

Richmond upon Thames College

General further education college

Inspection dates		12–16 May 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-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:

- Teachers' planning does not always take into account the assessed needs and abilities of their students, resulting in missed opportunities to ensure all students are challenged to reach their potential. Too many lessons are not sufficiently demanding to enable all students to make the progress of which they are capable and achieve high grades.
- The arrangements to set students challenging targets for development and monitor their progress are inconsistently applied across the subject areas; consequently, many students are not clear how to improve and their work is of a mediocre standard.
- Students' attendance is low and students are not always punctual. Many students who have not attended well are at risk of failing their qualification.
- Initiatives to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have not had sufficient impact across all subjects; action planning is not consistently rigorous to bring about rapid improvement. Good teaching practice is not shared routinely across subject areas.
- Performance management arrangements are not rigorous enough, and do not support teachers effectively to improve their practice.
- Senior leaders do not use robust and up-to-date data to inform the planning of improvement initiatives; consequently, a minority of reviews of success rate performance are too optimistic and limit the effectiveness of the quality improvement process. College managers do not collect systematic data on the internal progression and final destination of students; this inhibits the leadership team's understanding of where students move on to when they leave their course.

This college has the following strengths:

- Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 courses have improved and are high.
- Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly effective.
- Leaders, managers and teachers place particular emphasis on students' feedback in order to make improvements.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of students' learning and progress rapidly by:
 - ensuring teachers have high expectations of their students, their planning takes into account students' starting points so that students are challenged to reach their potential and know what they need to do to reach it
 - improving how teachers plan effective learning and assessment, incorporating clearer links to show how students' English and mathematics will be developed in lessons
 - developing teachers' skills and confidence in using information and learning technology (ILT) creatively in lessons and extending learning outside the college
 - ensuring students are set specific and measurable targets that are frequently monitored and that enable them to make excellent progress and achieve higher grades
 - developing further the tutorial arrangements for monitoring students' progress on A-level courses to ensure the links between academic and pastoral staff are effective
 - ensuring students attend regularly and punctually
 - promoting a greater sense of awareness of equality and diversity themes within lessons so that students are well prepared for employment and their next steps.
- Ensure teachers' action plans following lesson observations contain specific and timely interventions to promote rapid improvement in teaching, learning and assessment practice.
- Improve the performance management of teachers through more rigorous and timely appraisals.
- Ensure consistent, robust and up-to-date data inform the self-assessment process, quality improvement planning and secure sustained improvement.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2012/13, the proportion of students completing their course successfully was similar to the previous year and below the overall national rate. Students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 courses achieve well. However, performance on all other levels of courses for students of all ages is not good enough, and too few students achieve high grades. Although an increasing proportion of adults taking courses achieve their qualification, most students are aged 16 to 18, and their success rates have not improved over the past two years, especially on A-level courses. On AS-level courses, success rates have declined and are low. ▪ Students' progress on the large majority of level 3 qualifications, when taking their prior educational attainment into account, is below the average for similar groups of students. As a result, many do not achieve the higher grades they are capable of, particularly on A- and AS-level courses. Current monitoring of students' progress demonstrates that too many are not making sufficient progress to meet their target grades. Students' achievements vary across subjects. For example, in hospitality and catering, media and communication and building and construction courses the large majority of students achieve their qualifications. However, in the majority of subjects, not enough students succeed and fulfil their potential. ▪ Teachers do not consistently set high expectations, with the result that the standard of students' course work, especially on A-level programmes, is often mediocre and not good enough. In a number of subjects, students' work does not demonstrate sufficient depth of theoretical analysis and application to excel and achieve higher grades. ▪ In response to poor levels of attendance and punctuality in 2012/13, especially amongst adults, senior leaders have implemented a series of monitoring processes to increase attendance. 	

However, in-year levels of attendance and punctuality have not improved sufficiently, remain below college targets and affect students' outcomes adversely.

- The gap between male and female achievement has narrowed over the past three years. There is no discernible difference in the performance of differing groups of students over time.
- In the current year, there has been a substantial increase in the number of students aged 16 to 18 studying English GCSE and functional skills mathematics at level 2. In 2012/13, the proportion of students who achieved higher grades at GCSE in mathematics was slightly above the low sector average, but it was below in English. The overall success rate for mathematics functional skills courses was above the national rate, but below for English functional skills.
- The majority of students aged 16 to 18 benefit from a wealth of opportunities, projects and links to the wider community to develop their personal and social skills. The provision of purposeful work experience is variable across the subjects; for example, vocational students in travel and tourism, sport and health and social care develop relevant industry-specific skills through placements with a range of employers. However, students studying other subjects, including those studying engineering, business studies and information and communication technology (ICT), do not have sufficient opportunity to gain relevant experience in the workplace.
- The proportion of students progressing to higher education has increased over time. However, senior leaders do not collect and use robust data to monitor the internal progression and final destination of students. This inhibits the leadership team's understanding of where all students move on to when they leave their course.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as reflected in students' achievement, which has not improved since the last inspection and has declined for those on AS-level courses. In too many lessons, students are not challenged sufficiently and, consequently, do not make the progress of which they are capable. This was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection.
- Teachers develop students' confidence and independence well in the majority of lessons, including those held on subcontractors' premises. Most students are keen to learn and interested in their courses. The majority develop appropriate skills for their future employment and next steps. Staff have good subject knowledge and industrial skills, and most students have access to relevant resources and equipment used in the workplace.
- The majority of lessons are effective. In these lessons, teachers use information on students' starting points well to plan learning which develops their skills and knowledge at a rate which enables students to make good progress, such as in sports and art and design. Teachers ensure that students work together in pairs and groups to share ideas and techniques, developing their confidence and independence well.
- The majority of teachers use questioning and informal assessment activities skilfully to test students' skills, knowledge and to develop deeper learning. For example, in an A-level sports revision lesson, students worked in small groups to identify at least six relevant points relating to topics chosen from the syllabus which they planned to film for a whole-group resource.
- A significant minority of lessons require improvement. Teachers' planning does not take account of their students' abilities sufficiently well. Students work at the same pace on the same tasks, which results in the less able not developing their learning fully and the more able completing tasks which do not challenge or extend them effectively. In weaker lessons, on level 3 courses, the more able students 'coast' and do not achieve high grades. Teachers' planning is often less detailed in the weaker lessons and so students' learning and development are not structured sufficiently well or purposeful.
- A minority of teachers use ILT creatively in classes to develop and extend learning. For example, teachers in the English and modern foreign languages department encouraged students to use their mobile telephones as learning resources, using them to photocopy their work for uploading

to the virtual learning environment (VLE) as a resource for other students. This is not routinely the case across all subject areas as not all teachers are confident in its use, which leaders and managers recognise.

- A few students are not punctual and a small minority do not attend well, which affects their learning and progress. Attendance was low at the time of inspection. Many of the students who have not attended well this term are behind with coursework and assessments.
- Students’ starting points are assessed thoroughly. Support for students with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and is put in place promptly. Learning support staff work closely with teachers to keep them informed of students’ particular needs and their progress. Students value the support they receive through one-to-one and group sessions and in the learning support workshop. Plans to assess the quality of this support are underway.
- While the vast majority of students have access to functional skills and GCSE English and mathematics classes to develop these skills further, students do not yet benefit from teachers including English and mathematics routinely or effectively in lessons and assessments. In a very few cases, teachers’ own work contains errors.
- Most vocational students benefit from good academic and personal tutorial arrangements and timely reviews of their individual targets. Tutorial arrangements on A-level courses are less effective as information on students’ progress is not shared and used sufficiently effectively to help students improve. Students’ targets are often not specific or measurable and students are not always clear of what they need to do to improve. Teachers in art and design, dance and sport use target setting well in lessons to develop individuals’ skills.
- Assessment meets awarding body requirements. Feedback on the majority of written work is mostly detailed, spelling and grammar mistakes are corrected and students know what they need to do to improve. This is not always the case. Students value the workshops teachers run at this time of the year to enable them to improve their grades.
- Students work together well in lessons and across the college. The Serious Snack Shop and Apple Trees Café, run by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are well supported by students and staff. Teachers do not routinely plan activities or prepare resources that broaden students’ knowledge and awareness of equality and diversity in the wider world across all subjects.
- Students benefit from the information they receive prior to joining the college. Not all students are offered taster or pre-induction activities close to the start of their courses so they can meet the teaching teams and be fully aware of the expectations of their programmes of study. Students are prepared well for their next steps, with an increasing number of level 3 students considering an apprenticeship route.

Science and mathematics

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and this is reflected in the outcomes for students in previous years. The proportion of students that complete their courses successfully is low in science, particularly for AS-level courses, and requires improvement. It is higher for mathematics and comparable to similar colleges; success rate performance is high on the large majority of A-level mathematics courses, but there is variable performance on AS-level, other level 3 and GCSE courses. The progress made by students with high grades at GCSE level is not sufficient. Too few students achieve higher grades. The majority of lessons are good; however, a significant minority require improvement.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and, in many lessons, use this well to develop lessons that stimulate and interest the students. They encourage independent, critical and evaluative thinking to develop students’ learning skills. The laboratory skills of science students are

developed well, as exemplified in a science lesson where the teacher ensured students used titration equipment to the correct precision.

- Science teachers use interactive whiteboards well to develop students’ understanding of scientific concepts. In one lesson, students presented their understanding of the photo-electric effect to their peers. They used animation to explain how the frequency of light affects release of electrons, emphasising key technical terms reinforced by a tally exercise to consolidate knowledge and understanding.
- In the less effective lessons, teachers do not plan effectively to meet the full ability range of all students. Teachers have high aspirations for their students, but they do not always articulate them well in their planning. For example, although teachers have good information on the prior attainment of students, the activities taking place in lessons do not cater sufficiently for the needs of all.
- Support for students is good. Students receive regular support from their subject teachers who know them well. Mathematics workshops help students consolidate their knowledge and prepare for examination. Students benefit from the setting and monitoring of long-term and short-term targets; these enable students to understand their progress and know what steps they must take to improve. However, teachers and personal tutors do not collaborate consistently and effectively to ensure that subject specific targets are monitored and timely intervention takes place to make sure good progress is made towards them.
- Teachers use a broad range of appropriate methods to assess students’ progress. Thorough marking allows teachers to provide feedback that helps them to progress, although occasionally the feedback is too brief to allow students to understand what they need to do improve. Teachers use praise well in lessons to motivate students undertaking tasks. Students organise their work well and take pride in the quality of its presentation.
- The effectiveness of teachers’ questioning is mixed. Often the questions stimulate discussion among students, further developing their understanding, motivation and enabling teachers to check their progress. Where the questioning is less effective, students become disengaged and bored and this inhibits the teachers’ knowledge of how well they have understood key concepts.
- Teachers develop students’ literacy well. They focus on ensuring students understand key definitions and are able to spell scientific words correctly. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are corrected thoroughly in marked written work. Students develop correct technical language and use it to improve the standard of their work. Teachers successfully develop students’ mathematics skills in science subjects.
- The quality of information, advice and guidance provided to science students requires improvement. A few students are enrolled on to science courses having not met the entry criteria; teachers do not offer additional in-class or formalised workshop support to help these students achieve to a high standard.
- All staff provide a welcoming and inclusive environment. Lessons are characterised by an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect. However, the extent to which teachers explore broader diversity themes in their lessons varies and teachers miss opportunities to develop students’ understanding of equality and diversity issues that have arisen naturally.

<p>Engineering</p> <p>16-19 study programmes</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The overall proportion of students who successfully complete courses has increased over the past three years and is high on the large majority of vocational courses. In 2012/13, success performance on the AS level in design and

technology was slightly below the rate for similar colleges. Current students and apprentices are making good progress. They enjoy learning and their standard of work is good.

- Apprentices and students are strongly motivated to achieve their programme aims and objectives with challenging targets set by subject teachers. However, a small minority are not encouraged sufficiently to attempt and complete activities to achieve higher grades.
- In most lessons, teachers check students' and apprentices' understanding accurately and ensure both can apply this knowledge to their assessed work or activities in the workplace. In an engineering mathematics session, students calculated the velocity of a vehicle, taking into account variable wind velocity, and were issued with laptop computers in order to check results graphically by modelling the data on a spreadsheet. However, in a minority of theory lessons, due to poor direction from the teachers, the more confident students dominate discussions and other students lose interest in learning.
- Students, through skilled teaching, develop good skills, particularly in workshops and laboratories. Progress tracking is thorough and motivates students and apprentices to develop skills and complete activities in a timely fashion. Support for students falling behind in their studies is good, and detailed interventions and additional support classes are effective in getting them back on target to complete.
- Students and teachers make effective use of high quality computer-aided design systems, electronics simulation systems and well-maintained milling machines, lathes and hand tools. Employers' resources are of a very high standard, providing good opportunities for apprentices to gain valuable skills. Apprentices and students benefit from knowledgeable and experienced staff. The reinforcement of health and safety in college workshops and laboratories is good and students adopt safe working practices. However, students do not have sufficient opportunity to participate in work experience to develop their industry-specific skills further.
- Initial assessment is thorough and is combined with interviews with curriculum managers to ensure that potential students are correctly placed on a programme that best meets their needs. The assessment of students' and apprentices' work is detailed and thorough. Feedback to students and apprentices is clear and helps them to understand how to develop and improve.
- Apprentices work and train on employers' premises with highly skilled designers as mentors who provide expert guidance to enable them to develop very high levels of practical skills and technical knowledge. However, during apprentices' progress reviews, targets for the development of technical skills do not always consistently explain the sequential steps required to extend learning, and this inhibits apprentices' development of skills in the workplace. Communication between assessors and employers is effective in supporting apprentices to achieve.
- Students and apprentices use their mathematical skills effectively in taught lessons, workshops and in the workplace. Students studying at level 3 are encouraged to study AS-level mathematics in order to enhance their progression opportunities. However, teachers and assessors do not consistently correct students' spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work.
- Information, advice and guidance are thorough. College open days and taster events provide good opportunities to present the range of engineering programmes to potential applicants. Engineering staff take care to guide students and apprentices toward their next steps in education and training. Progression into employment or into higher education is good.
- Students and apprentices have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity. However, in most lessons and progress reviews, teachers promote and reinforce equality and diversity insufficiently in students' knowledge and work. Teachers do not take opportunities to discuss the impact equality and diversity may have on their personal and working lives sufficiently.

ICT**16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes**

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Success rates are low and significantly below the rates for similar colleges on courses for ICT practitioners. Students' progress, compared with their starting points, is low on both A-level and AS-level computing courses. The proportion of students achieving high grades is too low.
- More students remain on their courses this year through closer monitoring arrangements. Success rates on information technology (IT) users' courses, the very large majority of which are short in length, are above national rates, except the certificate course which has improved in-year.
- Attendance rates have increased from a low base and are at the college target. High numbers of students on subcontractors' provision progress to higher-level courses. For many students on the study programme, their understanding of the IT industry environment is limited by insufficient opportunities for employer visits and to undertake meaningful work experience.
- Students are keen, enthusiastic, enjoy their studies and value highly the support they receive from their teachers. Teachers enable students to augment their independent learning skills through the setting of homework that is reviewed in both lessons and individual tutorials. Students on subcontractors' provision develop IT skills well and are able to use technical terms confidently.
- Not enough teaching is consistently good. Students respond well to the tasks they are set in classes and the large majority are able to work confidently to complete them in a timely manner. While the majority of students make adequate progress in their studies, teachers do not consistently challenge them to improve their work and excel. In the better lessons, learning outcomes and assessments are clear, supporting the development of students' knowledge and skills effectively. For example, in a multimedia workshop, level 1 students set their own challenging targets for creating a storyboard and clearly described the target audience and purpose of their e-fliers.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to check and extend students' understanding and application. Planned opportunities for group activities and discussions help students to develop their understanding appropriately. For example, in a computing lesson, students worked effectively in pairs to 'dry run' complex logic from a flowchart before coding and testing. However, teachers' planning and use of learning outcomes to target and develop students' knowledge are underdeveloped in many lessons as too much focus is placed on the completion of tasks, resulting in work of a mediocre standard. In weaker lessons, teachers' lack of planning means that students are insufficiently involved with their learning and progress. Often activities do not take account of the wide range of students' abilities, with the result that teachers miss opportunities to ensure all students are sufficiently challenged.
- Students make appropriate use of the VLE to gain access to documents, presentations, videos and learning materials, as well as to upload assignments. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards which teachers use for presentations and videos, but their full potential is not exploited sufficiently to enrich learning.
- Teachers use questioning and activities in the majority of lessons to assess students' progress effectively. Teachers provide helpful written feedback, which enables students to improve the standard of their work. The majority of teachers offer regular guidance to students as to how to complete assessed tasks; however, this seldom encourages students to extend their learning fully.
- The assessment of students' starting points and subsequent guidance ensures that students are enrolled on appropriate courses and additional support is provided where needed. Students who

are at risk of falling behind in their work are supported well through helpful support in personal tutorials.

- Teachers do not routinely plan the promotion of equality and celebration of diversity in lessons to improve students' understanding. Students' English skills, especially their writing techniques, are prioritised in lessons through the preparation of presentations and re-working or correcting of assessed work. However, teachers miss opportunities to promote the development of students' mathematics skills.

Performing arts, music technology and media

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as reflected in low success rates, particularly on level 3 courses in performing arts which have declined over time. The proportion of students who successfully complete their courses on creative media production vocational courses and music technology is high; however, success rates on A-level courses are not consistently high. The number of students progressing to higher education is among the lowest across the college. Too few students achieve higher grades. Attendance and punctuality require improvement.
- Well-qualified and experienced teachers inspire students who appreciate and respect their credible experience as actors, musicians and media professionals. However, teachers do not use extended activities and concepts consistently to deepen the learning experience. The content of lessons is not challenging enough for students on level 3 courses and the planning for individual needs is inconsistent.
- Teachers' use of targeted questioning to check understanding and assess students' progress is variable. In good lessons, teachers provide encouragement to students and support them to develop and apply creative skills within original projects. In these lessons, teachers help students build subject knowledge well through carefully structured coaching techniques.
- In weaker lessons, teachers do not refer to individualised targets to inform skill development and subsequent work tasks. Lessons lack structure and do not end with clear targets designed to secure improvements in the standard of students' work. However, in dance programmes, students use performers' journals well to ensure that they identify both their progress and areas for development.
- Teachers' planning of imaginative practical tasks and appropriate collaboration between differing courses enable students to become confident, versatile performers. For example, drama students made thoughtful contributions to rehearsals of a modern play, whilst media production students clearly articulated how a script is realised on screen within the shooting and directing process.
- Staff skills in utilising and promoting wider learning technologies are variable; teachers' and students' use of the VLE to extend learning is patchy. However, performing arts teachers use learning technology skilfully to record vocal and movement work to support assessment and students' reflection on their progress. Students' and teachers' work is often disrupted by unreliability in the technology available, and media students work with outdated software that does not enable them to acquire up-to-date industry skills.
- Media students develop work-related skills in suitable work placements, for example learning about imagery with a special effects company. However, few performing arts students have the opportunity to undertake purposeful work experience.
- Students take part in a range of enrichment activities in concerts and dance festivals, initiatives within higher education to work on choreographic projects, and master classes with guest authors, broadcast journalists and film editors.

- The quality of marking of written work is thorough and highlights potential improvements. However, in-lesson assessment is directed to the whole group without ensuring students have enough regular individual feedback to understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers do not develop students' English and mathematics consistently well. In good lessons, teachers provide opportunities for students to develop their English skills through the promotion of technical language relevant to the sector. However, teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on the relevance of mathematics to the industry in many lessons.
- Teachers use an appropriate range of stimuli drawn from diverse cultures and students consider how the media portrays differing social groups in performance. However, this is not extended to encourage students to analyse critically pertinent issues in the arts, such as the role of women and people of minority ethnic origin.

English and modern foreign languages

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Success rates on English courses are in line with national rates, and those on modern and foreign language courses are just above. However, too few students achieve high grades, except for those studying French and German at A level. Students make insufficient progress when their starting points are taken into account. Too many students do not attend their courses regularly.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students and many are particularly skilled at enabling students to analyse and compare sources and themes, for example differing perspectives of how social class is portrayed by authors in texts. However, students are often hesitant when asked to express their ideas to their peers, nor are they always convinced of succeeding in their examinations. Too many language students do not have the confidence to speak with fluency.
- Teachers are well qualified and have excellent subject knowledge. However, attendance has declined on the previous year, and is low, and this prevents a minority of students from making the expected progress on their course, resulting in mediocre work. Teachers do not plan sufficiently to meet the needs of individual students. In the better lessons, teachers set the students particularly challenging tasks, effectively reinforce study skill techniques and skilfully rephrase questions to encourage reflection and analysis. They make good use of pair work in the evaluation of texts or to motivate students through competitions, for example in writing a review of a Spanish film.
- Teachers use ILT in an innovative manner to support learning. In English lessons, students use their mobile telephones to photograph their writing before uploading it on to their computers and the interactive 'blog'. Teachers use electronic telephone applications to motivate students to analyse and reflect upon a range of writing, for example the poetry of Emily Dickinson.
- Assessment requires improvement. Students receive detailed information about the demands of the courses. Teachers set students targets, but do not consistently review them robustly or in a timely manner. However, the better teachers involve students effectively in reviewing their learning and checking, correcting each other's work. These teachers provide feedback on assessed work that is detailed, with recommendations on what to do to improve and meet required standards. The most effective teachers also give students a summary of the best elements of their essays, reinforcing specific features and highlighting effective analysis. However, a minority of teachers do not mark work promptly or sufficiently offer students pertinent information on how to make improvements.
- Students benefit from good tutorial support. Their tutors are accessible and provide helpful advice with their applications to higher education and planning further study routes. The recently-introduced software for monitoring students' experience on their course facilitates communication between tutors and teachers on the attendance and progress of students.

However, this has not yet had sufficient impact on improving attendance and ensuring all students are making sufficient progress to achieve their set target grades. Personal tutors are not fully aware of the targets set by subject teachers and, as a result, are insufficiently clear about what is required for their students to achieve higher grades.

- Equality and diversity are promoted well across the curriculum. Teachers use opportunities to, for example, explore the situation of women in Victorian times or how religious beliefs impact on poetry.

Business studies and law
16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. This correlates with the overall success rates in business studies and law, which are below the national rates. Insufficient numbers of students achieve higher grades on A-level programmes.
- Teachers have high expectations of students. However, attendance is too low and prevents many students from making effective progress on their courses. In the large majority of lessons, teachers miss too many opportunities to challenge and extend the more able students' knowledge and understanding through questioning or individual, pair and group activities. For example, in a business studies lesson, a number of students had completed a numerical problem more quickly than the majority of the class and had to wait for a considerable time to let other students catch up before they could continue with their learning.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers plan lessons carefully and match learning tasks to the different ability levels of students. However, in the large majority of lessons, teachers teach to the whole class, irrespective of individual needs; consequently, many students do not make the progress they are capable of achieving.
- The standard of students' work in business studies and law is at an appropriate level, with examples of good quality work seen. However, not all students are on target to achieve due to low attendance. The very large majority of teachers annotate work effectively, with reference to examination expectations and industry skills in both business studies and law. On vocational courses, all students submit assignments electronically onto the VLE. This approach helps to develop students' organisational and IT skills. Teachers' feedback is timely and provides clear guidance for students' future development; spelling and grammar errors are also routinely identified.
- Teachers relate the importance of English and mathematics skills to the requirements in the sector. For example, AS-level business studies students demonstrated calculating and applying cash flow forecast and breakeven outcomes to a series of business issues effectively. The use of ILT in lessons is underdeveloped. In the overwhelming majority of lessons, teachers use interactive whiteboards solely to project information, rather than for interactive activities and tasks to stimulate learning. The VLE lacks imaginative use, is a repository for class notes and does not provide opportunities for students to extend their understanding through links to additional tasks and resources outside of lessons.
- Students benefit from the college's good links with local businesses, law firms and the courts, to develop problem-solving and team-working skills that are relevant to the sector. For example, students recently formed an enterprise society and have been provided with national funding to create a website for students to donate unwanted text books and develop a telephone application to allow students to keep track of lessons, notes and homework. However, students do not have the opportunity to improve their industry-specific knowledge and skills through meaningful work experience.
- Appropriate curriculum advice is available throughout the year to ensure prospective students are placed on the appropriate programme of study. Students value meeting with tutors to discuss their academic and personal targets. However, the majority of their targets are too

vague and do not inform them sufficiently of what they need to do to improve. Teachers provide additional workshops beyond lessons so that students who are at risk of falling behind can catch up.

- Teachers maintain a welcoming and caring environment for all students, with the majority creating opportunities to promote equality and celebrate diversity in lessons. For example, in a vocational business lesson, students evaluated how companies may use 'culture' in internet marketing insensitively.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have taken action to improve quality and performance across the college. However, these changes have not yet had sufficient impact on improving teaching, learning and assessment or outcomes for students.
- The Principal and governors have an ambitious strategy to develop the college into a multi-agency campus that will provide a coherent approach to meeting the educational aspirations of young people in the borough. They are working closely with the local authority, schools, and local businesses to realise this ambition.
- Governors have a broad range of relevant experience and skills. They are highly committed to supporting the college's improvement, and have a thorough understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses, and the challenges that the college faces. The quality of reports that governors receive about the college's performance has improved significantly in the last 12 months. However, reports are often too optimistic about projected success rates, or are incomplete, which limits governors' effectiveness in challenging leaders and managers to improve the college's performance.
- Improving the performance management of teachers has been a priority for the college since the previous inspection, and this has resulted in a significant increase in the proportion of teachers whose performance is appraised. However, appraisals of teachers have not led to consistent improvements in performance. Appraisals do not always identify specific actions that teachers need to take to improve the success of the students that they teach, or to improve the quality of their teaching.
- Managers have made significant changes to the quality improvement arrangements since the previous inspection, and have focused closely on improving the quality of teaching where it requires improvement. A team of trained managers observes the lessons of all teachers, and produces reports that are detailed and evaluative. However, line managers do not consistently identify improvement actions following observation, and actions that they do identify are too often insufficiently specific in explaining how teachers can improve their performance, nor are they timely. The college's best teachers have insufficient opportunity to share good practice with colleagues.
- Teachers benefit from a good range of opportunities to improve their skills and understanding. They particularly value the broad range of 'bite-size' training opportunities that the college's teaching and learning advocates deliver regularly in order to strengthen identified areas for improvement. These include topics such as e-learning, classroom management, promoting equality and diversity, and safeguarding.
- The majority of judgements identified through the self-assessment process identify accurately the improvements that the college needs to make. However, leaders do not use robust and up-to-date data to inform the planning of improvement initiatives. Consequently, a minority of reviews of success rate performance are too optimistic and limit the effectiveness of the quality improvement process. Managers do not evaluate consistently the impact of actions taken during the year to improve the quality of provision and, as a result, do not have a sufficiently clear picture of how much progress the college is making in rectifying weaknesses.
- The college has a robust approach to gathering and using feedback from students. Managers use feedback well to identify areas for improvement, and provide clear information to students

about the changes made. For example, managers have taken action to improve the correction of accuracy errors in students' written English in response to feedback from students.

- Managers monitor the performance of subcontractors well. Close monitoring of progress towards targets and frequent observations of lessons enable managers to evaluate accurately the quality of subcontracted provision and identify improvement actions.
- The college places a high priority on developing the curriculum in response to the requirements of study programmes. Students on most courses benefit from a range of activities that enrich their learning and give them insights into the world of work, including visits to employers and talks from external speakers. Not all students, especially vocational students, have the opportunity to improve their industry-specific knowledge and skills through undertaking purposeful work experience.
- Leaders and managers have successfully created a college ethos that is inclusive and diverse. They actively promote the college beyond the borough in areas of London with higher levels of ethnic diversity and, as a result, a high proportion of young people from minority ethnic groups attend the college. Students enjoy and benefit from working in this diverse environment.
- The college holds a wide range of activities to promote diversity, such as events celebrating Black history, and tutorials that aim to raise awareness and understanding of different lifestyles. However, this ethos is not sufficiently visible in public spaces in the building, and there are few examples of posters, promotional materials, or information for students that promote and celebrate equality and diversity.
- The college's arrangements for safeguarding are good. The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding students. Managers monitor carefully those students identified and assessed as vulnerable. Managers take appropriate action when necessary to keep students and staff safe.

▪ **Record of Main Findings (RMF)**

Richmond upon Thames 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	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-
Outcomes for learners	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Science	3
Mathematics and statistics	3
Engineering	2
Manufacturing technologies	2
ICT for practitioners	3
ICT for users	3
Performing arts	3
Media and communication	3

English	3
Modern foreign languages	3
Business management	3
Law and legal services	3

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	5200							
Principal/CEO	David Ansell							
Date of previous inspection	December 2012							
Website address	www.rutc.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+
	237	868	347	197	2868	227	4	57
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	63	27	16	17	4	5		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	0							
Part-time	7							
Number of community learners	0							
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"> ▪ Adult Training Network Ltd ▪ Life Long Learning Centre Ltd 							

Contextual information

Richmond upon Thames College is a large general further education college with its main campus located in the London Borough of Richmond. The college serves a very wide catchment area, attracting students from 28 of the 33 London boroughs. The college offers a wide range of courses and subjects including a small number of apprenticeship, higher education and adult courses. The number of people in the area who are unemployed and in receipt of benefits is approximately half that of the London average. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who leave school with five or more GCSE qualifications at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is significantly higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Matt Vaughan HMI
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Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the head of quality as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on students' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all 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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