

The Manchester College

General further education college

Inspection dates		12–16 May 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Most learners attend the college from some of the most deprived neighbourhoods and make good progress, often making better progress than less disadvantaged learners in other colleges.
- The very large majority of learners complete their courses successfully and gain employment or continue their studies at the next level.
- Learners demonstrate good attitudes to learning as a result of the good development of their personal and social skills, through lessons and tutorials.
- The large majority of teaching, learning and assessment are good or better and the good support motivates learners to make good progress in lessons.
- Strong leadership has transformed the culture of this very large and complex college through comprehensive quality improvement, internal reviews, accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and strong performance management.
- Highly detailed and thorough strategic planning has taken excellent account of local and regional priorities to provide courses that respond to the needs of the communities served by the college.
- Very good promotion of equality and diversity leads to a strong culture of mutual respect and safety, supported by the strong contribution of a team of full-time youth workers.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The proportion of learners making better than expected progress or achieving higher grades on advanced-level courses or in GCSE English is low. Success rates remain low in a small minority of subjects. In a few subjects, learners arrive late to lessons and their attendance rate is low.
- Teaching, learning and assessment still require improvement in a small minority of lessons. The development of learners' English and mathematics skills lacks consistency across most subject areas and workplace learning. Not all subject areas have developed sufficient work placements to meet fully the requirements of the study programme.
- Not all managers are adept at implementing improvement actions or analysing data about learners' progress. Support areas do not evaluate their impact on supporting learners to achieve. Improvement arrangements in workplace learning lack sufficient impact.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve learners' progress and achievement further by:
 - raising higher-grade achievement on GCSE and advanced-level courses
 - raising the proportion of learners who achieve in the small minority of subjects where success rates remain low
 - ensuring that more learners attend regularly and on time
 - providing sufficient stretch and challenge to enable all learners to achieve their potential in relation to their starting points
 - improving the quality of teachers' feedback on marked work so that all learners understand what they need to do to achieve challenging targets.

- Raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use information about learners' starting points to plan learning and set high-quality, demanding targets
 - ensuring that all teachers have the skills to plan lessons with learning objectives that build on learners' progress
 - improving the development of learners' English and mathematics skills in the areas where this is not yet sufficiently integrated, through the full implementation of the English and mathematics strategy
 - ensuring that all learners on study programmes benefit from work placements so that they develop the relevant work-related skills required for their subject area
 - improving the quality and frequency of workplace assessment and employers' involvement for a minority of apprentices
 - ensuring that the content of the virtual learning environment (VLE) enables learners to study in their own time.

- Improve the quality of provision that is not yet good by:
 - strengthening the quality assurance and quality improvement arrangements in workplace learning
 - extending self-assessment to support areas so that these areas can evaluate their contribution to learners' achievement
 - improving the collection and use of data to provide greater consistency in monitoring performance against targets
 - ensuring that all managers are skilled in implementing improvement plans.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. The large majority of learners attend the college from areas of economic and social disadvantage in Manchester. The very large majority make good progress with success rates higher than learners in colleges with less disadvantage.
- Since 2010/11, the proportion of full-time learners completing their courses successfully has risen by 10 percentage points, bringing the college in line with the national rate. As a result of sustained improvement actions by managers, most learners aged 16 to 18 on all levels of courses, including A levels, now complete their courses successfully. For adult learners, most complete their courses successfully on foundation- and intermediate-level courses. At advanced

level, the proportion of adult learners completing their courses successfully has improved over the previous three years and now the large majority gain their qualifications.

- Learners aged 16 to 18 on advanced-level courses make progress as expected. They make very good progress in A-level mathematics and in performing arts. Higher-grade achievement on A-level courses is, however, low. Managers have recognised this as an area for improvement.
- For apprenticeships in 2012/13, as a result of strong and sustainable actions by managers, the overall framework success rates for all age groups and levels increased by 10 percentage points to be just above the national rate and by 12 percentage points to be 10 percentage points above the national rate for timely completion. At both intermediate and advanced level, apprentices complete their studies at a substantially faster rate than the national rate and continue an improving trend. However, apprentices aged 16 to 18 and those over 25 on intermediate-level courses complete at a slower rate.
- The standard of learners' work is good. They develop good practical skills in most subjects and understand well the links between theory and practice. Learners demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons is exemplary. The vast majority of learners and apprentices develop good work-related skills and demonstrate a positive work ethic.
- The college has implemented an employability scorecard that provides learners with complementary activities to ensure that all learners gain essential work-related skills to help them apply for jobs. In childcare, learners make good use of their work-placement experience to deepen and enrich their learning. In media, learners work towards business-sponsored design briefs to complete real-life projects. Learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from good internship placements that prepare them well for permanent employment.
- Group tutorials, as part of the study programme, develop learners' personal and social and work-related skills well. However, managers identify the need to provide more work-placement opportunities.
- The college has ensured that the gap in the performance of different groups has reduced. The success rates of men and women are similar to the national rate. Learners from minority ethnic backgrounds generally perform at the same level as other learners in the college, although adult learners from Bangladeshi and Arabic backgrounds perform less well. Most learners who are in receipt of additional learning support and those who have left care settings perform at a similar rate to other learners in the college. Learners who were previously in receipt of free school meals generally make good progress.
- Learners' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. As a result of improvements to strengthen the monitoring of attendance, current learners have fewer absences than those in the previous two years. Learners feel safe and their behaviour in social areas is good.
- Success rates for functional skills at levels 1 and 2 for learners aged 16 to 18 and for adult learners at level 1 are higher than the national rates. At level 2 for adult learners, they remain below. The proportion of learners gaining higher grades in GCSE English has declined since 2011/12 from just above the low national average to nine percentage points below in 2012/13. For GCSE mathematics, the proportion gaining higher grades shows a declining trend for adult learners but remains significantly above the national rate for learners aged 16 to 18. As a result of effective improvement planning, the proportion of learners continuing to study on both courses has improved for the current year.
- As a result of good independent careers guidance, learners' progression to further study or employment is good with almost all leavers in 2012/13 progressing to the next level in their education and training or to work. About one fifth of learners went on to university.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment contributes to the good outcomes for learners. The actions that managers and teachers have taken to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection have been successful.

Teachers plan learning thoughtfully, which results in vibrant and interesting lessons. Most lessons are good.

- Highly qualified teachers are ambitious for their learners, with whom they have highly productive working relationships. Learners are extremely well motivated and actively involved in a wide range of interesting activities to support and develop their practical skills. For example, in a health and social care lesson, learners participated in an activity wearing misted goggles, thick gloves and shoes with lumpy objects in them to develop empathy skills in their study of dementia awareness. The lesson was engaging, learners enjoyed what they were doing and they learnt a lot about the potential loss of dexterity during the ageing process.
- Learners develop good collaborative learning skills in many lessons. They respect each other's contributions and value each other's opinions. In one computing lesson, learners worked together on an employer-sponsored competition to produce a device to deliver greater product information to customers. The energy and enthusiasm for this task was noticeable and all the groups performed very highly.
- In the small minority of lessons that require improvement, learners do not make sufficient progress. They spend too long on the same activity, often completing repetitive tasks, which do not challenge them or raise their expectations. Questioning is often too general, teachers accept superficial answers, resulting in learners becoming bored and uninterested.
- Assessment at the college and in the workplace is good. In the majority of cases, teachers and assessors mark learners' work carefully. Feedback to learners and apprentices is supportive and advises them clearly on how to improve and make progress. In the minority of less-effective examples, written feedback is not constructive and grammar and spelling errors are not corrected.
- Early assessment of learners' starting points ensures that the majority of learners enrol on a programme that meets their needs. However, teachers do not routinely use learners' starting points to develop learning activities appropriate to their learners' diverse needs. Apprentices receive a thorough initial assessment of their skills, experience and previous learning that ensures they are on the right level of course.
- Tutorials are effective in tracking and monitoring learners' progress, and supporting their personal and social development. Learners value the systems to support and monitor their progress, such as the learner information portal, the electronic MarkBook and the regular reviews with teachers. However, teachers' expectations and targets for learners are not always sufficiently challenging.
- Assessors identify well the progress that most apprentices make and negotiate appropriate targets with their employers. However, a minority of apprentices do not have sufficiently regular visits from assessors and are not supported fully in the workplace to develop and extend their skills.
- Support for learners at the college is good. They receive highly effective and timely support to enable them to achieve their qualifications. Youth workers and specialist guidance and support workers across the college provide an excellent range of advice and guidance on personal matters to learners. Their specific support has helped many learners stay on their course.
- The development of learners' English and mathematics skills lacks consistency across most subject areas, including workplace learning. Learners develop good subject-related language and numeracy skills. Although most teachers identify and correct learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar errors effectively, this is not the case across all subjects.
- Accommodation, resources and learning resource centres to support learners' progress are good across the majority of campuses. Classrooms and workshops are well equipped with attractive displays promoting learners' work. Learners use the VLE, mobile telephones and social media alternatives very well for research in science, hairdressing and beauty therapy, performing arts and in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). A team of information and learning technology (ILT) champions is developing the further integration of ILT into learning inside and outside the classroom.
- All learners benefit from the strong focus the college places on equality of opportunity. The diverse range of learners' backgrounds contributes to the promotion of diversity on a daily

basis. A sense of harmony and respect pervades lessons and social areas. Teachers and support staff have received good training in diversity matters. However, in a minority of lessons teachers struggle to translate their understanding into practical measures to deepen learners' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of modern Britain.

Early years and playwork

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good as reflected in the large majority of learners who remain in learning and complete their courses successfully. Learners have good attendance and punctuality.
- As a result of teachers' high expectations, learners value their time at college and develop high-level technical skills for future employment and further study. The vast majority of learners progress to higher-level courses or into employment as teachers, nursery nurses or youth workers.
- Support, care and guidance for learners are good. Teachers identify learners' support needs quickly and put in place a good range of support, such as coaching, to ensure that learners make good progress. The large majority of learners develop effective organisational and learning skills, which contribute to the achievement of challenging personal targets. Learners are self-motivated and develop confidence to work in a range of childcare settings.
- In the majority of lessons, knowledgeable, skilled and highly experienced teachers plan lessons well. Learning activities interest learners and link well to the Early Years Foundation Stage to provide good connections between theory and workplace practice. Teachers use highly effective questioning to check and extend learners' understanding of concepts such as the Spiral Curriculum or the barriers to effective communication. Learners use highly appropriate work-related knowledge to discuss and explain concepts and how these relate to their work placement.
- In the minority of less successful lessons, the pace of learning is slow and learners do not make the progress expected of them. Activities lack clear structure and purpose with questioning that insufficiently challenges the more able learners.
- Teachers assess learners' starting points and their additional support needs accurately. Individual support from subject-related coaches is good. Recently, teachers have begun to use electronic target-setting to review learners' progress against targets and this has resulted in improved communication between learners and personal tutors.
- Marking of learners' work is fair and accurate and teachers provide clear and detailed feedback on what learners need to do to improve. In a few instances, written feedback lacks sufficient detail to help learners to make better progress. Teachers do not correct learners' errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation systematically. The quality of assessment on apprenticeship programmes varies considerably. A minority of reviews are not sufficiently frequent to ensure rapid progress.
- The development of learners' English and mathematical skills is good. Learners use appropriate technical language and practise their mathematical skills in a range of contexts such as learning the multiplication tables through song in order to support learning in the early years' settings.
- Learners benefit from good and timely information, advice and guidance. They receive regular information on their next steps in training through assignments, group tutorials, individual reviews and a wide range of work placements and additional activities. However, for a minority of courses, the information learners receive before joining the course does not provide a clear outline of the demands of the training.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. In lessons, learners behave well and exhibit high levels of respect for their teachers and each other. Teachers' choice of topics helps

learners to think about inclusivity. For example, a tutorial on human acts of kindness encouraged learners to reflect on their own behaviours and attitudes.

Science

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Most learners complete their courses successfully, often achieving results higher than in similar colleges. As a result of managers' continuous focus on raising standards, almost all learners now remain in learning until the end of their studies and their attendance rate is high.
- Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their subjects. In the best lessons, they convey a sense of infectious enthusiasm that results in high standards of learners' work and their good progress. They incorporate a good variety of activities to inspire learning and ensure that learners make progress. Using their knowledge of each learner's starting point, teachers adapt learning to match the learners' needs. One biology revision lesson made excellent use of mobile technology to conduct a quiz, the results of which were collated instantly on the screen and used to plan the next revision topics. Teachers' use of questioning is good, stimulating learners' interest further and confirming the good progress made. In the small minority of less-effective lessons, teachers do not always set sufficiently high-level learning objectives. As a result, learners do not make the progress expected of them.
- Teachers incorporate good work-related examples in their lesson planning. For example, learners gained good experience of teaching relevant engineering science topics to primary-aged pupils at a local school. Visits to employers, such as the local water treatment company, help to raise learners' awareness of skill requirements and associated careers. Learners benefit from good information about university courses and a high proportion continue into higher education. However, science learners do not have work experience as part of their study programme.
- Resources are good and most lessons take place in dedicated laboratories in which teachers and learners pay appropriate attention to health and safety. Learners benefit from a good range of practical work that develops good laboratory skills. In an intermediate-level lesson, learners were introduced to acid base titration and quickly developed skills associated with routine handling of pipettes, stands and other basic laboratory equipment.
- Teachers provide helpful feedback to learners on their assignments and provide useful suggestions for further improvement. Revision lessons are often imaginative using, for example, mind maps to help learners consider their work on enzymes. Learning support lessons that use science specialists provide useful additional guidance for those needing help to succeed as well as assisting the more able learners to excel.
- Teachers include the development of learners' English and mathematics skills in their planning of learning, using the many natural opportunities within science topics, particularly, for example, mathematics in physics. However, a small minority of lessons do not develop learners' writing skills sufficiently. Teachers do not always correct spelling, grammar and punctuation errors in learners' written work.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. A culture of mutual respect exists between learners and teachers. However, use of natural extensions to science topics to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity is insufficient.

Mathematics and statistics

16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is reflected in the very good progress that most learners make in relation to their starting points. Most learners on A-level mathematics courses, including further mathematics, complete their courses successfully. The majority of learners aged 16 to 18 taking GCSE mathematics gain a high grade of A* to C, significantly above the rate in similar colleges. However, only a minority of adult learners on GCSE mathematics courses achieve a high grade. Learners' attendance is very high on A-level courses but low on GCSE.
- Most teaching is good or better and results in most learners making good progress. In the best lessons, knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers plan learning well to meet learners' individual needs. The pace in lessons is brisk and challenging activities stimulate learners' interest. As a result of the careful adaptation of learning materials to support all levels of abilities, learners make good progress. For example, in further mathematics lessons, learners enjoy solving a range of equations in preparation for their examinations.
- In a small minority of lessons, the slow pace, lack of clear instructions and infrequent checking of learning results in learners' loss of interest and slow progress. Teachers do not always ensure that learners' files and notes are well-organised to enable them to refer to previous learning for revision purposes.
- Learning materials, the majority of which teachers have designed themselves, are innovative, challenging and interest learners. However, few resources are available on the VLE and this reduces learners' opportunities to study outside lessons.
- Teachers assess learners' starting points accurately. Learners benefit from good information, advice and guidance before they start and during their studies, which enables them to make informed decisions about their next steps in learning or employment. As a result of the good additional subject support on all mathematics courses, many learners, including the most able, make better rates of progress. Teachers track learners' progress well on all A-level courses. However, teachers' monitoring of learners' progress on GCSE courses lacks detail.
- The marking of learners' work is regular and contributes to the good progress most learners make. Feedback is detailed and helps learners to improve. Teachers pay good attention in most lessons to the correct use, understanding and spelling of subject-specific words.
- Advanced-level learners develop good personal, social and work-related skills through a wide range of good-quality additional activities. For example, first year learners take part in the promotion of science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects to primary school pupils in the local area.
- Learners' behaviour is exemplary, demonstrating high levels of mutual respect. Diverse groups of learners work very well together and value each other's contributions. For example, in a lesson where learners had to book and budget for an overseas holiday, they shared relevant cultural information that drew on the diverse range of backgrounds in the group.

Manufacturing technologies and motor vehicle

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes
Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This reflects the good or better progress made by almost all learners and the high proportion of learners who complete their courses successfully. Learners enjoy their courses and develop good work-related skills. As a result they gain employment or go on to further study. The proportion of learners progressing from intermediate- to advanced-level apprenticeships is high.
- As a result of the thorough and accurate assessment of learners' starting points, teachers identify learners' support needs well. A range of interviews and assessments, including practical exercises and a computer-based aptitude test, ensures that learners are enrolled on the most appropriate course. Learners make good progress and achieve as a result of the additional learning support that teachers arrange. Learners receive a comprehensive induction that enables them to start their learning promptly.
- Learners benefit from good relations with their teachers that result in good levels of support for those who experience personal difficulties or are at risk of leaving their course early. Good weekly themed tutorials, as part of the study programme, help promote learners' personal and social skills and develop additional work-related skills.
- The quality of learners' written work is good. Teachers ensure that classroom-based learners receive good written feedback on assignments that are marked and returned promptly with corrections to spellings and grammatical errors, where required. In practical motor vehicle lessons, learners develop good work-related skills quickly. They use tools and specialist equipment confidently in modern well-equipped workshops. As a result learners make good progress, with many nominated for national training awards.
- Teachers plan the majority of lessons well. Teachers and assessors are knowledgeable and use their own industrial experience well to emphasise and promote good practice. In the better motor vehicle theory lessons, teachers use ILT very effectively to enhance learning. In these lessons, teachers use visual aids and questions posed to individual learners effectively, alongside a variety of teaching and learning activities that stimulate learning and encourage discussion. Exercises include additional tasks to stretch the more able and confident learners. However, in less-effective theory lessons, long periods of inactivity demotivate learners. In a small minority of motor vehicle theory lessons, teachers do not challenge sufficiently learners who regularly arrive late.
- Resources and specialist motor vehicle facilities are of a very high standard and used well to promote learning and develop job-related skills. The promotion of health and safety is good for the vast majority of courses. However, teachers pay insufficient attention to the use of personal protective equipment in a very small minority of practical motor vehicle lessons.
- Assessment practices in the workplace are good. Assessors plan and manage observations in the workplace well. Progress reviews are thorough. Assessors provide constructive written feedback on apprentices' work explaining how they can make better progress. Most progress reviews include detailed targets for improvement. However, a minority of progress reviews lack target completion dates. Support for apprentices from employers in the workplace is excellent. They ensure apprentices develop a full range of skills by carrying out tasks that meet their needs and the requirements of the apprenticeship qualification. As a result most employers take part in the design of apprentices' training plans and participate in progress reviews.
- Prospective learners benefit from good information, advice and guidance with a detailed pre-course information pack that contains materials and booklets that explain the range of courses available and career opportunities. Taster courses and open days enable potential learners to experience practical activities in a realistic engineering environment.

- Teachers promote equality and diversity effectively in the workplace and in the better classroom-based lessons. However, in a small minority of motor vehicle theory lessons, the planning of learning does not include specific reference to equality and diversity topics.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment in hairdressing and beauty therapy are good. This is reflected in the high proportion of learners who complete their courses successfully at college or through an apprenticeship. Attendance is satisfactory. A small minority of learners are late to lessons.
- Highly motivated and well-qualified teachers demonstrate high expectations of learners and support them well to develop good technical and work-related skills. For example, learners demonstrate good technical skills as they create hair-up styles. Learners on nail art courses complete highly creative designs. However, in beauty therapy, teachers do not always ensure that learners complete initial preparation before starting work on a client.
- Good specialist resources for teaching hairdressing and beauty therapy enable learners to conduct themselves professionally and work to standards expected in industry. The quality of the hairdressing and beauty salons is at least good. Salons are spacious, well-equipped and benefit from a plentiful supply of clients, enabling learners to make good progress. The majority of learners attend work placements, which enable them to develop their job-related skills.
- Learning in practical lessons is good with the majority of learners completing complex and challenging tasks that often exceed the course requirements. They develop good interpersonal skills when meeting and working with clients. However, in the majority of practical lessons, teachers do not systematically check finished work or assess learners' understanding of the practical tasks they complete.
- In theory lessons, teachers encourage learners to use mobile phones for research on the internet. The use of questioning is good to check learning and to ensure that learners participate in very effective and challenging discussions. Learners use the VLE well to support their learning at college and at home.
- Assessment of learners' and apprentices' work is thorough. Learners and apprentices benefit from well-planned and detailed monitoring and assessment. Assessment is good and learners are clear about their stage of learning and the progress they are making. Accurate and effective target-setting during progress reviews and tutorials focuses on the progress made in lessons and early achievement of qualifications.
- Teachers assess learners' starting points quickly and identify learners' support needs promptly. As a result learners mostly make good progress and continue to a higher-level course. However, a small minority of college-based learners make slow progress as they study on foundation-level courses, regardless of their prior attainment, before going on to the next level.
- Support for learners is good. Learners appreciate highly the support they receive from their teachers. Teachers identify learners' specialist support needs quickly and put in place an extensive range of support to ensure learners make good progress. For example, specialist support tutors work particularly effectively with learners with hearing difficulties to enable them to take an active and productive role in group discussions.
- Learners benefit from a good range of additional activities that contribute to their good progress. For example, they attend trade exhibitions, manufacturers' courses, enter national competitions and work with the local community. Learners develop their technical and

communicative skills well as they support patients at a local hospital by providing hairdressing and beauty treatments.

- The development and promotion of mathematics are particularly good in lessons as teachers relate numeracy skills well to the hairdressing and beauty industry. Teachers develop learners' English skills well in hairdressing but less so in beauty therapy lessons.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. For example, in beauty therapy lessons, learners discuss mental health awareness and treatment adaptations for clients with restricted mobility. Hairdressing learners know how to adapt hairdressing techniques for different hair types.

Performing arts

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This reflects the improvements in the proportion of learners who complete their courses successfully. Good support has helped the majority of learners make good progress towards their qualifications, with increasing numbers achieving higher grades and progressing to higher-level qualifications. Good monitoring has contributed to small improvements in learners' attendance and punctuality.
- Learners benefit from high expectations from practitioner-teachers and this motivates them to succeed. Opportunities to learn from working alongside established performers support learners in developing professional standards. Learners on extended diploma programmes adopt a disciplined and highly focused approach to their work.
- Teaching and learning are predominantly good. The majority of teachers set challenging assignments which encourage learners to either provide technical support for performances or to perform their work publicly in local prestigious venues such as 'Band on the Wall'. These opportunities extend learners' technical, practical and employability skills through learning activities often outside the classroom. Through the innovative use of a good range of specialist learning materials available on the college's social media pages, learners enhance their research skills for their assignments. All accommodation is of a good standard and enables learners to work safely with high-quality specialist equipment.
- The best teaching demonstrates thorough planning, which enables learners to develop good practical skills. In a successful dance lesson, learners displayed high levels of energy, physicality and stamina in devising a challenging dance piece. They were able to display good choreography with partners and in small groups that contributed to a successful performance. They then participated well in a self- and peer-evaluation of their performance.
- In a small minority of lessons, teaching is less effective and teachers fail to maintain learners' attention or engagement. Lessons start or proceed too slowly and teachers do not always manage discussions or group activities well. Teachers' questioning techniques do not elicit good responses from learners.
- Teachers assess learners' starting points thoroughly to place them on the right course. Informative group profiles show that teachers know their learners well although a few lack sufficient detail. Monitoring of learners' progress is good. The marking of work is generally good and learners understand the links between learning objectives and assessment criteria. A few teachers do not make sufficiently evaluative comments on learners' work, or fail to identify learners' spelling and grammatical errors, or give learners guidance on how to best organise their ideas in a well-constructed essay.
- A personalised functional skills programme effectively supports learners needing to improve their English or mathematics skills to progress to an advanced diploma. Many learners understand and use technical language drawn from the word prompts devised by teachers. Teachers extend learners' mathematical skills well through work-related activities, particularly in

dance and music technology lessons. However, not all learners demonstrate good oral, communication or writing skills.

- Good information from induction and taster opportunities introduce learners to the broad range of subject choices in the arts and ensure that they are placed on the right course. Many learners progress to higher-level qualifications, to university or employment. Practitioners from the industry provide very good careers advice.
- A strong culture of respect enables learners to feel safe. Special projects develop learners' wider understanding of diversity. For example, music learners extend their understanding of social injustice, class and poverty through working on a production of '*Les Miserables*'. The number of male dance learners increased following the college's successful challenge to the stereotypical image of dance represented by 'tights and tutus.'

Media and communication

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. The large majority of learners successfully complete their courses in A-level film and media and on intermediate and advanced media diplomas. They are less successful on other intermediate- and AS-level courses. The proportion of learners who achieve high grades is below that of similar colleges. As a result of recent effective management action, most learners remain on their courses until the end of their studies.
- Teachers are well qualified and have in-depth knowledge of their subject. They model the media industry practice and employment requirements well and encourage learners to view themselves as trainee professionals. As a result of the good use of industry links, learners complete assignments designed in collaboration with real clients. All learners understand their personal targets clearly and the timescales in which they must be achieved.
- In the better lessons, learners, especially those at intermediate level, manage their time and work very well. They work without supervision with a clear focus on the task in hand and are able to apply their skills well. In these lessons the teaching enlivens learners, and teachers' good use of questioning ensures that all participate in the lesson. Learners use specialist terminology and vocabulary accurately and in the correct context. For example, learners in a film studies lesson discussed with confidence the mise-en-scene in Fernando Meirelles '*City of God*', analysing well the images of violence in Brazil.
- In weaker lessons, teachers plan activities that are insufficiently demanding and slow learners' progress. Teachers do not always challenge learners who take drinks into prohibited areas, keep their coats on, and use earphones during lessons.
- Learners benefit from the media-industry standard information and communication technology (ICT) equipment in dedicated and well-maintained classrooms, which contributes to the development of their production skills.
- Assessment is good. Teachers' feedback on marked work is detailed and regular with a clear focus on what learners need to do to meet the awarding body requirements and achieve a higher grade.
- Teachers pay good attention to the development of learners' English skills in lessons and insist that learners use the correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. In better lessons, teachers incorporate literacy and numeracy into subject-specific quizzes to develop learners' English and mathematical skills. However, teachers do not always highlight the relevance of mathematics in the media industry.
- Information, advice and guidance are good and motivate learners to succeed in their learning. They benefit from good additional support that helps them make better progress on their

courses. However, a small minority of second-year learners have yet to identify what they will do once they have completed their course.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. Learners are courteous to their teachers and each other and demonstrate high levels of mutual respect. Teachers ensure that cultural, religious and ethnic diversity references are key themes across all subjects.

English for speakers of other languages

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Almost all learners complete their courses successfully, often achieving results that are better than in similar colleges. Learners develop and use exceptionally high-level language and mathematical skills that they have learnt in lessons to further enhance their personal, social and work-related skills. Teachers are passionate about helping their learners to achieve, and provide high levels of excellent support both in and outside lessons.
- Teachers are excellently skilled practitioners and use their extensive experience and expertise to great effect, encouraging learners to achieve challenging targets and to aspire to higher levels of learning. Teaching is exceptionally vibrant, personalised and thoroughly enjoyable.
- Teachers assess learners' starting points thoroughly and use these results to set and monitor realistic and challenging targets. They identify the learning needs of individual learners accurately and use this information particularly well to plan for learners who have personal difficulties, learning disabilities and many other potential barriers to learning.
- Very high levels of enthusiasm, with learners fully absorbed in learning are typical characteristics of most lessons. Actions taken to gather learners' views are exceptional and have created a positive environment where learners feel that teachers listen to them and take steps to design innovative courses that are highly flexible and responsive to their needs.
- In the vast majority of lessons, teachers plan skilfully to meet fully the needs of learners with a wide range of abilities. They adapt learning materials and methods exceptionally well to engage learners and encourage active participation. Mobile phones are used particularly well to support learning. For example, in a lesson on data collection, learners developed high-level learning skills using a mobile phone to identify the temperature in their country of birth. This information was collected from learners and the data were successfully used to create a high-quality bar chart.
- Teachers' comprehensive, regular and excellent assessment practice enables learners to develop high-level language and mathematical skills. Teachers question learners skilfully to test their knowledge and to challenge them to make further progress. Learners support each other very well and this results in weaker learners improving their work and achieving high standards. Written feedback on learners' work is excellent and is particularly detailed and precise. Learners have an excellent understanding of their current levels of English and mathematical skills and what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Learners benefit from excellent pastoral and academic guidance and support. For example, the youth team and the safeguarding team work particularly well together to support learners with personal problems to remain on their course. Regular and very effective tutorials also help learners overcome obstacles to learning. Extensive links with specialist services help learners move to independent living, and support young learners emotionally who do not have any parents in this country. Teachers encourage foundation-level learners to become volunteers in a new project in the community to support pre-entry level learners to achieve high-level English skills.

- Learners with additional support needs receive extremely high-quality support that enables them to make progress and achieve as well as other learners in their class. Advice and guidance for learners progressing to other courses in the college or elsewhere is outstanding.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is excellent. Learners develop a very good understanding of diversity matters through a broad range of topics. Teachers promote and develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity further during lessons and through additional activities. A strong culture of mutual respect is evident throughout the department and prepares learners well for living and working in the local community.

Foundation English

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. This is reflected in success rates in functional skills for 16 to 18 year old learners at entry level and for adult learners at level 2, which are below the national rates, and in higher-grade GCSE achievement in English. As a result of managers' effective improvement actions, the large majority of learners have remained on courses in the current year. The majority of learners develop good personal and social skills relevant to employment and understand the importance of improving their English in order to support them in the achievement of their learning goals and career aims.
- Teachers assess learners' starting points in English accurately. Lesson planning takes into account the individual needs of learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers adapt resources well for learners with a visual impairment or for whom English is an additional language. However, teachers do not always use the results of assessments to plan learning that meets the needs of all learners.
- In better lessons, learners benefit from teachers' high expectations and are motivated to succeed. Teaching includes a good range of activities that create meaningful opportunities for learners to develop and consolidate learning. The planning for mixed levels and different subjects is good in functional skills lessons. For example, intermediate- and advanced-level learners in science, health and social care and business studies work well together on joint projects that develop their English skills. In the less-effective lessons, teachers rely on a narrow range of activities that results in learners making slower than expected progress.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers ensure that the content reflects the learners' subject areas. Activities to support persuasive writing skills make effective use of current news topics. For example, advanced-level media learners produced a persuasive letter to encourage a celebrity to appear on a television show.
- The quality of target-setting and progress reviews varies considerably across the college. As a result learners on functional skills courses in English are unsure of their progress and what they need to do to improve. However, in the better examples, progress reviews are frequent and detailed. Marked work contains comprehensive feedback to help learners improve. For example, detailed written feedback to learners on GCSE English courses supports their progress. Teachers routinely identify spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.
- Resources and learning activities promote equality and diversity positively and well. Learners are actively encouraged to respect each other's values and beliefs, creating a culture of inclusivity in which diversity is celebrated. For example, in a GCSE class for intermediate- and advanced-level engineering learners, the teacher exploited the opportunity skilfully to challenge stereotypes and transphobia in relation to a European song contest.

Business**16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes
Apprenticeships**

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. This is reflected in the number of learners who make slow progress given their starting points. Staff do not challenge consistently the most skilled and able learners to achieve the highest grades. For apprentices, teaching, learning and assessment are good. The number of apprentices who achieve their qualifications successfully improved significantly in 2013 and success rates now exceed national rates.
- The majority of learners demonstrate high expectations and aspirations to succeed. They value the support and accessibility of their teachers in helping them to achieve their educational and career goals. A minority of learners have poor attendance and this limits their progress and levels of achievement.
- Teachers assess learners' starting points and identify their needs well. However, teachers do not always use this information to plan learning which meets these individual needs effectively. In most business lessons, teachers do not routinely challenge learners to deepen their understanding of relevant business concepts, models and frameworks.
- In the most effective lessons, learners benefit from experienced and knowledgeable teachers who use relevant and topical case studies to illustrate key business terms. This helps learners to apply their learning and to make good links between theories of organisational development and the real world of work. For example, in an A-level lesson, learners were able to evaluate critically different approaches to business integration planning for takeovers and mergers. Staff encourage learners effectively to demonstrate creativity in their approaches to business start-up projects and entrepreneurship.
- Learners on trade union studies programmes benefit from very effective lessons, which develop their work-related skills well. For example, in a lesson on mental health awareness, learners worked very effectively in teams to analyse the impact and implications of different conditions on employees, businesses and the wider society.
- Apprentices benefit from regular contact, workplace visits and timely feedback from assessors, which supports their progress and achievement effectively. Their independent learning skills are well supported with the effective use of an electronic portfolio. This helps them to organise and present good quality work, which they apply to their work roles.
- The majority of learners receive timely and accurate feedback on their work to help them understand what they have achieved. However, learners on diploma courses do not always receive clear and challenging targets to promote consistently high levels of progress and achievement.
- Teachers develop learners' subject-related English and mathematics skills effectively through appropriate learning activities in the majority of lessons. Most teachers are good at highlighting areas for development in learners' spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- The majority of teachers and support staff use the learner information portal effectively to respond to learners' needs for timely advice and guidance. Learners are well informed about progression opportunities. Careers events, guest speakers and visits prepare learners well to make their next steps to employment or further study. The majority of learners do not have the opportunity to apply and develop their skills in meaningful work placements as part of their study programme.
- The VLE is underdeveloped and provides few opportunities to support and extend learners' learning outside of the classroom. Teachers do not plan opportunities to enhance learning through the use of technology and multimedia resources.
- Learners demonstrate a good understanding of equality and diversity. For example, learners in a business lesson had a lively debate about world cultures and their impact on international

business. Learners mix with each other particularly well, consistently demonstrating mutual respect for each other, to visitors and to members of staff. Their behaviour and attitude to learning are excellent.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the governors have carried out a thorough review of the focus of the college and directed their energies towards sustained improvements in the quality of provision and learners' achievements. They restructured the college carefully and appointed a new Chief Executive Officer, Principal and Vice-Principals. The dynamic new leadership team has transformed the ethos of this very large college. The positive, open and learner-centred approach of managers has reinvigorated the teaching and support staff, who now have a strong appetite to improve their performance for the benefit of the community they serve.
- Governors and senior leaders are highly skilled at planning and managing the large-scale projects that have been required to improve this complex organisation. They have built up strong relationships with the city council, local enterprise partnerships and other agencies. They have used their thorough understanding of regional and local priorities in order to shape the future direction of the college. They keep a keen eye on providing training that will support local people into employment in, for example, newly emerging sectors such as digital media.
- Through careful financial management, the governors and managers have invested steadily in the college estate. Learning resources are of a high standard in most of the college's many sites and provide settings which prepare learners well for future jobs.
- Within the past year, managers have overhauled the approach taken to training staff. Very well-planned and delivered staff development, including whole-college training days, effective coaching, and peer support groups have refreshed teachers' approaches to their practice. They are now more confident to try new teaching and learning strategies and share their ideas. As a result the standard of teaching, learning and assessment has risen rapidly, and is now good.
- Managers have strengthened the evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment, which is accurate and appropriately self-critical for all courses on college sites, in the workplace and with subcontractors. Managers at all levels have a good understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement, which is informed well by the views of learners and employers, as well as by the college's own internal reviews. However, this evaluation does not yet encompass the work of all departments that support learners. Managers recognise this as an area for development.
- Through the successful introduction of a revised scheme for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment, managers are now able to evaluate teachers' skills more precisely. Most managers have been assiduous in eradicating weaker teaching and use the appraisal scheme, which has a sharp focus on teachers' skills, to help them to identify what they do well, where they can improve, and to support them to achieve higher standards. However, this is less effective with work-based assessors.
- Senior managers monitor the progress that learners make closely, through effective monthly meetings, and this is bringing about improvements to learners' success rates, which are good. However, the extent to which all middle managers are skilled at identifying and implementing improvement actions quickly is an area for improvement in a small minority of subject areas.
- Managers use data well to track the general progress of learners, but more precise collection and analysis of data is required in order to support staff to place learners on the correct level of English and mathematics qualifications and to track their progress against those performance targets. Data are not yet sufficient to provide advanced-level learners with accurate targets and to enable teachers to prepare them to exceed the grades expected of them relative to their starting points.
- Managers have implemented the key aspects of study programmes with reasonable success, together with a stronger focus on improving learners' skills in English and mathematics and skills for jobs. They make effective use of their well-established partnerships with local

agencies, authorities, employers and subcontracted training providers to offer a curriculum that meets the needs of the community well. Examples of excellent practice include the supported internships for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ESOL training for the Somali community, ICT training for the orthodox Jewish community, and projects to engage learners who would not normally attend college. Managers play a lead role in a significant programme of workforce development and support employers well through an ambitious growth in apprenticeship provision.

- Safeguarding arrangements are good and the college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. A dedicated team of well-trained support workers is highly effective at ensuring that learners, who come from very diverse communities, work harmoniously with each other at all sites. Through their impressive connections with local agencies, managers and support staff have a detailed awareness of emerging concerns that affect learners and are well placed to provide appropriate assistance to maintain learners' well-being. They provide highly effective support for vulnerable learners, with timely referrals to outside agencies where necessary.
- Managers have implemented actions successfully to narrow the gaps in performance of different groups of learners, which are mostly negligible. Learners receive good training through the tutorial programme on matters such as internet safety, sexual health and anti-bullying. They take the lead in raising awareness of themes about which they feel strongly, such as a recent campaign to eradicate homophobia. Learners are very respectful of each other and, through a well-designed programme of activities across the campuses that celebrates cultural and social differences, are being well prepared for their roles as positive contributors to society.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

The Manchester College

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Early years and playwork	2
Science	2
Mathematics and statistics	2
Engineering	2
Motor vehicle	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Performing arts	2
Media and communication	3

Foundation English	3
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	1
Business	3

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college							
Age range of learners	14+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	25,847							
Principal	Mr Jack Carney							
Date of previous inspection	May 2011							
Website address	www.themanchestercollege.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+
	1,724	4,120	1,348	2,632	2,575	2,232	8	89
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	366	1,271	76	521	3	11		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	373							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Amber Train Limited ■ Diverse Training Limited ■ F C United of Manchester ■ Focusing First on People Limited ■ Fusion 21 Limited ■ Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service ■ Groundwork Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford ■ Manchester First Limited ■ Mantra Learning Limited ■ Manufacturing Excellence Limited 							

Contextual information

The Manchester College is the largest college of further education in England and the major provider of 16 to 18 and adult learning in Greater Manchester. According to the 2011 census data, about one third of Manchester's population is from a minority ethnic background, significantly higher than the North West average, and about one quarter of learners are from a minority ethnic background. The proportion of students in Manchester schools attaining five GCSEs at A* to C including English and mathematics is lower than the North West regional and England averages. According to the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation, the conurbation of Manchester contains many highly deprived areas, making it one of the most deprived areas of the North West region and the fourth most deprived nationally. Three-quarters of learners aged 16 to 18 and half of adult learners are from the most disadvantaged parts of Manchester. Almost two-thirds of learners receive some form of additional learning support. The unemployment rate in Manchester is substantially higher than both the regional and national rates. The college has one of the largest contracts nationally for offender learning.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Paul Fletcher HMI

Five of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and 11 additional inspectors, assisted by the Vice Principal for Quality and Standards 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 learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the college. 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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