

Wiltshire College

General further education college

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| Inspection dates | | 3–7 March 2014 |
| Overall effectiveness | This inspection: | Requires improvement-3 |
| | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory-3 |
| Outcomes for learners | | 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 learners

This college requires improvement because:

- Students' success rates remain below average and the rate of increase has not been fast enough, particularly for success rates for adults and at level 3.
- Apprentices' success rates have declined over three years and are below average.
- Teaching teams are not consistently working well together to ensure students' learning is good.
- Support to promote students' learning and achievement across all the provision is not focused sufficiently on maximising individuals' full potential.
- Many improvement actions are new, with insufficient evidence of impact on improving the quality of provision. Differences in the quality of provision between the main campuses remain.
- Managers' use of targets and sharply-focused actions to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is underdeveloped.
- Teaching of English is not good enough to ensure students develop their English skills adequately and achieve their qualifications.

This college has the following strengths:

- Good collaborative work with stakeholders which ensures that the curriculum meets the local needs at the four main campuses.
- Good promotion of students' employability skills.
- Safe and welcoming campuses.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities that benefit students' personal and social development.
- Good support for vulnerable students and those with additional learning needs.
- Rigorous self-assessment leading to the accurate identification of areas for improvement.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Embed the culture of high expectations across staff, including in their expectations of students' attendance and punctuality, in order to accelerate improvement.
- Develop teachers' skills in helping students to learn theory, including ensuring the strategies teachers use promote students' interest, engagement and ability to learn independently.
- Stabilise, strengthen and support teaching teams, particularly new teams, to ensure continuity in students' learning and progress and to encourage the sharing of good practice.
- Implement fully the strategy to improve the teaching of English and mathematics and take urgent action to improve the quality of teaching of English, including ensuring that specialist teachers and vocational teachers work jointly to monitor students' progress.
- Ensure that all staff are trained and supported to set sharply-focused targets for students to promote their maximum achievement.
- Further reduce the differences in the quality and effectiveness of provision across campuses through robust intervention and support from senior managers and rigorous quality assurance.
- Accelerate the impact of improvement action plans by ensuring all actions are explicit and supported by quantitative targets which are central to measuring success.
- Ensure assessors and training coordinators review the skills that apprentices are developing in the workplace thoroughly, provide detailed feedback that tells apprentices how to improve these skills and set challenging targets for apprentices to achieve.

Inspection judgements

| Outcomes for learners | Requires improvement |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students' long course success rates increased steadily between 2011/12 and 2012/13, but the overall rate remains below average. By age, students' success rates are close to average for younger students but below for adults. Success rates on short courses, around a quarter of which were provided by subcontractors, increased markedly in 2013 and are high, particularly for adults. Students' attendance is improving but remains an area for improvement, as is their punctuality, where there is too much tolerance of students' lateness by teachers. ▪ By level of study, students' long courses success rates are above average at level 2 and at level 1 for younger students. However, students' success rates are well below average at level 3 for both age groups and low for adults on level 1 courses. Significant underperformance on AS-level courses account, in part, for younger students' below average success at level 3; in 2013/14, the college ceased to offer both A- and AS-level courses. Adult students' high withdrawal rate on a level 1 information technology for users qualification contributed to the low rate at this level. This qualification is now offered as a unitised course, with much higher retention rates. ▪ Students' retention rates have increased, but remain below average; however, their achievement rates are mostly just above average, except at level 3 for younger students where the rate has declined to below average. In-year, because of improvement actions and close monitoring, students' retention at almost all levels of study is notably increased compared to a similar point in the previous year. ▪ By subject, students' success rates are high in agriculture, environmental conservation, transportation operations and maintenance, hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality and catering and visual arts. However, rates are below average in most other subjects and low in childcare, science, information and communication technology, sports studies, media and business administration. | |

- Students' success rates differ across the four main campuses. Rates are highest at the Lackham and Trowbridge campuses, but lower at the Chippenham campus and lowest at Salisbury. Male and female students' success rates are broadly similar, except at level 3 where female students outperform males by a greater margin than nationally, with a widening gap over time. Appropriate actions are in place to reduce this gap. The number of students from minority ethnic groups is too small to allow for statistical analysis.
- Vulnerable students, including care leavers and looked after children, achieve particularly well. Just under a quarter of students on substantive courses receive additional learning support and they succeed at a much higher level than their peers in almost all subjects except visual arts.
- Students often have lower than average prior attainment. For example, the prior attainment of nearly half of younger students on level 3 courses is below average. Over two thirds of students do not have five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. However, compared to their starting points, only a few exceed their expected grades, in part, because teachers' expectations of students are often too low. Students' progression between levels of study is high as are their destinations into employment, further or higher education in all but a few subjects.
- On GCSE courses in English and mathematics, students' success rates including for grades A* to C are high. Their success rates on functional skills qualifications at entry level are high but, although increasing steadily, rates are below average at other levels. Students are successful in gaining useful additional qualifications that add to their employability, such as first aid, health and safety and customer service. Through a wide range of activities under the 'Community Campus' banner, a high number of students develop good personal and social skills and develop a high awareness of important topics such as environmental sustainability.
- Apprentices' framework success rates declined between 2010/11 and 2012/13, as did the numbers of apprentices who complete their courses within the allocated time. However, apprentices' progress is improving in 2013/14 due to much closer monitoring and improved management of apprenticeships. Three quarters of apprentices who should have completed their apprenticeships have done so at the time of inspection and others are mostly on track to complete on time. By subject, framework success is high in retail and commercial enterprise but low in health and social care. Success rates for students studying workplace qualifications are very high.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, which correlates with students' below average success rates. Over recent years, the lack of stability in a number of teaching teams, due to staff turnover and some inadequate cover arrangements, has contributed to students' below average achievement. However, teaching teams are now relatively stable, the majority of lessons contain some good features and the improved support is reflected in current students' higher retention rates.
- Most teachers are well qualified with relevant industrial experience; however, their expectations of what students can achieve are not always high enough. The majority of students enjoy lessons, particularly now that previous staffing issues are being resolved. They usually work harmoniously together; however, too often teachers allow some low-level disruption and poor punctuality to go unchecked and do not insist often enough on high standards and a professional approach.
- Too many lessons are undemanding and uninspiring, particularly theory lessons. As a result, students lack concentration and do not always grasp important learning points. Teachers do not consistently structure lessons well enough to ensure that individuals, particularly more-able students, make good progress. For example, students often undertake the same type and level of work regardless of their ability.
- The fewer good lessons work well because teachers maintain a demanding pace, keep a sharp focus on students' learning and link theory closely to practical work. In these lessons, teachers

use questions successfully to assess students' progress and to challenge students to develop their analytical skills.

- Practical lessons are often more successful than theory, including in developing students' employability skills well. For example, in land-based machinery practical lessons, teachers use their strong links with farm machinery manufacturers to devise challenging and interesting projects such as full assembly of manure spreaders. This promotes a wide range of students' skills most effectively and prepares students well for employment.
- Assessment practice varies in effectiveness but it is satisfactory overall, as evident in students' just above average pass rates on most courses. Ongoing assessment in lessons is often less effective, where teachers do not check students' understanding robustly enough to inform their strategies. The majority of written feedback provides adequate guidance to students on how to improve; but a minority is too general, containing unhelpful comments such as 'use more graphs'.
- Staff provide improved support; for example, tutorials are frequent with useful content. Regular one-to-one tutorials are promoting students' much improved retention rates and most students receive the minimum allocation; however, staff shortages have had a detrimental impact on the frequency in a few subjects.
- Around one fifth of full-time students receive additional learning support and they achieve considerably better than their peers. Vulnerable students, such as those in care and students with complex learning needs, achieve very well. However, teachers do not systematically use initial assessment information to plan learning to meet students' specific needs, particularly for more-able students.
- The quality of target setting to promote achievement varies too much and some is ineffective. Staff tend to set imprecise targets and, in a few cases, students who need intervention by staff to get them back on track have not been given targets to support this. Staff set very few targets to promote development of students' English and mathematics skills, in part because new arrangements for joint work between specialist English and mathematics teachers and their vocational colleagues are not yet fully in place.
- Initial advice and guidance are adequate to enable students to make informed course choices. Improved interview procedures have contributed to more students being accurately placed on, and remaining on, the right course.
- Teachers' development of students' mathematical skills is satisfactory and good in a few subjects such as engineering. Teaching of English is inadequate, but vocational teachers' promotion of English in lessons varies from very good to underdeveloped, but, overall, is helping students to improve their literacy, particularly in gaining more fluency in the use of technical language.
- A minority of teachers use information and learning technology well but, overall, teachers' use requires improvement. The virtual learning environment has some good resources for a few subjects, but, for many courses, resources are limited and do not extend students' learning adequately.
- With a very few notable exceptions, such as in childcare, most teachers are insufficiently skilled in raising students' awareness of equality and diversity. However, students and staff work well together, bullying is rare and many of the extra-curricular activities are based on promoting equality and appreciating differences in culture and beliefs. For example, students raise large amounts of money for charitable causes.
- In work-based learning, the quality of training and assessing is improving rapidly. Assessors' practice varies in quality but is mostly satisfactory. Assessors do not consistently set well-focused targets to extend apprentices' workplace skills, but their progress is monitored closely with effective intervention when necessary. Work-based learning staff do not promote equality and diversity sufficiently well to ensure apprentices have a good understanding. Trainers do not always challenge apprentices' inappropriate language or use examples of equality and diversity in the workplace to develop apprentices' knowledge beyond a superficial level.

Public services

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as reflected in students' average success rates. Compared to students' below average retention over time, in the current year the proportion of students staying on their courses has increased. Students' attendance is not high enough and varies too much between campuses. Attendance rates are declining at the Trowbridge campus. A minority of students' punctuality is often poor.
- Most lessons contain some good features, but teachers' expectations of students are not high enough. Teachers do not consistently promote students' good attitudes to learning, for example by ensuring that they take written notes during theory lessons or by tackling some students' lateness robustly. At times, teachers do too little to reinforce the professionalism required in public services by tolerating a few students' poor behaviour.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and increasingly use interesting activities to engage students and develop their knowledge and skills. Most teachers set clear objectives, refer to these regularly during lessons and use them constructively to check students' learning. In the better lessons, teachers relate learning well to assessment criteria to support achievement.
- Teachers use their industry knowledge effectively to develop students' wider and vocational skills in lessons. For example, when students worked in groups to solve a murder, as part of a lesson on crime, the teacher ensured good development of students' analytical skills as well as teaching them about crime-solving processes.
- Teachers do not make good use of their knowledge of students' prior attainment to ensure that more-able students are challenged sufficiently. In some lessons, all students attempt similar tasks, such as designing fitness programmes at the same level, which are often undemanding of more-able students. However, in a few lessons, teachers use students' prior experience beneficially, for example in grouping students in a map reading task where students' prior experience of using compasses helped them make good progress.
- Teachers mostly check students' learning through questions during lessons well. However, they do not always ensure that students record what they learn for future reference; for example, in a few theory lessons, students do not take notes of the points covered. Too often, students are unprepared to take notes and rely on the teacher to provide paper and pens.
- Teachers often help students to develop their leadership and teamwork skills in a relevant way, for example, during activities such as locating an object on the college campus which simulated an Army exercise. Teachers ensure these activities often include good opportunities for students to evaluate their own performance and that of their peers, which promote their speaking and listening skills well.
- Teachers provide some good support for students to develop their English and mathematical skills through playing word games and undertaking relevant calculations as part of exercises. However, not all opportunities for skill development are used productively and teachers do not check the quality or accuracy of students' written work sufficiently during lessons.
- Students value the arrangements staff make for interesting and relevant visits to enhance their learning. They also benefit from informative talks by industry experts, such as an Army careers service representative. Staff arrange some work experience for students, but these opportunities have reduced, in part due to recent cutbacks in public services organisations.
- Teachers' promotion and monitoring of students' progress require improvement. Where targets are set to encourage increased progress, these are often too general and generated by students with limited staff intervention to ensure a sharp focus. For example, targets often focus on completion of activities rather than specific skill development.

- Although teachers develop equality and diversity themes well in a minority of lessons, their promotion is not consistently good. An example of good development was evident when students learned about the role of Gurkhas in the British Army, which increased their awareness of culture and diversity well in a relevant context. However, such examples are not widespread across the provision.

Early years and playwork

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement which correlates with students' below average success rates. The quality of teaching varies markedly across the campuses. Instability in the teaching team, as a result of high staff turnover and incomplete cover arrangements, has had a negative impact on students' achievement. However, a full teaching team is now in place and current students' attendance, progress and enjoyment have increased notably.
- Teachers mostly promote students' participation well and ensure students develop good personal and employability skills. As a result, students' confidence and self-esteem are high and the students develop good skills in planning children's activities as well as learning how to promote hygiene, healthy eating and safeguarding of children well. Teachers develop students' information and communication technology skills well so that they produce creative assignments and undertake research competently.
- In the majority of the lessons, enthusiastic teachers motivate and inspire students through stimulating and engaging activities, such as the production of colourful posters for parents explaining different types of infant feeding. A small minority of lessons are poorly organised and dull and, as a result, students lose interest and learn very little.
- Staff provide much improved support for students, particularly those who were affected by previous staffing problems. Support for students with significant health problems is good and staff intervene quickly to support vulnerable students. Staff provide particularly good and flexible support for students from rural areas who face transport difficulties; as a result these students' attendance and retention rates are much increased.
- Because of improvements, teachers' monitoring of students' progress is mostly working well. Teachers initially assess students' motivation, as well as their English, mathematical and writing skills accurately, and use this information effectively in planning learning. Teachers' close links with employers support an extensive and good work placement programme. However, their monitoring of students' progress on placements is underdeveloped.
- Most students know what they need to do to improve their work, but the quality of teachers' feedback on assignments is not consistently good. A minority of feedback is superficial and unhelpful. Students attend regular well-planned tutorials, but targets set by staff are often imprecise about what they need to do to improve and make better progress.
- Teachers place high importance on English and mathematics and are succeeding in reinforcing this with students. Teachers often make students practise numerical skills through tasks such as calorie counting and their vocabulary of childcare terminology is often extended well. Students' written work is mostly good.
- Teachers provide good information, advice and guidance on career choices which motivates students and help them to make successful connections between their learning and progression. Staff support students to develop their curricula vitae well in preparation for employment.
- Staff reinforce equality and diversity well. Lessons promote students' understanding of topics such as disability as well as exploring cultural issues. Students demonstrate good understanding of the needs of children with disabilities. At Trowbridge, staff promote understanding of diversity well, for example through the celebration of Diwali and other religious festivals.

Engineering

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

- The quality of training and assessment on apprenticeships requires improvement, as shown by apprentices' average success rates which declined between 2010/11 and 2012/13. Apprentices' progress towards completing their qualifications within the allocated time is improving, but is not yet good; only just over two thirds complete within this period. Attendance and punctuality on off-the-job college-based training are good.
- Teachers and assessors do not stretch or challenge apprentices sufficiently in order to ensure they make good progress. Assessors make too little use of information from initial assessment and current performance to set apprentices appropriately challenging targets. Targets set largely relate to completion of tasks and rarely include targets for the development of learning and thinking skills.
- Teachers and assessors help apprentices develop good personal, social and employability skills to improve their workplace effectiveness. Teachers use activities to develop problem solving, team work and communication skills well during off-the-job training. However, more-able apprentices are not encouraged to make rapid progress or to extend their technical knowledge and skills beyond syllabus requirements.
- Communication between assessors and employers is mostly effective in supporting apprentices to achieve. Planning of apprentices' learning is shared with employers to engage their support; however, links between on- and off-the-job training are underdeveloped. Teachers and assessors have not ensured that all apprentices appreciate the relevance of off-the-job training to their overall career development.
- Assessors provide reliable and timely support through frequent assessments and reviews. Assessment practice is generally thorough. For example, during a comprehensive workplace assessment, an apprentice demonstrated a wide range of skills, including planning, while completing a routine maintenance operation at a local engineering manufacturer. Staff ensure that good health and safety practices are well established.
- Off-the-job training requires improvement because it is often unchallenging. Teachers do not always match work well to apprentices' capabilities and the apprentices lose interest and their progress slows. The pace of lessons is undemanding, particularly for more-able apprentices. Teachers' underdeveloped questioning techniques do not adequately check apprentices' learning. Apprentices are unclear about their progress and what they need to do to achieve.
- In the more effective aspects of off-the-job training, teachers help apprentices develop good mathematical skills, for example in using mathematical formulae correctly to solve problems related to angular acceleration. However, teachers and assessors do not develop apprentices' English skills sufficiently.
- Assessors' good verbal feedback, particularly during on-the-job reviews, helps apprentices to make good progress in their practical work, which is often of good quality. However, teachers' feedback on apprentices' written work is not always timely or detailed enough to be fully helpful. Teachers and assessors do not encourage apprentices to reflect on their work in order to make improvement.
- Teachers use adequate college-based practical resources to develop basic engineering competence, but resources do not reflect more recent advances in engineering technology. A wide range of learning resources is available on the virtual learning environment; however, only a few apprentices use these to support their learning.
- The promotion of equality and diversity during on- and off-the-job training requires improvement. Teachers do not plan lessons well enough to challenge and develop apprentices' awareness of equality and diversity themes beyond a basic level and opportunities to challenge perceptions and stereotypes in the workplace are often not developed.

Hospitality and catering**16-19 study programmes****19+ Learning programmes**

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement which is not reflected in the above average success rates that students achieve on level 1 and level 2 courses. Although practical teaching is mostly good, theory teaching requires improvement and students' attendance is not good enough. Training and assessment on apprenticeships, which are now delivered directly by college staff, require improvement, although framework success rates for the previous year for subcontracted provision were above average.
- In practical lessons, experienced teachers with good industrial experience ensure that students improve their food preparation and cookery skills well. Teachers emphasise the importance of following instructions precisely, for example when folding samosas carefully to contain the filling or adding the right amount of water when making pastry. However, in a few practical sessions, students do not always pay sufficient attention to good hygiene practices.
- The recently reopened public restaurants are used well by teachers to provide students with experience of food production in a work environment. Teachers ensure students produce and present food to a high standard and work efficiently as a team. Students respond well, including by careful cooking of fish dishes. However, because of the limited opening hours of the restaurants, students do not receive enough routine skills practice or gain experience of evening shifts to ensure their skills are fully developed.
- Theory teaching is less effective and teachers do not provide enough interesting activities to ensure students participate and learn effectively; for example, the use of projected presentations and worksheets is often uninspiring and fails to motivate students. In the few better theory lessons, teachers make good links between practical and theory which increase the relevance and help students to learn.
- Teachers use detailed group profiles to inform their provision of individual support. They often use effective questions to ensure students understand important points. Teachers provide good verbal feedback which helps students to reflect on their performance and contribution as well as know how they can improve dishes in future.
- Staff arrange good enrichment activities for students, including competitions and catering for events. Through these activities, students improve their personal and social skills by interacting with customers and learning front-of-house skills. Level 1 students benefit from two weeks of work experience at the end of their course, which often lead directly to employment. Students' progression from level 1 to level 2 is high.
- Practical resources are adequate to meet the requirements of the level 1 and level 2 courses that are offered. Equipment meets industry standards and has been updated by the recent replacement of a blast chiller. Resources on the virtual learning environment are underdeveloped and teachers do not promote students' independent use of these sufficiently during lessons. However, use of technology is promoted in other ways, for example by encouraging students to research recipes on their mobile phones.
- Assessors are flexible in meeting the assessment needs of the small group of apprentices, including by undertaking assessments at evening functions when apprentices have the opportunity to demonstrate higher skill levels. Assessors support apprentices well in the workplace and make sure they are clear what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers have not done enough to promote apprentices' attendance at off-the-job training, including functional skills lessons where attendance is low. Assessors' recording of apprentices' progress and their use of clear targets to promote achievement are insufficient and not formally communicated to employers, although the recent instigation of a coordinator's role is beginning to improve this position. Apprentices have access to the virtual learning environment, but very few resources apply to their courses which limit the extent of their independent study.

- Teachers monitor college-based students' progress well. They support students to develop useful skills for employment well, such as the importance of listening to instructions, communicating effectively and measuring, weighing and multiplying quantities in recipes accurately.
- Teachers do not consistently pay enough attention to spelling and grammar in students' written work and their accurate use of terminology, such as *velouté*, even when this is on a displayed glossary list. However, students receive good additional support to help their functional skills development, reinforced by teachers' use of spelling tests and identifying 'words of the week' to increase students' familiarity with technical vocabulary.
- Teachers make interesting references to equality and diversity in lessons through discussions about cultural events, dishes from different countries and adaptations to equipment, for example, the accessibility of equipment for people who are left handed. Teachers' promotion beyond this approach is underdeveloped.

Sport, leisure and recreation

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement as reflected in students' success rates which are below average largely due to low success rates on two-year courses at level 3. Most previous staffing issues of shortages and a high turnover have been resolved. Teachers are focused on helping students work towards reaching their full potential; however, in 2012/13, very few students achieved above their expected grades on level 3 courses.
- Vocationally-experienced teachers plan learning carefully and ensure that most lessons engage students and make them think for themselves. However, until recently, teachers have not insisted on high quality assignment work and some students' work is not of a good standard. In particular, although teachers promote the use of subject terminology well in lessons, the technical content and vocabulary in students' assignments do not reflect this.
- Teachers mostly promote students' development of self- and peer assessment well. For example, level 2 students reflect on their performance confidently and evaluate the skills, tactics and techniques used, for example, when playing badminton. Similarly, level 3 students often provide constructive feedback on their peers' officiating skills which enables them to evaluate their own performance critically.
- Teachers and students often use information and learning technology well to enhance learning. For example, students circulated comprehensive notes about the circulatory system to their peers for review by email. The virtual learning environment is used well to promote independent learning. Teachers use thought-provoking questions effectively to encourage participation, promote engagement and to assess students' progress. However, in a small minority of lessons, more-able students are insufficiently challenged.
- A range of high-quality facilities at a local leisure centre supports the development of students' practical skills at Salisbury effectively. At the Chippenham and Trowbridge campuses, the on-site gym and sports hall provide satisfactory resources. In addition, an established football academy, supported by experienced professional coaches, provides good opportunities for students at these campuses to develop their sports performance competitively.
- Good development of students' communication and employability skills supports their high rates of progression to further study and employment. Teachers use work experience placements, other work-related opportunities and educational visits well to enhance students' study. Students develop their leadership and coaching skills through additional courses and productive links with local schools and sports organisations.
- Teachers use accurate initial assessment to inform their work to ensure that students' individual needs are met through teaching and additional support. Improved initial advice and guidance

ensure most students are on the appropriate course. The quality of teachers' verbal and written feedback has improved and this now clearly identifies what students must do to improve their work.

- Teachers monitor students' progress closely and intervene with actions promptly when students are at risk of underperformance. However, targets set in action plans are not always precise enough to promote swift completion. Because of previous shortcomings in progress monitoring, teachers recognise the urgent need to ensure students who are behind with their assignment work or who have submitted work that is of a lower standard than they are capable of receive a high level of support. Robust and increasingly successful actions are in place to resolve this position.
- Teachers are not placing enough emphasis on developing students' English and mathematical skills. In better lessons, teachers reinforce spelling of technical terms correctly and help students develop confidence in providing constructive oral feedback, but in other learning activities and in assignment work not enough is done to improve students' English skills to a good level. Teachers' development of students' mathematical skills in lessons is rarely maximised.
- Teachers' promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Teachers do not always develop themes within lessons to reinforce students' understanding of equality and diversity, such as the wide range of options within sport to meet the needs and interests of people from diverse cultural backgrounds or people with disabilities.

Visual arts

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are improving, but are not yet good, as shown by students' below average success rates on level 3 courses which make up almost all the curriculum. Students' success rates increased on level 3 courses between 2011/12 and 2012/13 because of improved retention of students. In the current year, students' retention rates are markedly higher as a result of improvements to advice, guidance and support. However, the very few students who receive additional learning support do not achieve as well as their peers.
- Students' attendance and punctuality require improvement. Until recently, staff did not reinforce the importance of high attendance and good punctuality. The teaching team, particularly because of new teachers' frustration with some habitual low attendance and poor punctuality, is focused on resolving these issues which have had a negative impact on students' achievement. However, during inspection some low attendance and poor punctuality were observed.
- Teachers help students well to become confident, articulate and communicate their ideas clearly, both visually and orally. They ensure that students undertake thorough research which underpins their extensive design development work. As a result, students can explain how their ideas originated and their interpretation from research into individual design ideas. Level 3 students used research on the zeitgeist to produce work in their favoured discipline and period. This gave their work relevance to contemporary ideas and the socio-political climate.
- Teachers' good use of diagnostic study helps students to identify accurately the vocational areas that best match their skills and interests. Teachers' and students' enthusiasm is reflected in their extensive use of specialist facilities, including for independent study, in fashion and textiles and information and communication technology suites. Teachers promote students' ability to work independently well.
- Teachers support students to make progress to higher education very effectively, including on to prestigious courses. Progression rates are high. In the current year, most students have already secured multiple places on degree courses.
- Lessons often contain good features. In the better lessons, teachers ensure that students develop good skills in critical analysis through frequent group critiques. Teachers' good and

frequent use of questions engages all students and probes their understanding well. Students' use of technical language is good.

- Teachers pay insufficient attention to the development of wider skills, such as time management and punctuality, when developing students' employability skills. In a few lessons, teachers' expectations of students' standards of work are low; for example, as part of portfolio preparation, students produced unprofessional hand written commentary on exercise paper to accompany presentation pieces.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory. Students receive timely feedback on their work with adequate guidance on how improvements can be made. Appropriate targets for achievement are included in students' individual learning plans and progress towards their achievement is regularly monitored. Staff complete initial assessments of students' English and mathematical skills promptly. However, relatively few students receive support and it is not always effective.
- Resources at the Salisbury and Trowbridge campuses are mostly good, for example the well-equipped computer-based studio and fashion design resources at Salisbury. However, a few workshops are cramped and untidy and do not reflect the industry the students aspire to work within.
- Equality and diversity themes are not actively promoted, although appropriate links are made in schemes of work. Teachers' coverage of themes in class is scant and spontaneous opportunities for promotion are not developed.

Foundation English

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate which is reflected in students' below average success rates on functional skills qualifications in English at level 1 and level 2. However, students' success rates on these qualifications at entry level are above average, as are success rates on GCSE English, including for grades A* to C where adults make up the largest part of the cohort. In the current year, enrolments on the GCSE English course have increased markedly, particularly for younger students. These students are not making adequate progress towards their qualification because the teaching team is not adapting quickly enough to meeting their needs and supporting their progress.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of students, particularly the more able. Lessons often have a slow pace with insufficiently stimulating activities to maintain students' interest. Teachers make very few links to relevant vocational contexts and too many students do not improve their skills or acquire new knowledge adequately.
- Teachers do not consistently use initial assessment information to meet students' learning needs. In particular, teachers do not focus enough on developing students' writing skills. Teachers' skills in managing mixed-ability lessons are underdeveloped. Teachers often rely on whole group activities and do not check individual students' learning regularly. Too often this results in students becoming disruptive or not working on the tasks set and leaving the class early.
- Students make good progress at entry level and work at a good standard, as shown by their results. Teachers provide them with helpful written feedback and ensure they are well prepared for progression.
- In the small minority of better lessons, teachers use interesting and varied approaches to learning English skills. For example, a quiz to review the language features of persuasive writing worked well and use of a video clip of rap poets led successfully to students exploring writing styles linked to diversity issues. However, other aspects of equality and diversity themes are not consistently well developed.

- Vocational and functional skills teachers do not monitor students' progress adequately. Students rarely have specific learning targets for their English skill development. Staff often set unhelpful generic targets relating to passing the course or improving attendance. Accountability for monitoring students' progress is not clear nor is monitoring effectively coordinated between vocational and functional skills teachers.
- Specialist teachers have been successful in helping students to understand the importance of their English lessons, particularly as a requirement for progression on to the next level of study. However, vocational teachers who support functional skills learning in English do not consistently help students to understand the use of English in their area of work, which results in a lack of enthusiasm and poor behaviour in a few English lessons.
- The recently revised strategy for developing English is well considered, with suitable actions planned to resolve issues. However, its implementation is at an early stage. Managers recognise that not enough teachers have suitable specialist qualifications and that they need support to develop their teaching skills to meet younger students' needs. An appropriate programme of staff development is being put in place.

Foundation mathematics

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement which is reflected in students' below average success rates for functional skills qualifications in mathematics at level 1 and level 2. However, success rates on these qualifications are above average at entry level and students' success rates on the GCSE mathematics course, including for grades A* to C, are above average. Until the current year, most students who took the GCSE course were adults.
- Teachers support the majority of students to make satisfactory progress overall, but a minority are insufficiently challenged in lessons; for example, they often complete similar tasks or already fully understand the mathematical concepts taught in lessons. Teachers monitor attendance rigorously and the rate is increasing steadily. However, it is not unusual for teachers to allow a minority of students to leave before the end of lessons which means they do not gain the maximum benefit in terms of learning.
- Most teachers help students to develop a wide range of mathematical skills which prepares them well for progression. Teachers set relevant exercises which ensure students apply their skills and increase their problem solving skills. For example, when costing pet care bookings, students applied their skills well, solved the problems of costing a mix of long- and short-term care as well as food costs, and produced accurate results. Teachers develop students' vocabulary well; for example, level 1 students learn to use an extensive range of terms related to addition and subtraction.
- In better lessons, teachers organise a good range of group and independent learning activities for students in lessons for mixed ability levels. They engage and interest students well; for example, students were totally absorbed in handling and analysing data related to popular football teams, pop groups and television soap shows. Teachers motivate students on the GCSE course to improve their grades and study independently by promoting regular use of learning resources from well-established websites.
- Teachers' assessment of learning in lessons is frequent and helpful. Teachers identify areas where students need to improve and correct their mistakes accurately and helpfully. Teachers consolidate the main learning points often and provide intensive support and detailed verbal feedback to individual students.
- Teachers' skills are underdeveloped in matching work precisely to meet each student's specific needs to ensure the students make consistently good progress. Student profiles do not contain enough detail about their specific mathematical skill development needs to support this.

Teachers do not share enough information about students' needs with support staff to ensure their time is used fully productively.

- In less effective lessons, teachers use a narrow range of activities that do not always increase students' knowledge and understanding, for example completing past examination papers. They do not always contextualise mathematical learning; for example, when estimating probability, teachers related this to weather forecasts and health issues rather than students' vocational interests.
- Students benefit from good advice and guidance provided by specialist staff at the start of their course. Teachers' initial assessment of students' needs and prior attainment is adequate and most are accurately placed on the appropriate course and level.
- Teachers' monitoring of students' progress requires improvement. Teachers and vocational course tutors do not work together to ensure that progress in mathematics is closely monitored. Students set themselves general targets, such as passing an examination, with too little intervention by teachers to ensure targets are sharply focused on raising achievement.
- Teachers do not promote equality and diversity sufficiently and do not challenge students' perceptions of diversity enough. During a data interpretation task, students made incorrect judgements on the diverse ethnic groups listed for the British population and queries raised by students were not sufficiently addressed by the teacher.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior managers and governors have reshaped the curriculum, largely successfully, to meet the various needs of local communities. Alongside this, much-needed clarification of senior and middle managers' accountability and responsibilities and a sharpening of managers' focus on increasing the impact of quality improvement actions have taken place. Campus directors now take full responsibility for students' achievement at each site and, for the first time, have clear and mostly challenging targets to meet.
- Managers' impact on improving students' performance increased in 2012/13, compared with a slow rate of improvement previously. Over time, students' achievement has increased gradually from a low base; however, these increases have not matched the rate of improvement nationally, particularly for adults. In 2012/13, students' performance increased more significantly, but the overall long course success rate remains below average. Based on in-year data, further improvement in students' retention is evident but cannot be confirmed until the end of the year.
- Governors have strengthened their role in scrutiny of the college's performance. They provide a high level of challenge and check key performance indicators effectively. They keep a close overview of staff performance and their impact on learning and achievement. Student governors take an important and active role in governance. Governors have appropriate skills which they are using well to raise the ambition of staff. However, they have not held managers to account sufficiently until recently.
- Managers' actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning have had mixed success and many much-needed actions are recent and not yet fully effective. Managers have stabilised and fully resourced most teaching teams, but a relatively high proportion of staff are new, some lack experience and the proportion of part-time or hourly-paid teachers is relatively high. Teaching and learning coaches are working well to support teachers to improve; however, the number of the coaches has only recently been increased despite an obvious need to provide a high level of support for teachers.
- Managers' judgements about the quality of lessons are over optimistic. The lesson observation scheme has been revised, but inspectors found that the grades awarded for lessons by internal observers did not consistently match inspectors' grades. The evaluation of the quality of learning in observation records is insufficiently precise to pinpoint what teachers need to do to improve. In a few cases, prompt action has not taken place where teaching requires improvement.

- Stronger performance management of staff, alongside the closer scrutiny and focus on differences in the quality of teaching across the four main campuses, has resulted in more robust action to tackle poor performance. The arrangements for appraising staff performance have been improved by increasing the extent to which personal objectives are precise with quantitative success measures, including targets, established and an increase in the frequency of monitoring of managers' performance against these.
- Managers identify areas for improvement mostly accurately and self-critically. However, a minority of improvement plan actions are insufficiently precise. Good improvement has been made to support arrangements and the central monitoring of students' progress. Senior managers' analysis and evaluation of data are rigorous and middle managers are improving their skills quickly. However, improvements to other aspects, such as arrangements for target setting for students and the systems for monitoring students' progress in subjects, are applied with too much variation and not enough accountability.
- Managers place importance on gathering students' views and involving them well in evaluating the college's work. Managers' collaborative work with stakeholders is strong. For example, campus directors work productively with local schools to provide a sensible and strategic approach to county-wide further education provision.
- Managers are implementing aspects of study programmes well. For example, substantive and additional qualification aims for individual students have been matched to their individual needs well and work experience is being planned and implemented carefully. However, provision to develop students' English and mathematics is not fully effective as teaching and learning in English is inadequate. Managers' strategy for this provision is new, well-considered but recently implemented, with too little attention paid to coordinating and integrating specialist teachers' and vocational teachers' work, particularly in terms of monitoring students' progress.
- A new team of managers has identified the need to improve apprenticeship provision. Because of prompt improvement actions, the managers monitor the progress of apprentices closely, hold assessors and trainers to account for performance and progress and ensure that apprentices are recruited to the right course. Managers have removed some poorly performing apprenticeships, including a few delivered by subcontractors.
- The quality of accommodation and resources varies markedly across campuses, some is of high quality, but a significant proportion is in need of improvement. Plans for investment and new buildings are already agreed for several sites, such as the Chippenham campus, and construction of a new building at Trowbridge is well underway.
- Managers' promotion of equality and diversity is not strong enough. Inclusive recruitment policies attract students of wide-ranging abilities on to courses where vulnerable students and those with additional needs achieve well. No significant achievement gaps exist; however, middle- and higher-ability students do not consistently get the best chances to maximise their achievement. Managers have a strong focus on increasing staff awareness and skill in promoting equality and diversity themes, but training is recent and strong promotion is rare across subjects and in work-based learning.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Good attention is paid to health and safety across the provision. Senior managers ensure that subcontractors providing training on the college's behalf provide a safe environment for apprentices.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)


Wiltshire College

| Inspection grades are based on a college'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 | 3 | - | - | 3 | - | 3 | 3 | - | - |
| Outcomes for learners | 3 | - | - | 3 | - | 3 | 3 | - | - |
| The quality of teaching, learning and assessment | 3 | - | - | 3 | - | 3 | 3 | - | - |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management | 3 | - | - | 3 | - | 3 | 3 | - | - |

| Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Grade |
|---|----------|
| Public services | 3 |
| Early years and playwork | 3 |
| Engineering | 3 |
| Hospitality and catering | 3 |
| Sport, leisure and recreation | 3 |
| Visual arts | 3 |
| Foundation English | 4 |
| Foundation mathematics | 3 |

College details

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------|-----------------|-------|----------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| Type of provider | General further education college | | | | | | | |
| Age range of learners | 14+ | | | | | | | |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year | Full-time: 4,008 | | | | | | | |
| | Part-time: 11,315 | | | | | | | |
| Principal | Diane Dale | | | | | | | |
| Date of previous inspection | January 2012 | | | | | | | |
| Website address | http://www.wiltshire.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 | 632 | 50 | 889 | 103 | 1,573 | 413 | 27 | 262 |
| Part-time | 113 | 1,585 | 201 | 2,306 | 87 | 634 | 6 | 293 |
| Number of traineeships | 16-19 | | 19+ | | Total | | | |
| | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | | |
| Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age | Intermediate | | Advanced | | Higher | | | |
| | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | | |
| | 191 | 239 | 70 | 265 | 0 | 5 | | |
| Number of learners aged 14-16 | | | | | | | | |
| Full-time | 0 | | | | | | | |
| Part-time | 263 | | | | | | | |
| Number of community learners | 863 | | | | | | | |
| Number of employability learners | 0 | | | | | | | |
| 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"> ■ Aspire Sporting Academy Ltd ■ Smart Development ■ LJ Care Training Ltd ■ Quality Transport Training Ltd ■ Strive Training ■ Optima ■ Learning & Skills Solutions ■ Insight Solutions ■ Haddon Training ■ FACT ■ Skills Uk | | | | | | | |

- 
- Team Bath
 - Trackss
 - Toolbox
 - Valkyrie

Contextual information

Wiltshire College has four main campuses across the county at Chippenham, Trowbridge, Lackham and Salisbury, as well as a number of smaller sites including in Devizes, Warminster, Castle Combe and Corsham. The main campuses are spread geographically with over 50 miles between Chippenham and Salisbury. The Lackham campus includes an estate of around 224 hectares and a range of land-based enterprises including a farm and a small animal centre. The curriculum includes courses in all sector subject areas except history, philosophy, theology and social sciences. GCE A- and AS-level provision ceased to be offered from September 2013. The largest vocational subject areas include health and social care, engineering, motor vehicle and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Apprenticeships and workplace learning are offered in ten sector subject areas, the largest being engineering. In Wiltshire, the proportion of pupils aged 16 achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C is above average; however, more than two thirds of the college's students join the college below this threshold measure. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is low and similar to the proportions within the Wiltshire population.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Philippa Francis, HMI

Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and nine additional inspectors, assisted by the vice principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on students' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. Inspectors observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all the relevant provision at the college. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement |
|---------|----------------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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