

Waltham Forest College

General further education college

Inspection dates		13–17 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 provider requires improvement because:

- Too few learners aged 16 to 18 on study programmes at levels 1 and 2 complete their qualifications successfully.
- Teaching and learning in discrete English and mathematics lessons are not good enough; too few learners who enrol with low grades in these subjects achieve their qualifications.
- Attendance and punctuality are poor.
- Too few learners on study programmes have sufficient opportunities to take part in meaningful, external work placements to enhance their work readiness and employment prospects.
- The management of teachers' performance, and their planning and actions to improve quality, are not sufficiently rigorous to reduce the wide variations in learners' success in different subject areas.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Success rates are high for adult learners, particularly those on level 3 courses; the majority of learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 study programmes also achieve their main qualifications successfully.
- Learners develop good practical skills quickly and acquire a thorough knowledge of their subjects; they make much better progress in lessons than at the previous inspection.
- College managers work very well with employers, subcontractors and other partners, locally and regionally, to develop highly successful courses in the workplace which meet particular skills shortages, and help unemployed people to achieve qualifications and find jobs.
- Leaders and managers have effected a positive change in expectations among staff, which is starting to raise standards; managers are self-critical regarding the success of initiatives to improve provision and are resilient in adopting new approaches to those which have not worked previously.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve teaching and learning in discrete English and mathematics lessons so that all learners have a much better chance of achieving these qualifications to enhance their employability. Teachers need to focus more on learners' development needs in and between lessons; on extending the range of teaching, independent study and assessment methods used to make topics more interesting and relevant to learners' main areas of study.
- Ensure that attendance, behaviour, and punctuality are consistently good in all subject areas; emphasise to teachers the importance of setting clear expectations about attendance and punctuality as an important part of developing their employability skills.
- Use the existing good partnerships with employers and many initiatives already in place to bring learners into contact with employers during their studies, to arrange work placements for learners in subjects where they currently do not exist so they can experience real-life commercial demands of the workplace.
- Ensure managers at all levels improve action planning and performance management of staff in those subjects which perform poorly so that all learners have an equal chance of achieving successfully, and share more of the good practice of outstanding teachers to reduce the wide variations in the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The college provides study programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 at levels 1, 2 and 3, and these make up around one fifth of the provision. The majority of adult learners are on level 1 and level 2 full- and part-time courses. The number of apprentices, almost all of whom are on intermediate level apprenticeships, is increasing but makes up only a small proportion of the total learner numbers. ▪ Over the past three years, the proportion of learners on college-based programmes who achieve successfully has risen, but still requires improvement. Too few learners aged 16 to 18 who complete level 1 and level 2 study programmes achieve their qualifications. Success rates are low in health and social care, construction, hairdressing, beauty therapy and visual arts subject areas. By contrast, the number of young people on level 3 study programmes who achieve their main qualification successfully is high. Success rates are particularly good in information and communication technology (ICT), hospitality and catering, sport, and travel and tourism subject areas. ▪ A much greater number of learners took GCSEs in English and mathematics in 2013/14, most of them with low prior attainment in these subjects. The proportion of these learners who were successful in achieving GCSEs at grades A* to C in English and mathematics was very low. Functional skills success rates are similarly poor, particularly for younger learners on study programmes taking English at level 1 and mathematics at level 2. By contrast, a high proportion of learners aged 16 to 18 on entry level functional skills courses achieved their qualifications; most of the significant numbers of adults studying functional skills in franchised provision were also successful. The majority of learners returning to do a second study programme in 2014/15 progressed to a higher level functional skill or to GCSEs in English and mathematics. Learners develop good English and mathematics skills alongside their vocational studies. ▪ Attendance is low and varies too much between different subject areas. Punctuality is poor in a significant proportion of lessons. Learners behave well in classes in their subject area and around the college, but behaviour is poor in too many discrete English and mathematics lessons. 	

Those learners who attend regularly enjoy, and take pride in, studying at the college and feel very safe. Managers ensure that the college provides an inclusive culture where learners' respect for each other is evident.

- Learners are not yet able to undertake work placements in motor vehicle, construction, ICT and business courses, and too few take part in cross-college enterprise or volunteering activities. Initiatives implemented to develop learners' employability skills are improving but require improvement overall. They are already successful in the better performing subject areas in introducing learners to the world of work in a number of different ways, including through mentoring programmes and live project briefs. Learners on study programmes in hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality and catering, early years and health and social care develop good practical skills and become more knowledgeable about their subject area, both in lessons and through a wide range of other work-related activities, including placements with employers. The small cohort of student ambassadors who help to organise college events benefit from improving their self-confidence and communication skills.
- Success rates for adult learners have improved significantly over the past three years and are high. The improvement has been most notable at level 1 where a far higher proportion of learners achieve their qualifications than at the time of the previous inspection. Adult learners perform very well on level 3 courses. They achieve successfully and make good progress in several subject areas, including hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality and catering and business, but success rates are low for adult learners on health and social care, early years and visual arts courses.
- Progress made by learners in lessons is good and has improved from the previous inspection. Learners on English courses become more confident in using their speaking, listening and reading skills, but less so in their writing. Adults on hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes make very rapid progress in acquiring good practical skills. A significant proportion of learners on study programmes at level 3 achieve high grades for their vocational qualification, particularly in public services, ICT, art and design and fashion. By contrast, the numbers of learners on level 2 study programmes in health and social care, sport and art and design who achieve high grades for their vocational qualification are low.
- Success rates for apprentices are high. Good partnerships with a range of employers and subcontractors result in substantial benefits for learners who progress well at work and are very successful in achieving their qualifications. A highly effective partnership with Jobcentre Plus has helped a significant number of unemployed people to progress into employment. Success rates for the qualifications they take as part of their training are very high. Learners on subcontracted courses achieve very well, particularly those on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses.
- College managers have partially succeeded in reducing differences in achievement between very diverse groups of learners. Learners aged 16 to 18 perform worse than their adult counterparts on long courses. Male learners perform as well as their female peers. Some groups of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve particularly well, most notably the very large cohorts of learners from White British backgrounds, and those from the Bangladeshi community. Learners aged 16 to 18 who receive additional learning support outperform their peers. The small cohort of learners who were formerly looked after children achieve well. Success rates differ too greatly between subjects, as noted in the last inspection; in a number of subjects they are very high, but in others they are too low.
- Managers have been successful in capturing data on progression and destinations from more learners when they finish their courses than at the previous inspection. A high proportion of learners on level 1 study programmes progress to further courses. Progression to higher education for those learners on level 3 courses who apply through UCAS has improved over the past two years, but requires further improvement. The proportion of learners who move on to higher levels of study or gain employment is high and above the average for London colleges.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The main aim of the college is to provide vocational courses that enable learners to gain employment, either locally or in London. The six subject areas reported upon represent a sample of the college's most significant provision. Inspectors evaluated study programmes and foundation English, reflecting current government priorities. The college's apprenticeship provision has expanded, but was not inspected in detail, as the numbers of apprentices were relatively low until recently.
- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as reflected in learners' outcomes. They have not reached consistently high standards, despite having been subject to much improvement activity in the college over the past year. Poor attendance and punctuality adversely affect too many lessons and this has a negative impact on learners' successful achievement of their qualifications, particularly for those aged 16 to 18.
- Teaching in discrete English and mathematics lessons is not good enough, with poor behaviour too often disrupting learning. Too many changes in staffing result in a lack of continuity in learners' studies, preventing them from building productive relationships and becoming more knowledgeable about subjects in which they already lack confidence. Learning resources are often uninspiring and lack sufficient relevance to enable learners to understand how they can apply topics studied in lessons to their everyday lives. Weak assessment practices in English lessons mean that learners are not always clear about how to improve their work.
- The provision to improve learners' employability skills on study programmes requires improvement. While learners in subjects such as hospitality and catering benefit from numerous different types of work experience, those in a minority of subject areas do not take part in any work placements. Imaginative initiatives, such as mentoring programmes and live project briefs, help learners who do not have the opportunity of a work placement to enhance their employability skills. For example, in 2013/14, learners in business and ICT took part in a six-month mentoring scheme with a prestigious high street bank, attending monthly workshops to improve their interview skills, personal goal setting and understanding of the world of finance.
- In weaker lessons, teachers adhere too rigidly to a standard lesson plan so that their teaching is not sufficiently captivating and learners make slow progress. Teachers use a very limited range of teaching strategies and learners lose interest in their work and quickly become bored. These lessons lack a clear direction and learners do not understand what is expected of them.
- Assessment practices require improvement. While teachers are assiduous in correcting learners' grammar and spelling in marked work, written feedback to learners in a significant minority of cases does not provide sufficient information about how to improve. Learners use information and learning technology (ILT) confidently to submit their assignments on time and to receive prompt feedback from teachers.
- Previously, the poor scheduling of assignments made it difficult for learners to complete all their coursework successfully, for example in health and social care. Changes at the start of the current year mean that submission dates for assessments are spread more evenly throughout courses. Learners returning for the second year of their studies value the better opportunities they have this year to spend more time on individual pieces of homework.
- Well-considered changes in curriculum management, combined with revised procedures to rectify a number of the areas for improvement in teaching and learning identified in the past year, are beginning to have a positive impact on standards in lessons. Involvement of senior leaders and curriculum managers in carrying out all lesson observations ensures they are accountable for the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teachers now take greater responsibility for improving their professional practice than previously, supported effectively by new teaching and learning coaches. They share learning strategies that work well, but this process requires further improvement to reduce the wide disparities in the performance of subject areas. Lesson observation reports are succinct and purposeful, but a small minority of observers focus too much on the role of the teacher, and not enough on learners' progress and the skills learners gain.

- In lessons where teaching and learning are very good, learners take part in interesting and relevant activities that deepen their understanding of the subject and enthuse them with a desire to quickly improve their skills. As a result, learners make good progress and acquire the confidence to perform complex tasks at an early stage in their learning. Teachers challenge learners well to explore difficult concepts, encouraging them to develop an inquisitive attitude to their learning. Learners respond very effectively by taking responsibility for their own learning and progress.
- Learners respond enthusiastically to experienced teachers who help them understand the relevance of learning to their future careers. For example, learners on art courses have a very good understanding of the need to match their imaginative ideas to the financial constraints and deadlines of employers’ design briefs. Learners on ESOL courses enjoy practising their good speaking and listening skills while discussing the relevance of correct health and safety procedures in a business.
- The majority of teachers skilfully weave the teaching of English and mathematics into their lessons. Learners discover, with surprise and pleasure, that they actually use mathematics on a daily basis and that developing their English skills has a very positive impact on their progress in lessons and on the quality of their assessed work.
- Teachers use ILT effectively to make learning interesting and to reinforce important theory learning. Learners improve their own use of ILT, developing relevant skills that enhance their employability. College managers have implemented a clear strategy and grading system to help teachers identify their own competence in the use of ILT and to identify training to help them improve further. Learners’ use of the college’s virtual learning environment (VLE) to support learning inside and outside the classroom is improving, but not all teachers are yet successful in encouraging learners to acquire strong independent learning habits.
- Learners who have additional learning needs receive good support to ensure they achieve as well as, and in some instances better than, their peers. Recently introduced initiatives, such as learning mentors and specialist support staff, provide highly effective assistance to learners with visual or hearing impairments or other learning difficulties, helping them to achieve very successfully.
- Advice and guidance are good. Learners receive timely and appropriate information to guide their learning once they have enrolled, and to help them progress to higher level courses. Staff have been successful this year in significantly reducing the numbers of learners who drop out of courses during induction.
- Teachers’ promotion of equality in lessons requires improvement overall, but most teachers celebrate diversity thoughtfully. For example, discussions with learners about current problems affecting countries around the world lead to well-informed considerations of differences in culture, religion and politics. Learners in the majority of lessons work well together and learn in a harmonious atmosphere of mutual respect.

Health, social care and early years

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. In 2012/13, success rates were very high on early years courses, but they declined in 2013/14 and now require improvement. Too few learners achieve their qualifications successfully in health and social care. High success rates for learners on the Access to Higher Education in social work course enable the majority to progress to degree level studies in higher education.
- College managers have a clear understanding of the reasons for declining success rates over the past 12 months; a detailed improvement plan has begun to rectify many of the problems. Staff teams in both subjects work well together to share good practice and to support one

another in improvement. Additional management support has been particularly effective in raising teachers' morale and in renewing their determination to deal with areas for improvement in their practice.

- Learners enjoy their courses. Those who have progressed this year to higher level programmes, or to the second year of their studies, identify a very significant improvement from the previous year in the management of all aspects of their learning. Attendance, which was particularly poor in health and social care in 2013/14, is improving, and teachers deal well with any learners who do not attend or are late for lessons.
- In the weaker lessons, teachers fail to motivate learners and do not plan their teaching sufficiently well to make sure they meet learners' needs and interests. Learners become bored and distracted and waste their own and others' time. They struggle to maintain their focus and interest in the subject. Teachers' questioning does not always test learners' deeper understanding of topics.
- In good and outstanding lessons, teachers enable learners to develop good practical skills and a sound appreciation of workplace practices and how they relate to theory teaching. For example, learners on early years courses gain a good understanding of the checks and procedures that must be in place before taking young children out on a trip.
- Learners benefit from teachers' high expectations and are well motivated. Teachers monitor learners' progress well and provide very good support particularly when learners work outside the college, for example in health and social care and early years settings. Such support allows learners to develop their self-confidence and become employees that are more willing to take on new, unfamiliar tasks.
- The majority of teachers are well qualified and have up-to-date experience which they use well to illustrate their lessons with interesting work-related examples. In the best lessons, the detailed planning of teachers ensures they use a wide range of activities, including group work, research and presentations, which maintain learners' interest and develop their skills and knowledge. They use ILT well to reinforce learning, making particularly good use of video clips to illustrate specific aspects of professional practice. For example, a teacher in a particularly good lesson used a short cartoon showing examples of different types of disabilities and cultural practices which deepened learners' understanding of people's barriers to communication.
- The best teachers use the outcomes from initial assessment effectively to help learners recognise what they need to do achieve their qualifications successfully. They plan lessons which take into account learners' different learning styles and provide individual learners with very specific support to meet their needs. However, a significant minority of teachers are not sufficiently skilled at directing support they identify in their lesson plans to provide clear guidance to learners in classes.
- Assessment of learners' work requires improvement. Teachers do not routinely give learners clear feedback on how to improve the content and presentation of their work, or how to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar, inhibiting their progress towards professional standards.
- The majority of subject teachers support learners well to help them understand the importance to their future careers of developing good English and mathematics skills. Teachers take every opportunity to develop learners' speaking, listening and presentation skills, as well as increasing their confidence in the use of relevant professional terminology. Learners in an early years class, for whom English is their second language, confidently discussed what attributes make a good teacher and prepared imaginative presentations about their favourite tutor. By contrast, the teaching of English and mathematics in discrete lessons requires improvement. Very few learners achieve functional skills qualifications or GCSEs at grades A* to C in English and mathematics.
- Learners benefit from good links with local employers in early years and in health and social care settings. They take part in a wide range of interesting work placements, which reflect their individual career aspirations and new developments within both occupations. Staff provide good coaching to help learners complete their work placements successfully.

- Staff support learners well with any problems or concerns, and involve parents and carers fully in celebration events and open evenings. Teachers respond sympathetically and sensitively to individual challenges faced by learners. In a very good tutorial, the teacher supported an older learner to develop a strategy to enable her to attend lessons regularly, while still being able to manage her family responsibilities.
- The promotion of equality and awareness of diversity in lessons require improvement. Teachers do not make sufficient use of students' multicultural backgrounds to develop interesting debates about different cultural backgrounds and varying practices in community, early years, social work and health settings. Learners understand the importance of good procedures for the safeguarding of themselves and also those they may work with in social care and early years settings. They feel safe and treat each other with respect and courtesy in the college.

Motor vehicle

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement; success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 have declined to just below the rates for similar colleges. Too many younger learners do not achieve their qualifications successfully. Success rates for the smaller cohort of adult learners have been high for the past three years. Learners progress well to higher level motor vehicle courses. The majority of learners are confident and communicate well with their peers and teachers. They develop good practical skills, which reflect industry standards and changes in technology.
- Recent changes in the management structure in the motor vehicle department are starting to have a positive impact on standards of teaching and learning. Teachers have high expectations of what learners can achieve. Performance management of teachers is good and has improved teaching through rigorous target setting. Resources at the two motor vehicle training centres are good and reflect current industry standards.
- In the best theory lessons, teachers ensure that all learners understand key learning points. They set learners very effective introductory tasks for topics being taught and use resources well to relate theory to industry practice. Learners in successful practical lessons develop good technical skills and use accurate terminology to describe important engineering concepts. They work productively on realistic engineering tasks and achieve high standards of work, dismantling engines quickly and identifying the component parts accurately. In one particularly good lesson, learners confidently removed and measured the dimensions of brake pads and used their ILT skills well to devise data sheets to determine if they met legal requirements.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers are unsuccessful in motivating learners to take part fully in lessons and they become bored and distracted. This slows their progress. Learners struggle to understand important theories and to relate their theory learning to practice. Teachers are not sufficiently aware of the progress of all learners in the lesson, particularly when they are working unaided on practical tasks. Attendance and punctuality are poor in these lessons.
- Teachers do not always meet the needs of all learners. In a few lessons, tasks set by teachers are too easy for more able learners who are unable to achieve their full potential. Few teachers provide additional activities to inspire and motivate learners who finish their work before their peers.
- Learners make good use of the VLE to complement their learning and to develop their independent study skills. In one lesson, they used the VLE confidently to research data relating to the components of an advanced braking system, analysing each part in detail and extending their knowledge and skills well.
- Assessment of learners' work requires improvement. While the majority of teachers use a wide range of assessments to support learning, their oral and written feedback to learners lacks detail

and does not provide sufficient information on how to improve their work. Teachers correct learners' grammar and spelling, but do not provide any suggestions on how to improve, thus limiting learners' further progress.

- Learners' development of English and mathematics skills requires improvement, both in discrete lessons and in motor vehicle classes. Teachers' lesson plans identify how teachers intend to weave English and mathematics into their teaching, but very few assess these skills in lessons. The proportions of learners who achieve functional skills qualifications and GCSEs at grades A* to C in English and mathematics are low.
- Use of the information gathered on learners to identify their strengths and barriers to learning requires improvement. Teachers' often fail to take sufficient account of learners' individual abilities when devising lessons.
- Too few learners take part in external work placements to enhance their employability skills in a commercial environment. A wide range of other good enrichment opportunities support the development of learners' personal and employability skills, including visits to motor manufacturers.
- Teachers' promotion of equality and diversity in lessons requires improvement. Learners and teachers work together within an ethos of mutual respect. Learners value the welcoming environment at the two centres, feel safe and understand the importance of good health and safety practices.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Adult learners, who make up the majority of enrolments in hairdressing and beauty therapy, have outstanding success rates and make very good progress in lessons. The smaller number of learners aged 16 to 18 on study programmes achieve much less successfully; their success rates require improvement. Younger learners' punctuality in lessons is poor, particularly at the start of the day. Their attendance requires improvement. A high proportion of learners continue to higher level hairdressing and beauty therapy courses in the college.
- Learners develop good practical skills. Adult learners on hairdressing courses acquire outstanding skills in a very short space of time. They learn quickly how to cut hair in a range of styles and develop very good blow-drying skills. Beauty therapy learners work to commercial timings and demonstrate excellent communication skills with clients when completing pedicures.
- Teachers engender high levels of enthusiasm among learners and use imaginative teaching strategies that involve them fully in lessons. Teachers are very highly motivated and have good up-to-date industry experience which they impart willingly to learners. They update their vocational skills regularly. Teachers have high expectations of their learners who develop a positive attitude to what they can achieve. Learners respect their teachers as role models and mirror their high standards of dress and behaviour.
- Well-planned lessons are a key feature of good and outstanding teaching. In outstanding lessons, teachers focus particularly well on learning and plan very challenging activities which benefit learners. They use good questioning strategies to check all learners understand topics and demonstrations. Adult learners demonstrate outstanding dexterity when using scissors and combs to complete complex haircuts. Teachers add time constraints to practical tasks to challenge learners to complete them in the time expected by employers.
- In the less effective lessons, the pace of teaching is too fast and learners have insufficient time to reflect on their learning and how they might improve the tasks they complete. By contrast, the pace is too slow in a small minority of lessons and learners become bored and lose focus on

their work. Teachers in these lessons make insufficient use of direct questioning to check that each learner understands the topic being taught, or the skills being demonstrated.

- Teachers make particularly effective use of ILT to enhance learning in beauty therapy lessons. Learners use their mobile telephones confidently to scan electronic codes which link quickly to websites containing good learning resources. A learner with dyslexia successfully completed an online test on facial muscles using voice recognition technology without any support.
- Hairdressing and beauty therapy teachers integrate teaching of English and mathematics very well into their lessons. They are adept at explaining to learners the importance of costing products in order to achieve a profit and the financial benefits accruing from selling retail products in a salon. Teachers are assiduous in correcting learners' oral pronunciations and the written spellings of technical terms, thus promoting professional standards. They also promote good health and safe working practices which learners adopt rigorously when working on clients in salons. Learners feel safe in the college.
- Teachers fail to motivate learners sufficiently, and thus often fail to develop their skills and knowledge adequately, in discrete English and mathematics lessons. They set tasks that do not challenge the majority of learners or retain their interest throughout the lesson. Teachers' classroom management is poor. Learners do not interact well with, or have sufficient respect for, the teachers. Hairdressing and beauty teachers and functional skills and GCSE staff do not work sufficiently well together to develop strategies that reinforce the English and mathematics skills needed by learners in the workplace.
- Learners benefit significantly from a wide range of opportunities to develop their work readiness. Hairdressing and beauty therapy salons provide a realistic work environment, supplemented by well-organised work placements. Learners attend a wide range of trade exhibitions and competitions which develop their industry knowledge. Manufacturers and guest speakers attend the college for learners' development days. Learners receive helpful information, advice and guidance, resulting in good progression to higher level courses and employment. Courses fully meet their expectations.
- Staff provide good support for learning. Teachers assess learners' prior attainment quickly and identify their support needs promptly. Learners with hearing impairments and dyslexia receive particularly good assistance to complete their studies.
- Teachers' assessment of learners' work is rigorous and the standards learners achieve are high. Learners fully understand the criteria required to achieve their full potential. Detailed and constructive oral and written feedback to learners helps them to understand what they need to do to improve their work and to progress to the next stage of their studies.
- Teachers promote the understanding of equality and diversity well. Teachers weave themes relating to these topics very effectively into lessons. This enables learners to explore their thinking and improve their knowledge when styling hair and completing beauty treatments for clients from different ethnic backgrounds. Teachers encourage learners to discuss how they would adapt their working practices to deal with clients who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Hospitality and catering

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in high success rates. Teachers set learners exacting professional standards. They use a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities to motivate learners, who enjoy lessons and make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge.
- Learners benefit from teachers who are well qualified and have up-to-date expertise in a wide range of hospitality and catering settings. Teachers are knowledgeable and passionate about the

opportunities available to learners to work in the industry. Learners develop good, and sometimes outstanding, practical skills. Teachers constantly emphasise to learners the time pressures of working in hospitality and catering and the need for them to work to commercial constraints. Learners gain first-hand experience of these demands by preparing and serving food in the college's own catering outlets. They develop their self-confidence and improve their customer service skills quickly. Feedback from customers about the standards of food and service is very good.

- Teachers set learners tasks which reflect current demands of the industry in a wide range of settings, including the retail supermarket sector. For example, learners develop skills to produce contemporary American steak cuts that are new to the food market and skilfully bone, roll and pack legs of lamb ready for sale. They demonstrate good knife skills and use small hand tools with dexterity.
- Teachers enrich lessons through very good demonstrations of culinary skills. In one particularly good class, the teacher's clear explanations enabled learners to shape dough expertly. Teachers ask learners challenging questions that extend their learning and insist on accurate and comprehensive answers so that learners achieve their full potential.
- Learners receive good personal support to meet their individual needs and aspirations. Teachers' helpful guidance enables learners to develop good research skills in study sessions. Learners appreciate teachers' prompt assistance in rectifying any problems they have at college.
- Teachers' use of the outcomes of initial assessment requires improvement. While they gather a wide range of detailed information about learners' prior attainment and skills, including their abilities in English and mathematics, they do not always use it well to ensure all learners improve their full range of skills in lessons.
- Learners use ILT confidently to assist in successful completion of their studies. They use their mobile telephones in lessons to send photographs of dishes they cook to teachers. This ensures prompt assessment of their work.
- Learners' development of English and mathematics skills requires improvement. The numbers of learners who complete functional skills and GCSEs at grades A* to C in English and mathematics are low. Standards of teaching and learning in discrete English and mathematics lessons are poor. Weak teaching strategies fail to motivate the majority of learners, who quickly become bored and distract their peers who want to learn. Teachers rely too much on handing out the same paper-based tasks to all learners, without sufficient consideration of their varying abilities.
- In a small minority of subject-specific lessons, teachers prompt learners well to calculate food prices accurately and to convert quantities in recipes from metric to imperial measurements and vice versa. They ensure learners pay close attention to weighing foodstuffs accurately, for example when measuring out ratios of flour and butter for sponge cakes.
- Younger learners on study programmes participate in a wide range of prestigious work placements to enhance their employability skills and to broaden their knowledge of the many different types of jobs available in the hospitality and catering industry. They work at well-known venues and events, such as the London Guildhall and the national football stadium at Wembley. Teachers go to great efforts to organise visits to venues such as Billingsgate fish market and to arrange international trips that broaden learners' understanding of the origins and history of foodstuffs.
- Teachers are adept at using the opportunities available to them to promote diversity well in lessons. They encourage learners from different backgrounds to cook dishes that are popular in their countries of origin and to demonstrate different techniques involved in preparing food.

Foundation English**16-19 study programmes****19+ Learning programmes**

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment on functional skills and GCSE courses in English are inadequate. Success rates are very low, particularly for learners aged 16 to 18 on study programmes. Very few learners improve their grades when they retake GCSEs in English. While the majority of learners complete their studies, they do not pass the examinations required to achieve their qualifications successfully. Attendance and punctuality in English lessons are poor. Learners' lateness disrupts learning in the majority of lessons.
- A new management team has implemented a targeted action plan for improvement that is starting to yield better results and higher standards of teaching and learning. Attendance in lessons is improving, as is the use of initial assessment to place learners on the right level of course.
- While the majority of learners have clear aspirations about their futures and acknowledge they need English to find employment or to go to university, they cannot confidently give examples of how they might use English skills in their everyday lives at home or at work.
- A small minority of teachers successfully enable learners to practise and improve their spoken English and reading skills through well-planned activities. However, learners' confidence in writing is less well developed. In one lesson requiring improvement, learners discussed different types of informative or descriptive text, but did not make notes to help them develop and assess their own writing. Too many teachers use worksheet activities to practise writing that do not inspire learners to want to learn. Learners are unable to see the relevance of the tasks to their main subject area.
- The weakest lessons are characterised by activities which leave learners unclear about the purpose of their learning. Teachers' planning to meet learners' individual needs is weak and these learners quickly become distracted and bored in lessons and make slow progress. Teachers do not set enough work for, or give clear instructions to, those learners who complete tasks quickly and who consequently have to wait too long for the next part of the lesson.
- In good lessons, learners demonstrate well-developed deductive and thinking skills and produce reasoned analyses of images and texts. In a lesson analysing the novel *Of Mice and Men*, learners developed thoughtful presentations that explored themes of character development, loneliness and the 'American Dream'. They subsequently took part in a discussion that demonstrated their ability to proffer constructive criticisms of each other's views and assumptions.
- The use of ILT by both teachers and learners is weak and requires improvement. The majority of teachers restrict themselves to using electronic slide presentations in lessons and do not attempt to broaden learners' knowledge of other types of electronic media. By contrast, a small minority of more confident teachers use video clips, internet website links and online games well in lessons to promote very lively discussions about the use of English.
- Teachers' checking of learners' progress in lessons is poor. Teachers confine themselves to asking questions to the whole group, resulting in responses from only a few of the more confident learners. Less able learners receive no encouragement to answer questions or to contribute to the lesson. The majority of teachers provide clear oral feedback to learners on how to develop their reading, speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers' assessment of learners' work requires improvement. Marking and feedback to the majority of learners are limited to the correction of spelling, punctuation and grammar, with no guidance given to them on how to improve their written work. While the majority of learners complete an initial assessment of their skills during enrolment, teachers do not use the information to plan ways in which to rectify specific gaps in learners' knowledge.

- Teachers do not routinely update targets for learners on the college's electronic tracking system. Learners bring 'Excited about English' workbooks to lessons, but very few are aware of targets for their completion because teachers do not update the targets in their individual progress reports.
- Learners receive clear advice and guidance about the expectations of staff regarding which English qualifications they should take, based on their prior attainment. Teachers in the college's skills centre provide good additional learning support for learners who want to improve their English skills. However, specialist English staff do not work closely enough with subject teachers to support learners' commitment to attend, and take part in, discrete English lessons.
- The majority of teachers do not incorporate the promotion of equality and awareness of diversity into the planning of lessons. Where teachers do encourage learners to discuss themes relating to diversity, for example through texts and images that reinforce gender stereotypes, learners express well-informed views and respect the alternative opinions of their peers.

Business management and law

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good in both business management and law. Learners on business management courses achieve successfully, particularly those aged over 19. Success rates for the much smaller cohort of learners on law programmes are outstanding.
- Teachers inspire and encourage all learners to set ambitious goals and to adopt a professional approach to their studies. This ensures very good attendance and punctuality in lessons. The strong emphasis placed by teachers on adhering to standards expected in a business environment leads to good behaviour in lessons and an atmosphere of mutual respect between learners and staff.
- Learners produce work of a good standard, focusing strongly on practical applications of their theory learning. For example, learners worked well to explore leadership theories, developing a very good awareness of how celebrities adopt different leadership styles when they become politicians. The majority of learners achieve high grades which enable them to progress to higher education.
- Staff are well qualified and have very good subject knowledge which they use to inspire learners with interesting and relevant examples from a wide range of businesses. They create stimulating learning environments by using many different activities which develop learners' knowledge in ways learners can easily understand. As a result, learners make good progress. Where a small minority of learners make slower than expected progress, it is because teachers provide them with too much information instead of allowing them to discover answers independently, or from their peers.
- Teachers use ILT very effectively to maintain learners' interest, particularly in lessons on complex business theories that learners find more challenging. They emphasise to learners the need to develop their own skills in ILT wherever possible as an important way in which to enhance their employability.
- Teachers track and monitor learners' progress very effectively. They make good use of a range of electronic media to alert learners when they are falling behind in completing their work. Where learners do need to catch up on their studies, teachers coach and support them well. Learners enjoy guided study lessons and find them useful in improving their assignment work and sharing with their peers.
- Teachers' assessment of learners' work is good. Learners receive helpful oral and written feedback on the quality of their assignments, which enables them to understand what they need to do to improve their work in future and to achieve higher grades. Learners and teachers make good use of electronic media to submit and mark work, ensuring that learners receive prompt

feedback within a short period of time. Early identification of learners with additional support needs, such as dyslexia, helps them to receive timely assistance to complete their studies.

- Business teachers are adept at incorporating the development of learners' English skills in lessons. This enables learners to expand their vocabulary, improve their spelling and grammar and to use correct business terminology in their written work and when taking part in discussions in lessons.
- Discrete English and mathematics provision for learners on study programmes is weak. Learners do not make sufficient progress in GCSE or functional skills English and mathematics lessons. Attendance is poor. Learners spend too much time in lessons practising for examinations, and not enough on improving specific aspects of English and mathematics related to their individual needs.
- The development of learners' employability skills in a realistic work environment requires improvement. The smaller cohort of learners on study programmes does not take part in work placements. A significant proportion of learners apply the skills they acquire, such as the writing of curriculum vitae and interview techniques, to find part-time employment during their studies. Teachers organise a wide range of work-related activities, including visits to different types of businesses and interesting guest speakers.
- Teachers provide a thorough induction for learners joining business management and law courses. Learners clearly understand what they need to do to complete courses successfully. Staff guide learners well to make sure they enrol on the most appropriate course to meet their long-term career aspirations. For example, staff successfully coached the owner of a small medical company, who intended to enrol on a course leading to a nursing qualification, to realise that a business programme would suit his needs more effectively.
- Teachers ensure that the promotion of equality and raising awareness of diversity are strong themes throughout the majority of lessons. Learners on law courses reflect well on the challenges of ensuring that ethnic backgrounds of judges working in the English legal system reflect those of people accused of crimes. They discuss the relationships between the police and particular groups of people from different heritages. In business management lessons, learners consider leadership styles of their favourite international role models. Teachers support learners well to emphasise positive attributes of their diverse backgrounds when writing personal statements as part of their applications to higher education.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Senior leaders' and managers' actions have not yet resulted in raising standards in all areas of the college. Despite an overall improvement in success rates since the previous inspection, variations in performance of curriculum areas are too wide. Whilst a minority of subjects have had high success rates for three or more years, a similar number has performed poorly over the same period of time. Managers recognise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in different subject areas varies too much.
- Performance management of staff is not yet rigorous enough to bring about rapid and widespread improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Managers' targets for teachers to improve are too vague and do not clearly express what teachers need to do to change their classroom practice. Improvement plans arising from performance management meetings do not consistently identify the expected outcomes of better teaching and learning on proportions of learners who achieve their qualifications.
- Self-assessment in the majority of subject areas is accurate and self-critical, but action plans arising from self-assessment do not always precisely identify what actions managers need to take to bring about necessary improvements. Senior leaders and managers are honest and self-critical about the insufficient impact of initiatives introduced previously, for example to increase the proportions of learners who achieve English and mathematics qualifications. They have revised their approaches to these problems and implemented new improvement arrangements,

key to which has been the appointment of new managers and teachers. These actions are starting to have a positive effect on standards of teaching and learning, but it is too early to assess their full impact.

- Leaders' and managers' implementation of study programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 requires improvement. Too few learners complete a work experience placement or achieve qualifications in English and mathematics. Senior leaders have struggled to recruit sufficient high calibre English and mathematics teachers to deal with the dramatic increase in the numbers studying these subjects in the past year. Initial assessment is accurate in placing learners on the right level of English and mathematics courses. The large numbers of learners aged 16 to 18 on level 1 functional skills reflect their very low prior attainment in these subjects. The new arrangements for the management of English and mathematics have helped senior leaders to identify the most important areas for improvement.
- Senior leaders and governors have an ambitious strategic vision for the future of the college and are clear about its role in providing training that will help learners fill local skills gaps. Following consultation with staff and other stakeholders, they have translated the vision into a coherent strategic plan which focuses heavily on training for future skills needs in the local community. New management arrangements, including several new senior and curriculum management posts, are securing improvement in teaching and learning, which is a key target in the strategic plan.
- Governors bring a useful range of skills to support the growth and development of the college. They are currently recruiting new governors so that the mix of the governing body reflects the diversity of learners and the local community more closely. Since the previous inspection, governors have significantly improved their knowledge and use of information on the college's performance to challenge senior leaders on the actions they need to take to bring about rapid improvements in teaching and learning and outcomes for learners.
- The college is a key focal point for the local community, providing vocational education in a wide range of work-related subjects that meet skills needs in the local area and regionally. Senior leaders form good partnerships with the local council, the adult learning service and Jobcentre Plus. These result in the commissioning of successful bespoke courses in English, mathematics and ESOL for learners of all age groups and skills for employment programmes for young adults who have been out of work for several years.
- Managers work very effectively with subcontractors and franchise partners to help meet local and regional skills needs. They carry out comprehensive due diligence checks prior to working with new partners and apply the same quality standards and checks to learners studying on these courses as they do to college-based provision.
- Staff have developed very successful courses as a result of their work with selected employers to meet specific regional and national skills needs. These include a bespoke butchery apprenticeship for learners employed by a national supermarket chain, a railway track maintenance apprenticeship for a national rail maintenance provider and floor laying apprenticeships. Managers work collaboratively with staff from other colleges in the 'London, Stansted and Cambridge corridor' to provide training and learning which resolve skills shortages identified by four regional Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- The college's safeguarding of learners is good. Staff place learners' welfare and safety at the heart of everything they do. Senior managers have good links with the local authority's designated child protection officer, to whom they make referrals where necessary and from whom they receive useful advice and support. Activities for learners during Safer Learner Week help to raise their awareness and understanding of topical concerns, including knife crime, gang culture and extreme beliefs. Staff responsible for safeguarding complete comprehensive training in identifying and tackling radicalisation and extremism. Managers and teachers promote safe working practices assiduously.
- Learners feel safe at the college. They value the welcoming and supportive environment. Incidents of bullying and discrimination are infrequent and, when they do occur, managers deal with them quickly and decisively. The college's single equality scheme action plan accurately

identifies the essential actions to ensure staff remain up to date in their knowledge and understanding of equality and what it means for them in practice.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Waltham Forest College

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	3
Early years and playwork	3
Motor vehicle	3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Hospitality and catering	2
Foundation English	4
Business management	2
Law and legal services	2

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	7,154							
Principal/CEO	Robin Jones							
Date of previous inspection	May 2013							
Website address	www.waltham.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+
	392	2,995	627	1,008	399	270	-	15
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	46	165	2	6	2	2		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16	17							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	17							
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"> ■ Adult Training Network Ltd ■ Care First Training Ltd ■ D.T.K. Business Services Ltd ■ Floortrain (GB) Ltd ■ Learning Works Ltd ■ MTC Learning 							

Contextual information

Waltham Forest College is a large general further education college within Greater London. Waltham Forest is a diverse borough, ethnically and socially. The number of pupils at schools in the area achieving five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is below both the national average and the average for school pupils in outer London. Just over half of the residents in employment in Waltham Forest have jobs in the public administration, education, health, financial and business services sectors. However, unemployment is above both regional and national rates. The proportions of people of working age with qualifications at level 1 to level 4 are below regional and national averages, as are average earnings.

Information about this inspection

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

What inspection judgements mean

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

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

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

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