Teachers accurately assess students’ skills at the start of the course and produce detailed group profiles that clearly indicate students’ learning needs. This helps teachers to provide challenging activities for students who consequently achieve well. Teachers update electronic tracking sheets frequently so that students are able to monitor their own progress. The software automatically calculates how many UCAS points students have achieved and this inspires them to excel.
- Students produce high quality work. Teachers mark work promptly and provide useful feedback, which clearly shows students how to make improvements to their work. Teachers focus well on correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar in students’ written work.
- Students improve their mathematical and English skills as part of their accountancy and vocational business courses. Intermediate accountancy students take additional lessons to develop their English and mathematics skills beyond GCSE standard. Business and accounting teachers integrate the teaching of mathematics and English into the curriculum and students competently write business letters, reports and emails, and learn how to analyse statistics and manage budgets.
- Staff provide accurate and useful information to help students select the most appropriate course. Nearly all students who enrol on accountancy and business programmes remain on the course and staff provide good quality guidance so that students have clear goals for progression and work hard to complete their course.
- Teachers plan their lessons so that students develop their understanding of the ways in which social and cultural diversity affect business. Students also build strong business relationships with a wide range of professionals and business people from different backgrounds through mentoring programmes and the use of visiting speakers, so that they are well prepared to deal with the range of people they will encounter in the business environment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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- Since the last inspection, the senior leadership team and governors have set out a clear mission that has successfully given a much sharper focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment. Managers and staff have successfully rectified most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Actions to improve overall success rates have been effective, although the proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programme on time remains low. Managers have largely completed a programme of significant improvements to accommodation and the college is in a sound financial position.
- Governors provide the college with a broad range of relevant experience and expertise. They have a clear understanding of the college’s strengths and areas for development and are devising more effective ways of working so that they can provide a more rigorous consideration of strategic and operational issues. Governors have implemented arrangements to strengthen

the monitoring of the college's academic performance within the last year. However, senior managers do not yet present sufficiently detailed key performance information to enable governors to undertake a thorough analysis of all of the important aspects of educational performance.

- Senior managers carefully monitor progress made by course teams towards achieving a series of challenging targets. They pay very close attention to any underperforming areas and make prompt and mostly effective interventions to address any emerging issues.
- A clear strategy to improve teaching and learning is having a positive impact. While managers were building their capacity for assessing the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, they used expertise from outside the college to make assessments. The outcomes of lesson observations inform teacher appraisals well. Managers use feedback from observations to plan improvements and good use is made of relevant professional development activities throughout the year to improve the quality of teaching. Where it is appropriate, managers invoke effective procedures to manage staff performance.
- Quality improvement arrangements, including a self-assessment process that can be adapted to the particular needs of each subject area, are effective in securing improvements in most areas. Moderation is rigorous and, as a result, the reports for each area accurately identify the key strengths and areas requiring further improvement. Managers subsequently monitor quality improvement plans closely. Inspectors agreed with nearly all of the grades contained within the self-assessment report. Managers make effective and systematic use of the views of students to improve provision.
- Curriculum planning is good. The college meets the needs of local businesses well and has become more responsive to the needs of a broad range of students. A longstanding partnership with a property development company has created significant training and recruitment opportunities at a major retail development in the south east. This programme currently benefits applicants for a range of occupations and the college promotes this provision well amongst young people who are not in education or employment. Managers have adapted provision to the requirements of the new study programmes; however, they recognise that arrangements for the development of English and mathematics within the curriculum have not been sufficiently successful and have acted to bring about improvements.
- Managers have given the promotion of equality and diversity greater priority in the last year. A new policy, single equalities scheme and action plan have been implemented and the equal opportunities working group has been revived with a clearer focus on monitoring activity and performance. The performance of different groups of students is analysed by each department and, at present, there are no significant differences between different groups.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Students feel safe. Managers have enhanced site security at Dartford very effectively in the last year in response to students' requests. Leaders and managers pay close attention to ensuring that students are aware of issues in relation to online safety. The incidence of bullying or harassment is very low.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

North West Kent 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	3	-	-
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	2	-	2	3	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	2	-	2	3	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	2	-	2	3	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2
Early years and playwork	2
Engineering	3
Building and construction	3
Independent living and leisure skills	2
Foundation mathematics	3
Accounting and finance	2
Business management	2

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 3,528							
	Part-time: 4,185							
Principal/CEO	Mr David Gleed							
Date of previous inspection	November 2010							
Website address	http://www.nwkcollege.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	505	103	911	185	1950	258	-	-
Part-time	-	-	12	164	9	23	-	-
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+		
	325	191	96	217	-	3		
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	10							
Number of community learners	90							
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"> ■ ABM Training (UK) Ltd. ■ Quest Training South East Ltd. ■ TLT Top Line Therapist Ltd. 							

Contextual information

North West Kent College is a large further education college based in Dartford, with a second large site in Gravesend. It is one of five general further education colleges in Kent and also serves the population of south-east London where there are three other colleges. Most nearby schools have a sixth form and North West Kent College specialises in vocational education. Unemployment in the borough is lower than the national average and, in Dartford, a greater proportion of individuals is employed in senior roles than is the case nationally. The proportion of adults with intermediate and advanced level qualifications is lower than the national average, particularly in Gravesend, but school leavers achieve similar results to their peers nationally. The proportion of minority ethnic residents in Dartford is lower than nationally and slightly higher in Gravesend than is nationally the case. The largest minority ethnic groups are Indian and Black African.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Russell Henry HMI

Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and eight additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Teaching and 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 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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