

Central Sussex College

General further education college

Inspection dates		20–24 October 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:

- students' achievements are not yet high enough, particularly for adults, male students and apprentices
- too much of the teaching and learning is undemanding and not matched well enough to students' individual needs and abilities
- monitoring of students' progress is not thorough and too few students are challenged to do as well as they could
- students' attendance is not improving quickly enough and remains low in a minority of subjects
- several aspects of curriculum development are at an early stage and have not had enough impact on supporting students' progression towards career aims
- managers' actions to improve the quality of provision have not had sufficient impact
- managers' analysis and evaluation of data are insufficiently rigorous to ensure that improvement actions are based on accurate information
- governance requires improvement.

This college has the following strengths:

- the Principal's highly-skilled leadership in implementing a successful financial recovery plan and in rationalising and improving management structures
- governors' thorough scrutiny and careful monitoring of the college's financial position
- high levels of care and support for vulnerable students
- strong cohesion between staff teams and across campuses
- full commitment to maintaining a broad further education provision in Crawley and Haywards Heath including through managers' effective work with local enterprise boards
- students' influence in improving facilities for refreshments and independent study
- effective promotion by staff of good skills in English and mathematics, and their work in helping most students to enjoy studying these subjects.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teachers use their knowledge of students' individual learning needs effectively when planning learning. Make sure that teachers challenge students to produce work of a high standard, by setting work that leads to students working hard and extending their knowledge and skills.
- Insist on a common approach to monitoring of students' progress; require staff to implement fully the central system for recording students' assessment information, their progress and targets, so that this information can be used to promote high achievement.
- Prioritise the improvement of students' attendance where their attendance rates are not high enough. Set clear expectations of staff and students, and ensure that staff reinforce the importance of attendance robustly, including through the use of methods to motivate and support students whose low attendance is a barrier to learning.
- Implement fully and rigorously the measures in place to increase apprentices' success in achieving their qualifications and ensure that managers monitor apprentices' progress closely. Ensure systems for recording apprentices' progress work effectively to provide managers with accurate and full information. Increase governors' scrutiny of apprentices' performance.
- Increase the extent to which work experience is an integral part of students' study programmes and ensure the proper assessment of skills and knowledge gained.
- Improve the availability, accuracy and timeliness of data reports. Develop managers' skills in analysing and evaluating data to measure accurately the effectiveness of provision, to inform self-assessment and provide a basis for sharply-focused improvement actions.
- Underpin strategic objectives by ensuring that the steps needed to achieve these are clearly stated, are measurable and include milestones and targets that cover all aspects of students' performance.
- Increase governors' understanding and scrutiny of students' performance across a range of indicators so that governors properly understand the effectiveness of provision and provide a higher level of challenge. Review the work of the governors' quality and standards committee to ensure it fulfils its remit effectively. Eliminate descriptive reporting of performance measures to governors and ensure they are provided with accurate and evaluative summaries with which to monitor the quality of provision.
- Increase the scope and impact of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to ensure that all students benefit its use as a learning tool.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The college provides classroom-based learning comprising study programmes for students aged 16 to 19 and courses for adults at levels 1, 2 and 3, and these make up around three quarters of the provision. Apprenticeships at intermediate and advanced level make up around a quarter of provision. A small number of students study on community learning programmes. The subjects selected for inspection include large provision in construction, health and social care, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. ▪ Over the past three years, the percentage of students on classroom-based courses who complete their main qualification successfully has increased, but it is not high enough, particularly for adults. In 2013/14, an increased number of students withdrew early from their courses compared to the previous year. However, a greater proportion of those who stayed to 	

the end of their courses were successful, an improvement on previous years. The percentage of younger students on study programmes who are successful in their qualification is close to the national rate. However, adults' success in achieving substantial vocational qualifications, despite a significant improvement in 2013/14, is low.

- Students' achievement varies at different levels of study but it is not high enough in all, except at level 3 where students' achievement is above the national rate. At level 1, students' success in passing their qualifications is well below national rates, and for younger students has declined compared to the previous year. However, this position is affected by changes to the curriculum to match qualifications better to students' needs and support their potential for progression. On level 2 programmes, students' achievement, particularly for adults, increased markedly in 2013/14 from a low base but remains below the national rate particularly for younger students.
- Most younger students who take A-level academic study programmes are successful in passing their qualifications at grades A* to E, and a higher proportion than the national rate gain high grades of A*/A or B. Too few students continue on from their AS-level study to complete A levels and their achievement on AS-level qualifications requires improvement. In 2012/13, students on A-level courses made particularly good progress compared to their prior attainment; however, managers are unable to provide progress measures for students on these courses in 2013/14 so it is not possible to judge if this good progress has been sustained. Students on other courses mostly make the progress expected of them.
- In a few subjects, including languages, literature and culture, and performing arts, students achieve consistently well. However, in a number of subjects including information and learning technology, hospitality and catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and business management, students' achievement is not as high as it should be. In a few subjects, students' success in passing their qualifications is too low, including in philosophy, accounting and finance and law.
- Apprentices' success rates have declined and are inadequate. Too few complete their qualifications in the time allowed. Previously high-performing subcontracted provision declined markedly in quality in 2013/14; conversely, apprentices' success rates on the college-based provision increased from a low base. In all subjects, except information and communication technology, rates are too low.
- Students' attendance is not improving quickly enough. Adults' attendance is lower than attendance of younger students. Attendance at the Haywards Heath site is mostly higher than at the Crawley campus. In 2014/15, attendance rates up to half term are already showing low attendance in a few subjects such as hairdressing. Students' punctuality at lessons is mostly good. Too often, teachers' expectations of students' attendance and punctuality are not high enough and managers have not established an ambitious target to ensure that attendance improves rapidly.
- Students' progression to higher levels of study within the college is not high enough, making it difficult for many students to achieve their career aims. Just over a quarter of students move from level 1 to level 2 courses and just under a quarter move from level 2 to level 3 courses. On completing their courses, about a quarter of students go into employment. Students' progression from level 3 courses to higher education is high from the Haywards Heath campus and, although not as high, is improving from the Crawley campus.
- Increased numbers of students take GCSEs in English and mathematics; their achievement of grades A* to C is improving, and is higher than the national rate in mathematics. Students' achievement of functional skills qualifications is improving and the proportion of students who gain their qualification is closer to national rate than in previous years.
- Students gain technical skills and practical expertise well in the majority of subjects. For example, catering apprentices develop their cooking and presentation skills well through their work in the refectory and college restaurant, and performing arts students demonstrate their creative skills by presenting high quality dance productions at the Haywards Heath campus. In 2013/14, the participation of students in enterprise-related activities, such as skills competitions, or projects with regional businesses such as travel companies, was high.

- The gap between male and female achievement is starting to narrow, but is too wide on AS- and A-level courses where male students underperform compared to female students. Differences in achievement between White British students and those from minority ethnic groups, whose achievement is lower, are reducing.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- While recent improvements have been made in teaching, for example in business and construction, and in the rigour of assessments and reviews for apprentices in engineering, these are not yet leading to sustained and widespread improvements in students' outcomes. This position is reflected in the higher than average proportion of students who do not achieve well on college-based programmes and apprenticeships.
- Following the previous inspection, managers were slow to act on several of the identified areas for improvement in teaching. These include planning to meet individual students' needs, the implementation of an effective central system for monitoring students' progress and the use of the VLE, all of which still require improvement.
- More recently, managers have focused their efforts on improving teaching. As a result, more teachers are implementing the ideas they are learning from each other, improving their practice, and promoting equality and diversity more confidently.
- In too many lessons, teachers fail to capture students' enthusiasm or make sufficient demands on them. Teachers do not use the information they have about individual students to plan learning well enough. In a minority of subjects, this information is imprecise or incomplete which limits its usefulness. Too often in lessons, teachers accept superficial answers from students, and do not prepare sufficiently challenging work for students of differing abilities. Students' attendance at lessons is not high enough and teachers are too accepting of this position.
- In the best lessons, teachers set clear and challenging objectives, match work closely to students' abilities, and introduce new skills and concepts followed by opportunities for students to consolidate their learning through practice. For example, in a challenging GCE A-level English lesson on post-modernism, the teacher explained the concept carefully, used her knowledge of each student skilfully to pose challenging questions, and supported students to test their understanding on each other robustly. As a result, students used their analytical skills confidently and applied their emerging understanding of post-modern critical theory to the novel they were studying.
- Assessments are mostly well planned, frequent and relevant. Students receive useful oral feedback on their work, but written feedback is not always helpful enough to guide improvement. In tutorials, tutors set improvement targets, but do not pay sufficient attention to improving students' attendance. Because of recent improvements, assessors review most apprentices' skill and knowledge development frequently and thoroughly, but this has yet to lead to improvements in their outcomes.
- Monitoring of students' and apprentices' progress requires improvement. Teachers do not use a common approach to recording assessment information, identifying students' individual needs or specific gaps in their skills and knowledge and the setting of appropriate targets. This limits sharing of information and strategies to boost individual students' achievement, as well as limiting managers' overview of the progress made by groups of students. Teachers' monitoring of students' attendance and their implementation of actions, such as the setting of improvement targets, is insufficient. Where teachers use the new central system fully, monitoring is often more thorough.
- Teachers' use of information and learning technology to support learning is good in the majority of subjects where teachers and students use mobile technology, interactive whiteboards and web technologies confidently. For example, construction students use 'blogs' to discuss their understanding of construction techniques and, in English functional skills, students use on-line resources well to research definitions of words. However, the impact of the VLE on supporting learning remains underdeveloped; in too many subjects, it is mainly used to store course

documents and resources. On a small minority of courses, students have no access to the VLE to support their studies.

- Staff provide good support for vulnerable students, both in lessons and through specialist support staff. Support assistants in lessons know their students' needs well and work closely with teachers to plan support. However, managers do not monitor the extent to which the support helps students to succeed or how it affects their progress on their course.
- Staff have revised information, advice and guidance in a number of subjects; for GCE A-level courses it is now comprehensive, including the careers advice provided for progression opportunities. Staff apply greater rigour in recruitment than in the past and most current students are well advised and have settled into their courses quickly.
- Teaching of English is good, but the teaching of mathematics requires improvement. In English, students mostly use technical language well; however, in a few subjects, teachers do not correct errors in English appropriately, limiting students' opportunities for achieving the standards required in employment. Apprentices in engineering produce good written work and use specialist terminology well. The promotion of mathematics in vocational lessons requires improvement.
- Teachers' promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement in the majority of subjects; in a minority, promotion is good. Most staff use the training they have received on equality and diversity well to help students to consider their role in a diverse and complex society. Students respect each other. However, teachers are not all adept at ensuring that individuals and groups of students fulfil their potential, taking account of their starting points. Managers do not collect information about the effectiveness of actions to promote equality and diversity in order to measure the impact of teachers' work.

Health and social care

16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes Apprenticeships

Good

- Good teaching and learning are reflected in the high proportion of students who achieve their vocational qualifications and apprenticeships. However, in 2013/14, students underachieved significantly on AS-level social care because of weakness in the quality of teaching and learning. Managers took steps to improve the provision, including making changes in the teaching team and improving assessment arrangements; these actions are proving successful, as shown by current students' improved progress. Students develop a good understanding of theory and practice. Their rate of progression to the next course level and into employment or higher education is high.
- Teachers are good role models and have high levels of vocational expertise which they use well to inspire students and help them gain confidence. Over their study programmes, and through good work experience, students develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to enable them to become good social care practitioners.
- Teachers provide students with particularly good opportunities to develop their communication, presentation and social skills alongside consolidating their understanding of health and care topics. For example, students promote their knowledge of health awareness to students on other courses by making presentations or creating displays about sexual health, healthy eating and oral health.
- Assessors help apprentices make good use of their workplace experience to develop a wide understanding of the health care sector. They ensure that employers are involved in helping apprentices to learn particularly effectively. Assessors help apprentices and employers to use an electronic portfolio and other high quality learning resources very well to support evidence gathering and extend their knowledge.

- Good off-the-job training for apprentices helps them learn well, and particularly helps them pass functional skills qualifications. Staff support apprentices well, for example through additional workplace visits to develop their information and communication technology skills in helping them to use workplace software effectively. Assessors use technology, such as an electronic recording camera pen, particularly well to help apprentices, employers and verifiers to monitor apprentices' progress closely, and review the content and quality of assessment.
- Teachers work skilfully with their students in lessons and provide a good level of challenge to them. They plan learning carefully so that lessons are interesting and develop previous learning. Teachers use group work well to encourage collaboration and match work well to students' differing abilities. They ask probing questions and encourage students' self- and peer-assessment. Teachers monitor students' progress carefully and support those who need extra help quickly.
- Teachers' written feedback is not of high quality. A minority of teachers give too little guidance about skill development, such as in research or evaluation skills, to help students, in particular more able students, to improve their future work. Teachers' oral feedback is much more effective, providing praise and challenge to students to do better.
- Teachers promote awareness of the importance of good English and mathematical skills in the health and social care sector well. For example, they emphasise the consequences of calculating drug doses incorrectly or poorly written handover notes at the end of care shifts. Students develop and apply mathematical skills well, for example by interpreting graphs of declining deaths rates over time. However, in a few cases, teachers do not correct students' errors in written English, thus failing to emphasise the standards required in employment.
- Staff provide good initial advice and guidance. Teachers quickly gain a good understanding of students' needs and abilities. Personal support tutors support vulnerable students promptly. Staff support students with additional learning needs, such as dyslexia, well. Students with hearing impairments receive good support, including by signers.
- Students have a good understanding of diversity and teachers encourage them to broaden their understanding of different cultures. For example, an apprentice noted the value of supporting a service user during their attendance at a religious ceremony that was unfamiliar to her. Teachers and students promote non-discriminatory practice strongly, both in the harmonious way they work together and when they discuss topics that arise during work experience.

Construction

16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Good teaching and learning on construction courses are reflected in the high proportion of students who gain qualifications and make good progress towards achieving their career aims. However, students' success on electrical installation courses is lower, mainly because too many withdraw before the end of their courses, in part because of ineffective advice and guidance for adults. Current students are making good progress.
- Teachers ensure that the large majority of students develop trade skills well. Teachers have high, but realistic, expectations of appropriate standards for students' work and, even at an early stage in their courses, students often meet these. For example, electrical students show good skills in planning and wiring a two-way outdoor lighting system for a house, including using armoured cable.
- Teachers use their broad industrial experience to bring a realistic flavour of work in the construction trade into students' study programmes. For example, they share a wealth of technical tips in lessons and use clear demonstrations and productive discussions to make sure students learn these. As a result, students quickly become proficient in technical skills such as

developing good speed and competence in bricklaying and installing electro-technical equipment.

- Students' attendance is not good enough. In a minority of lessons, teachers promote good attendance well and students' attendance is high, but this is not widespread across lessons, and low attendance is not challenged or followed up robustly enough by all staff. Attendance at functional skills classes is often low. Punctuality is good.
- Teachers provide good and timely oral and written feedback on students' work, particularly in plumbing. Students submit some assignments on-line and receive particularly prompt and helpful feedback. Staff provide highly detailed reviews of students' progress in their skills and knowledge which are valuable to students and motivate them.
- Teachers provide students with good guidance about the range of skills they need for their next steps and ensure they gain a good work ethic. This raises students' aspirations and their rate of progression to the next level of study or into employment is high. However, although students do take part in valuable work-related activities such as community-based building projects, work experience is not fully integrated into all courses.
- Teachers support the development of students' English skills well. For example, they highlight the use of technical language frequently, leading to students' confident and habitual use of technical terms. For example, students described the use of a swan-neck chisel in hand mortising confidently and accurately. However, the development of students' mathematical skills is much less effective. Too few students are fully confident in using the basic mathematical skills they need for work, although a small number show a high level of skill, for example in calculating their wage-earning potential from different jobs.
- Initial advice and guidance require improvement, particularly for adults. These students do not always have a full and clear understanding of course requirements and too many withdraw early. Managers are reviewing the curriculum, entry requirements and associated guidance and putting in place relevant improvement actions promptly. Most current students are well suited to and satisfied with their courses.
- Staff and students use information and communication technology well. For example, students research information for assignments thoroughly using on-line resources and become skilled in undertaking this independently of the teacher.
- Teachers promote the understanding of diversity well, for example by enabling good discussions about a diverse range of cultural celebrations, such as Diwali, which successfully expand students' understanding of difference. Most students demonstrate good respect for their peers and their work colleagues, for example by providing constructive and fair feedback on each other's work.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes
Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning are not always good enough and do not lead to good outcomes for students. Too often, lessons and other learning activities fail to make sufficient demands of students. Students' attendance is not improving quickly enough. However, teachers, staff and students work well together and the majority of students display good standards of client care and practical skills for employment.
- Teachers do not explain theory well enough, so that a minority of students are unclear about the theory that underpins practical tasks, for example how the dimensions of a hair roller determines curl. The theory knowledge of level 2 hairdressing students and apprentices requires improvement; however, level 2 beauty therapy students' knowledge is well established.

- Teachers are well qualified. The salons and reception area are well run by staff and students, and students develop good commercial awareness. Teachers monitor students' work closely to ensure students work safely.
- Teachers organise most lessons well by giving clear instructions and encouraging students to work well, both individually and as a team. Staff make sure that students frequently undertake the working practices they will need to follow in future employment. Students develop good practical skills and a majority have learned basic hairdressing and beauty skills well by an early stage in their course. In particular, level 2 students are confident in handling and using the correct tools for clients' hair or skin.
- The most effective lessons combine teachers' careful planning of learning, using a wide range of activities, with their high expectations of what students can do, such as complex beauty treatments. In these lessons, teachers check learning frequently and thoroughly, and provide motivation through well-earned praise.
- In weaker lessons, teachers fail to draw on students' experiences to increase the relevance and interest in the lesson. Often, teaching strategies, including the use of information and learning technology, lack variety, providing students with insufficient academic and technical challenge. As a result, too few students exceed expectations based on their prior attainment and a small number underperform. However, staff use tutorials well to develop students' employability skills.
- Assessment requires improvement. The monitoring of hairdressing apprentices' progress has improved and is robust and frequent, resulting in more apprentices achieving their qualifications. However, monitoring of college-based students is underdeveloped, except for level 2 beauty students; this hinders the provision of timely help for those who are falling behind.
- Target setting, particularly teachers' setting of short-term targets, and the provision of oral feedback on students' progress in lessons, are sharply focused with clear expectations. Students' progression is good on beauty therapy courses, but progression routes are limited for level 2 hairdressing students.
- Teachers' development of students' English and mathematical skills requires improvement, because of weak planning for a minority of students. Weaker marking lacks the rigour needed to help students make improvements in these skills. However, students learn well from, and value, the discrete English and mathematics lessons they receive as part of their study programme.
- Staff carry out timely initial assessments of students' skills, and make the results available to teachers promptly, but assessment is not good because teachers do not always use this information well enough to guide their work with students. Good advice and guidance are provided by industry specialists, ensuring students take up appropriate courses. Staff provide adequate learning support which ensures that supported students achieve at least as well as their peers.
- Teachers promote the understanding of equality and diversity well. They plan awareness-raising activities based on 'virtual clients' and 'what if' scenarios imaginatively and thoughtfully, and use these with students constructively. In beauty therapy lessons, role play helps students in learning to be considerate and respectful of different clients' needs.

Sport

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning on vocational courses are not preparing students well enough for employment, and this limits their potential for progression. A high proportion of students pass

their qualifications and about half progress to sport-related higher education. However, too few students develop a good understanding and experience of sports industry requirements.

- Staff do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to gain a wide set of sports-related skills to support their progression to employment. Staff have not created enough partnerships with employers and sports clubs to enhance students' career opportunities. Only a few students study for additional industry qualifications, although a small number of students enhance their employability by taking a community sports leadership qualification.
- Too few students benefit from external work experience to give them experience of the breadth of the sports industry, support their career aims and provide valuable industry contacts. However, most students undertake a work experience unit during their course that helps them prepare curriculum vitae, practise interviews and develop work-related skills.
- Teachers promote good attendance, positive attitudes to learning and behaviour well. They are approachable and supportive and help students develop confidence and move towards becoming mature adults.
- Teachers do not use information on individual students well enough to plan work to match their abilities and meet their needs. They set generalised, whole class targets rather than more demanding targets which present challenge to specific ability groups. Students develop confidence in their coaching skills by leading netball or football sessions for their classmates. However, teachers do not arrange for them to practise coaching with players they are unfamiliar with, which means they lack experience of working with different players.
- Teachers often engage students well with a starter activity such as a fast-paced game. They link theory with practical tasks cleverly so that students apply the theory and develop good knowledge. For example, in a theory lesson about pulmonary ventilation, students built a working model of a lung to explore inspiration and expiration.
- Assessment is good. Teachers use a variety of assessment methods, including supporting students to undertake peer assessment, to check students' learning thoroughly. Students respond well to teachers' directed questions, giving accurate answers, for example about the legal use of drugs in sport. Teachers plan assignments based on industry scenarios, for example developing a fitness programme for a client, thus helping students apply their knowledge in practical situations.
- Teachers provide encouraging feedback on marked work, with accurate information about what students have achieved and the grade. However, teachers' guidance to students on what to do to improve their work to reach higher grades, or to extend their research using websites and references, is underdeveloped.
- Teachers are well qualified and use their experience effectively to develop students' sports performance, including that of members of the netball and football teams. However, too few students participate in sport and they do not get enough opportunity to practise their skills in competitive or club environments.
- Teachers use technology well to enhance learning and give students quick access to wider information sources. For example, students use their smartphones and quick response codes incorporated into worksheets in class, to research topics such as the function of the World Anti Doping Agency,. Students use the VLE well to revise topics.
- Staff monitor students' progress thoroughly. Students receive good support from frequent tutorials to help them achieve long-term targets and keep to deadlines. Additional learning support is provided in an effective and timely manner to those who need it.
- Teachers integrate mathematics effectively into lessons. For example, in fitness training, students work out the percentage of weight needed to increase intensity of exercise in the gym. However, teachers do not link the development of English skills to the sports topics they are covering well enough. For example, students were asked to adapt their language to explain nutrition to different client groups, but there was no discussion about how to do this.

- Teachers promotion of equality and diversity in lessons requires improvement. Recruitment strategies are not sufficiently developed to attract more female students to sport courses and, as a result, there are only a few female learners on courses.

Foundation mathematics

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning require improvement, as reflected in the proportion of students who are successful in passing functional skills qualifications. However, actions by the teaching team to improve teaching, particularly through the sharing of good practice and peer support, are having some impact; an increasing number of students are taking GCSE mathematics and, of these, a higher than average proportion achieves grades A* to C.
- Teachers often succeed in removing the barriers to mathematics learning that may exist for students. They help students to enjoy learning and to increase their confidence in using mathematical skills. Staff motivate students to have high aspirations, but the quality of provision is not yet effective enough to ensure sufficient numbers of students achieve their goals in the time available.
- Students' attendance is poor at mathematics lessons. However, current students are responding well to recent measures put in place to improve punctuality and attendance. Attendance at mathematics lessons has improved for students from a minority of subject areas this year, but staff in other subject areas have not ensured their students' attendance improves.
- Teachers use initial assessment well to assess students' prior attainment and to plan their individual learning pathways. Most current students have started at an appropriate level and have a clear route identified towards achieving a level 2 qualification. However, a number of students who should be studying for GCSE mathematics have not been able to start this course. This delay is hindering their progress and places at risk their chance of achieving the qualification.
- Qualified and experienced teachers plan learning well to engage and enthuse students. Most students participate well, for example in collaborating with their peers to solve problems. Teachers' activities are often effective because they reinforce students' previous learning, help them to develop new skills and knowledge and relate learning tasks to everyday life. For example, GCSE students calculate percentages to work out tax or simple and compound interest in bank accounts. However, teachers do not adequately relate mathematics learning to students' chosen vocations.
- Teachers do not all make fully effective use of the available information to meet students' particular needs and provide them with sufficient challenge relative to their prior attainment.
- Support for students is good. Students benefit from thorough support arrangements that enable them to make progress. These include a lunchtime drop-in mathematics workshop where students can get additional support on concepts that they have not mastered. Learning support enables students to improve their confidence in the subject, and develop their skills in learning independently.
- Teachers use information and learning technology well. For example, teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to demonstrate calculation methods step by step. Students make good use of the VLE, which contains a helpful set of resources, to support their learning and allow them to undertake additional study on particular aspects of mathematics.
- Target setting to support students' learning is underdeveloped. Teachers set targets that focus on the improvement of skills. However, they do not use their awareness of specific gaps in students' knowledge and skills to set precise individual targets. Teachers review students' progress in meeting personal and academic performance targets frequently.

- Teachers' written feedback does not help students to know what they must improve or how to do this. Oral feedback in lessons is valuable and constructive; for example, following their feedback on students' achievement of tasks, teachers often give further explanation about how to carry out the required calculation to reinforce understanding.
- Teachers' promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. In a minority of cases, teachers do not manage group work effectively to ensure that all students are able to contribute; they allow a small minority of students to dominate the activity, whilst others have insufficient opportunity to take part. However, staff and students appreciate the culture of mutual respect and students respond well to the high expectations of behaviour from staff.

Business

16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as reflected in the proportion of students who do not achieve their qualifications. Apprentices' success in achieving their qualifications has declined over the past three years and is low, because of some ineffective teaching and assessment. Significant and recent improvement actions are resulting in current students and apprentices making improved progress, with higher attendance than in previous years when the rate was too low.
- Teaching is improving because the new teaching team is strongly focused on this. Teachers have made a number of changes to their practice, which means that current students are benefiting from a much better quality of provision. However, many changes are recent and the impact of improvements cannot be assessed until students successfully complete their courses.
- Significant revisions have been made to initial advice, guidance and support, and fewer students have withdrawn early from their courses. Vocational teachers or work-based assessors conduct interviews so that prospective students gain accurate and full understanding of the content and demands of the qualifications and courses.
- Staff provide a comprehensive induction for students on college-based or work-based courses, which helps them to learn the working practices required to succeed on their courses quickly. Tutorials provide students with good support and staff monitor their progress frequently. Assessors review apprentices' progress frequently and set timely learning targets to promote their achievement. Students at risk of falling behind or withdrawing are identified quickly and prompt action is taken to support them.
- Assessors have high expectations of current apprentices and support them well, with frequent assessment to help them reflect on their work and develop their ability to learn independently. Apprentices benefit from well-written, relevant assignments; for example, one assignment related to assessing the hazards associated with laser printers. Assessors' skilful questioning works well to confirm apprentices' understanding. Assignments are thoroughly marked, feedback is detailed, encouraging and constructive, and apprentices know what they have to do in order to achieve.
- Teachers have extended the range of teaching methods on college-based courses and mostly use these well; they often involve students undertaking tasks to exemplify topics. For example, to consolidate their understanding of critical path analysis, students analysed the stages involved in making the teacher a mug of tea. Teachers prompt students' to make good use of the VLE.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students can achieve. Their schemes of work place an emphasis on providing challenge for individuals or groups of students, but this does not happen often enough. For a few lessons, the rooms are too small and not all students

have individual access to the computing equipment or are able to face the teacher; these problems limit their potential for making the best possible progress.

- Teachers ensure students develop important business-related and personal skills. They support students to communicate well, manage their time effectively and work well in teams. This supports their potential for progression, and around three quarters moved on to higher education on completion of their courses in 2013/14. However, fewer than half of students who studied AS-level business progressed to A level.
- Staff make a thorough and comprehensive initial assessment of learners' skills when they start the course, and plan appropriate support for students who have an identified need in mathematics and English. Teachers successfully promote skills in mathematics and English, for example through working out cash flows and report writing. Students' progress in mathematics and English is carefully monitored.
- Students feel safe and show respect for each other and their teachers. They have a good understanding of equality and diversity matters because teachers promote this well. Teachers make reference to particular points that emphasise diversity topics regularly and students contribute enthusiastically to discussions and tutorial topics, such as Black History month, related to these themes.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The Principal and governors have developed a clear, concise and aspirational vision. Through the Principal's skilled actions, including a significant reduction in staffing, the college is approaching financial stability. However, the strategic objectives proposed are not supported by clear strategic planning with measurable targets to monitor impact and attainment. Progress in increasing the rate of students' achievement is too slow.
- Governance requires improvement. Governors' ability to scrutinise and question managers' analysis of achievement data is limited. Governors do not use established key performance indicators effectively to monitor the quality of provision, including the quality of teaching and learning. This limits their ability to challenge the leadership team robustly and to monitor the impact of improvement actions. Governors are intensely supportive and have a good grasp of the financial issues. Attendance at meetings is good and training is frequent, particularly for the high number of new governors.
- Managers' actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning have not had sufficient impact. Results from the revised observation scheme do not correlate closely with students' outcomes, and managers place too much emphasis on the profile of lesson observation grades to determine the quality of provision. However, initiatives, such as the use of peer observations and mentoring for less effective teachers from advanced skills teachers, are helping teachers to improve.
- Managers have significantly strengthened the arrangements for the management of staff performance and aligned the scheme closely with staff development. They use the competency-based performance management process well to ensure the sharing and celebration of good performance, and poor performance is supported and dealt with robustly if insufficient improvement occurs.
- In teachers' personal development reviews, managers do not set robust or ambitious targets to promote high levels of accountability, or support staff to develop their skills quickly and effectively. Limitations in the current systems also mean that managers do not receive reports on the timeliness of personal development reviews. One member of teaching staff, for example, had not had a review for three years.
- Staff development is responsive, flexible and effective in facilitating improvement. A strong ethos for sharing good practice across curriculum areas and campuses has recently developed. This is promoted by 'swap shops' at staff development days and staff participating in drop ins to lessons to observe each other.

- The self-assessment of provision requires improvement. A detailed process that involves all staff and refers to students' views exists, but course reviews and action plans are too descriptive and lack rigour. Targets to measure success are not quantifiable, making the determination of impact difficult. Managers' understanding and use of data require improvement; they place too great an emphasis on meeting national rates as a means of measuring success. This leads to inaccurate judgements about the quality of provision.
- Managers have improved the management of apprenticeships to halt the decline in apprenticeship success rates. While recent actions have resulted in marked improvement in the quality of provision for college-based apprentices, the full impact will not be established until current apprentices' results are known.
- The quality assurance of most subcontracted provision is rigorous and highly effective. Students on this provision tend to perform well. Poor performance in 2013/2014 by one large provider resulted in a significant decline in the success of apprenticeships; that contract has since been terminated.
- The curriculum is broad, flexible and responsive in coverage of levels, subjects, qualification types and in its match to priorities based on local and regional skills gaps. Managers have strong links with the local enterprise board and local action groups. However, they do not gather employers' views to evaluate their satisfaction or determine how the curriculum can better meet their interests.
- A well-structured study programme for younger students is in place. It supports the development of English, mathematics and employability skills including through work experience. A revised English and mathematics strategy covers requirements for students' achievement of level 2 in these subjects. Limited resources, however, mean that not all capable students can enrol on GCSE programmes.
- Students' employability skills are developed through the well-conceived 3E (Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurial Skills) programme which incorporates work experience and is delivered through tutorials. Work experience opportunities are currently insufficient to meet the needs of all students. The scheme is supported by college-based work-related opportunities, for example, construction students are to help build social seating pods. Managers have not carried out sufficient evaluation to gauge the programme's success to date.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. The Principal and managers instil a strong ethos of mutual respect and tolerance across all sites. Staff promote these values strongly in tutorials and college-wide events. However, young male students underperform on their courses compared to female students and this gap is not closing quickly enough; no strategies are currently in place to tackle this. Teachers are not all skilled in promoting equality and diversity themes well enough in lessons.
- Safeguarding is good. The single central register of checks on all staff and contractors is efficiently maintained. Staff and governors frequently receive training, not just in basic safeguarding but also to enable them to identify and act appropriately to support current concerns such as online safety. Managers work closely with the police and the local community to combat risks associated with radicalism and other social problems. Risk assessments are carried out effectively and health and safety concerns are identified and tackled promptly through regular monitoring. Students feel safe and parents and carers consider the college to be a safe place.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Central Sussex 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	3	-	-
Outcomes for learners	3	-	-	3	-	3	4	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	-	-	3	-	3	3	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	-	-	3	-	3	3	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2
Building and construction	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	3
Sport	3
Foundation mathematics	3
Business management	3
Administration	3

Type of college	General further education college								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	14,775								
Principal/CEO	Ms Sarah Wright								
Date of previous inspection	April 2013								
Website address	www.centralsussex.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+	
	714	2,921	923	4,596	1,570	1,190	4	267	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	110	539	223	308	-		26		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	-		-		-				
Number of learners aged 14-16									
Full-time	20								
Part-time	320								
Number of community learners	557								
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">■ BIMM■ Free to Learn■ London Learning Consortium■ Parenta Training■ Phoenix4 Training■ Revive Hair and Beauty■ Skills Network■ Skills Training UK■ Strive								

Contextual information

Central Sussex College is based on two main campuses, one close to the town centre in Crawley and the second in Haywards Heath some 15 miles away. Two smaller sites at Horsham and East Grinstead are used for full cost provision and adult and community learning courses respectively. The local and regional economy is influenced significantly by the proximity of Gatwick Airport and the local enterprise partnership's priority areas for skills development include tourism, transport and logistics.

The college-based full-time curriculum includes all sector subject areas except agriculture, horticulture and animal care. Apprenticeships are offered in nine subjects, the largest being engineering. The Haywards Heath campus offers GCE A and AS levels in 29 subjects.

West Sussex is a largely affluent county and only a few areas of social or economic deprivation exist. Unemployment in the county is lower than regionally and nationally. The proportion of students of minority ethnic heritage broadly matches that within the local communities. In West Sussex, the proportion of students aged 16 achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is similar to the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Philippa Francis Her Majesty's Inspector

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

What inspection judgements mean

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

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

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

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