

Central College Nottingham

General further education college

Inspection dates		10 – 14 November 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		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This college requires improvement because:

- too many learners aged 16 to 18 do not complete and achieve their qualification
- too few apprentices aged 16 to 18, and apprentices of all ages on programmes delivered by the college rather than a subcontracted partner, complete their apprenticeship
- not all teachers consistently set targets that encourage learners to achieve high standards and managers do not monitor sufficiently the progress learners make relative to their prior qualifications
- the teaching of English and mathematics is not good enough; too few learners pass their qualification in these subjects, particularly those aged 16 to 18, and only a small proportion of learners who study GCSE English or mathematics achieve a grade A*-C
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much across the college and too many learners, particularly the most able, are not set tasks and activities that help them to make sufficient progress in lessons or when studying independently
- managers do not accurately assess the quality of provision in all subject areas and they do not consistently set targets to tackle specific reasons for underperformance.

This college has the following strengths:

- the high proportion of adult learners, and learners of all ages attending courses provided by subcontractors, successfully achieving their qualification
- an ambitious strategic plan set by leaders and governors that meets local and regional priorities, including those of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and employers
- the particularly effective development and implementation by leaders of strategies to improve the proportion of learners, particularly apprentices, who successfully complete their qualification; the quantity and quality of work-related learning activities; and the quality of a majority of the courses
- outstanding discrete provision for learners studying independent living skills
- the support that staff provide to learners requiring extra help.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Plan tasks and activities for learners, particularly those aged 16 to 18, to complete in lessons and independently that take account of their different abilities and ensure the most able acquire and practise the knowledge and skills needed to produce higher standards of work and pass their qualification.
- Collect data about the progress that learners make relative to their prior achievement and use the data to set course teams, and individual learners, challenging targets for the grades learners should achieve during their course. Ensure managers monitor the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment strategies that teachers use to help learners achieve their targets.
- Share existing good practice in teaching, learning and assessment between teachers and assessors within the college and partners so that it becomes more widespread. Support teachers to develop teaching and learning that best suits their learners.
- Develop further the English and mathematics strategy to provide distinct objectives and action plans for each subject and ensure curriculum managers are accountable for the standards of English and mathematics in their area of responsibility.
- Ensure teachers of all subjects develop their ability to promote English and mathematics and provide lessons, and other learning activities, that interest learners and enable them to improve their English and mathematics.
- Ensure all managers clearly identify areas for improvement in underperforming courses and the reasons for underperformance. Set clear targets for the standards they expect course teams to achieve and monitor closely the progress towards these.
- Use the data about learners' destinations to monitor and improve the progression learners make into employment and higher levels of study.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- The college provides study programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 with approximately equal numbers studying at levels 1, 2 and 3. These make up nearly a quarter of the provision. Apprenticeships at intermediate and advanced level make up nearly a quarter of the provision. Nearly half of all learners are adults with most studying short courses at levels 1 and 2. Approximately one third of the learners attend courses that subcontractors provide. Many of these learners are from the Nottingham area, but a large proportion, particularly adult learners and apprentices, are from the rest of the country.
- The proportion of learners aged 16 to 18 on study programmes who complete their course is too low and has not improved sufficiently. This is primarily due to slow improvements at level 3. The proportion of other learners on classroom-based courses who complete their course and achieve their qualification has risen over the last three years more rapidly than in similar colleges. These improvements have been primarily due to an increasing proportion of learners staying until the end of their course. The proportion of adult learners who achieve their qualification is now high. Most learners aged 14 to 16 are successful.
- Learners on courses in information technology are now significantly more successful than in previous years. Those on classroom-based courses in health and social care, science and mathematics, and hairdressing and beauty therapy are also more successful than in previous

years, but the numbers that complete and achieve their course is still too low. Too few learners on business and media courses complete their course.

- Over the past three years, the proportion of learners who achieve their apprenticeship has increased significantly from a very low level. Now, a large majority of adult apprentices are successful, but too few aged 16 to 18 achieve their apprenticeship.
- Subcontractors' apprentices are more successful than the college's apprentices. The success of college apprentices varies considerably. For example, a very high proportion of agriculture apprentices succeed, but in health and care, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and ICT, too few apprentices are successful.
- Results in English and mathematics functional skills have improved well for adults but too few learners aged 16 to 18 pass their qualification. Very few learners who take GCSE English and mathematics obtain a grade A*-C. While the proportion achieving a grade A*-C in mathematics has increased slightly, the proportion passing English with a grade A*-C has fallen and under a quarter of learners studying this subject achieve these grades.
- In most subject areas teachers set target grades for learners, but managers do not check that these are sufficiently aspirational or that they lead to a higher proportion of learners achieving the grades expected of them. Learners on courses at level 3 do not make as much progress as expected when taking into account their previous educational attainment, particularly in health and social care, applied science and childcare.
- In most subject areas, learners make good use of the increasing opportunities to develop skills that prepare them for employment. Art and design learners compete for a work experience placement in Germany and hospitality learners provide a commercial service in a catering company at an international cricket ground. Hair and beauty learners provide treatments, both as part of their course and as independent traders, in a well-resourced salon on a main shopping street in the city centre.
- Levels of attendance have improved in 2013/14 compared to the previous year and are now acceptable. However, large variations exist between courses. Learners' attendance on courses in public services and provision for independent living skills is high, but low on courses in plumbing, electrical, health care and childcare, and in partnership provision for media. Punctuality recorded by the college is extremely high with a very small minority of learners recorded as arriving late. However, not all teachers register learners accurately at the beginning of lessons and, during the inspection, too many learners arrived late to lessons.
- Managers have improved the collection of data on learners' destinations since the last inspection and now know the destinations of a high proportion of their learners. Most learners on courses at levels 1 and 2 progress to further study. A high proportion of learners on courses at level 3 move to further education but a small number progress into employment and higher education.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has continued to improve due to managers accurately identifying most of the weaker areas and taking firm action to improve these. Teachers and assessors reflect on, and develop their skills and most use these effectively to raise standards. However, too much teaching, learning and assessment is not good enough, lessons vary in quality too much and teachers do not expect all learners to work hard enough to fulfil their potential.
- In too many vocational lessons, teachers do not choose teaching methods that ensure that all learners, particularly the most able, work hard on relevant activities. In some subjects, such as travel and tourism and construction, learners frequently progress at the same rate, which is often too slow for the most able. A minority of teachers do not use information about learners' skills and knowledge when they start their course to plan learning effectively, especially at level

3. Following taught sessions, teachers often expect learners only to complete unfinished classwork and assignments and they do not provide the most able with additional, or more difficult, work that further develops their knowledge and skills.

- Too many learners, particularly at level 3, do not know what grades they should be aiming to achieve and do not receive sufficient challenge to make the progress of which they are capable. For a minority of learners, teachers do not set sufficiently challenging targets or they expect learners to set their own targets, many of which are insufficiently demanding. At level 1, too many learners do not receive sufficient guidance on the steps they need to take to achieve their targets.
- In the most successful lessons, learners actively take part in, and benefit from, imaginative and well-planned activities that take account of individual needs. Learners make valuable contributions to the discussions and take responsibility for their learning. For example, learners studying textiles are able to explain the ingenious techniques they used to produce imaginative dresses and take pride in the high standard of their portfolios. Engineering learners develop the technical skills that local engineering companies require, as a result of careful guidance and much practice.
- Apprentices receive good training and individual coaching that staff plan well and align carefully with the needs of employers. A majority of apprentices benefit from good teaching and learning, and make a valued contribution in the workplace.
- Learners receive clear and appropriate advice and guidance that ensure they enrol on a suitable course. Apprentices receive good information about the demands of their chosen occupation before they begin their apprenticeship. Staff work closely with schools, social services and other support agencies to ease the transition to college for vulnerable learners. Support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is quickly available once they start their course. Learning assistants, who support learners with sensory or complex needs, work effectively with teachers to ensure these learners make good progress.
- Most assessors and teachers assess learners' work regularly and provide clear and detailed feedback on how they can make improvements. However, a minority of teachers and assessors do not provide sufficient detail in their written feedback to help learners improve their work and rely too heavily on providing feedback through discussions with learners during lessons. Apprentices receive frequent and well-planned assessments to which most employers contribute well.
- Teachers' development of learners' English, mathematics and functional skills, particularly as part of the study programme, is variable across subject areas and requires improvement. In a minority of lessons, it is done well; for instance, in engineering, learners extend their technical vocabulary through recording written results when comparing dimensional component tolerances to manufacturers' specifications. However, teachers do not consistently develop the English and mathematics skills learners need for their chosen occupation and too few learners achieve A*-C grades in GCSE English and mathematics.
- The college is very welcoming and staff work hard, and successfully, to remove barriers that may prevent learners from participating in education. Learners are very respectful to one another, both in the college's social areas and in lessons. A team of specialist tutors and support staff ensures the tutorial programme, enrichment activities and public spaces are used well to promote equality and diversity. However, too few teachers and learners are alert to opportunities in lessons that could further develop learners' knowledge and understanding of diversity.

Health and social care

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement as reflected in the outcomes which, although improving significantly over the last three years, require further improvement.
- Most learners develop the practical and social skills that make them capable and effective care workers and many acquire the skills needed to progress into more senior positions or into higher education to study health-related courses.
- In the majority of sessions, learners are able to link theory to occupational practice well. Assessors have relevant experience of working in the care sector and use this to ensure learners not only develop skills relevant to their place of work, but also knowledge of the wider care sector. However, in a small minority of sessions, learners do not receive enough tuition about essential skills for care workers such as the importance of good communication skills.
- Assessors do not provide all learners with sufficient opportunities to develop their written English skills due to an over-reliance on audio recording of learners' answers and too little assessment of written answers and assignments. As a result, the significant minority of learners who have ambitions to progress into higher education do not have enough opportunities to practise their academic writing skills.
- Assessors spend too much time coaching learners to get through examinations rather than improving their understanding of the mathematics and English needed by care workers. Most assessors emphasise the importance of these subjects but lack the skills to teach them effectively.
- Assessors are increasingly teaching background knowledge well and becoming effective at monitoring how well learners acquire this. Assessors and learners are continuing to improve their use of electronic portfolios to make better use of the time between their meetings. However, the range of on-line learning resources available to learners is too limited.
- Assessors motivate and encourage learners through positive feedback. They effectively identify what learners need to improve and how they can bring about these improvements. They encourage learners to evaluate their own progress and set targets to help them acquire further skills and knowledge.
- Learners receive appropriate advice and guidance, which provide an accurate understanding of the apprenticeship framework and the commitment required. Support from employers is not always consistently good. Most provide sufficient support for their apprentices to study for their apprenticeship, but a small number do not. For example, they do not ensure learners have appropriate shifts, provide a suitable room for training or take sufficient interest in selecting appropriate optional units related to the learner's job.
- Learners develop a good awareness of the complex and diverse nature of society and its changing nature. Learners working in homes with predominantly white, Christian heritage service users are prepared well for working with an increasingly diverse population of older people in the country.

Science and mathematics**16-19 study programmes****19+ Learning programmes**

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment in science and mathematics require improvement, reflecting the low proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications. The quality of teaching and learning varies considerably across science and mathematics courses.
- In too many lessons, teachers' expectations of learners are not sufficiently high. They do not give sufficient consideration to how learners best learn and do not use the range of teaching methods necessary to ensure that all the learners receive sufficient challenge. For example, teachers frequently persist in using verbal questioning long after it is clear that learners are not willing to participate and do not use alternative strategies. Consequently, the pace of the lessons is often slow and learning disrupted.
- In a few lessons, learners learn effectively by taking part in activities that maintain their interest and develop their motivation. Teachers relentlessly challenge them to do better and to learn more. Learning often extends beyond that required to meet course requirements. For example, in a level 2 practical science lesson, learners demonstrated a growing understanding of how poor technique and an insufficiently thoughtful approach to conducting experiments can result in unacceptable experimental errors. In other successful lessons, learners demonstrate good understanding and application of prior learning. For example, in a level 3 science lesson, learners used previous knowledge on acids and alkalines to assess likely contamination in an experiment requiring solutions with precise pH values.
- Teachers in a subcontractor provide their learners with a particularly good learning experience. They use a range of highly individual teaching methods that are particularly well suited to their learners. In a lesson on ratios, music learners, who are also studying GCSE mathematics, were required to complete a demanding task before a background music track had ended. In a similar lesson, the teacher used excellent computer graphics to illustrate the difference between fractions and ratios to a group of computer gaming learners. The teaching was relaxed, enjoyable, relevant to the learners and led to excellent learning.
- Attendance and punctuality on college-based courses are low. Teachers do not always deal effectively with late arrivals and consequently poor punctuality often disrupts learning.
- Learners benefit from fair, accurate and reliable assessment. Teachers provide good verbal and written feedback that helps learners to identify how to improve their performance. Many teachers make very good use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to help learners successfully complete their assignments. However, teachers do not routinely set and mark regular homework to encourage learning outside the classroom.
- Learners in most science lessons are careful to use good English and precise scientific terms in class discussions and in their written work. Learners in subcontracted mathematics provision develop good mental arithmetic skills and seldom reach for a calculator to perform straightforward calculations.
- The college provides a safe environment in which learners study in groups with a rich cultural heritage. The atmosphere is one of respect for others and equality of opportunity for all. However, recent college initiatives to promote equality and diversity on the topics of Black History month and World War 1 commemorations were not available for science and mathematics learners.

Manufacturing technologies and motor vehicle

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes
Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good contributing strongly to very high progression rates and most learners achieving their qualification. Most learners quickly develop good technical skills and understanding that meet the needs of employers. Teachers make good use of their industrial skills and knowledge to care for, support and inspire learners. They have high expectations and the majority of learners achieve high grades in their programme.
- Learners successfully develop the skills they need for successful employment. Teachers plan most practical lessons well and workshops are of high quality. Learners adopt workplace practices well such as using job cards in motor vehicle workshops. They use tools and specialist equipment safely and confidently and work effectively in small teams. In practical lessons, teachers regularly check learning and provide good feedback. However, in a small number of lessons, learners make slow progress when they have to share tools.
- Teaching and learning in theory lessons are good. In most lessons, teachers check learning and progress frequently. They use a wide variety of techniques to motivate and stimulate learners including discussion, targeted questioning and information learning technologies (ILT). For example, in one lesson, learners used interactive software enthusiastically to research welding techniques. Most engineering learners at level 3 develop their knowledge well by regularly using learning materials from the VLE outside the classroom.
- College staff work closely with employers to ensure apprenticeships provide learners with the skills employers need. Most employers provide a good breadth of on-the-job training and have a good understanding of apprentices' progress. However, a small minority of employers do not receive sufficiently detailed reports to help them plan better support for their learners in the workplace.
- Assessors use progress reviews well to help most learners identify areas for improvement. However, in a few progress reviews, target setting, written feedback and guidance on how learners could improve their skills in the workplace are not sufficiently detailed. This contributes to a few apprentices making slow progress.
- Teachers' assessment of learners on classroom-based courses is good. They track learners' progress well in both practical and theory sessions. However, feedback on a minority of assignments does not provide all learners with sufficient detail on how to improve. This contributes to their slow progress. In a minority of lessons, learners' written English is weak and teachers do not always correct errors in specific technical terms and job-related expressions. As a result, learners do not consistently use technical language that is commonplace in the industry.
- Most apprentices improve their skills through a wide range of well-organised, appropriate, additional qualifications. Many learners successfully complete specialist units tailored to specific company requirements, such as hydraulics and pneumatics.
- Learners on study programmes develop skills well. While most, particularly in motor vehicle, gain good experience by carrying out a range of work-related activities on motor vehicles in the workshops, very few attend a work-placement.
- Learners receive appropriate information, advice and guidance and initial assessment. Those approaching the end of their level 3 course understand their progression opportunities well. Local employers visit the college to provide useful talks about career opportunities and the demands and expectations in the motor industry. However, a few learners at level 1 and level 2 are unclear about the range of career opportunities.

- Staff promote equality and diversity themes effectively at induction. However, too many learners have only a superficial understanding of these and their application in the workplace, such as how to understand and respond to the needs of clients from diverse backgrounds.

Sport and public services

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good which reflects the improvement in the proportion of learners who complete their course and achieve their qualification. However, the proportion of learners achieving high grades on advanced courses is declining. Attendance in sport and public services lessons has improved and it is now high. Punctuality is good, especially in public services lessons. The number of learners progressing on to higher-level courses or into related employment is high.
- Teachers and support staff provide good care, support and guidance, which are highly valued by learners. Teachers help learners understand their options for careers well and all learners benefit from a wide range of work-related activity, including involvement in exciting sports projects and voluntary work in local schools. Sports learners, who perform well at college, take part in the "Balls to Poverty" project, a highly successful charity run by the college through which learners raise money and travel to Africa to provide football coaching for children. This develops personal and social skills, as well as a greater understanding of diversity.
- Teachers are well qualified and have extensive industry experience, which they use skilfully to motivate learners and support learning. Public services teachers use examples from their own service experience to maintain the interest of learners and improve their awareness of the challenges faced by military personnel. Sports teachers use their experience well to help learners develop coaching and leadership skills, which they use when volunteering in the community.
- Targets for improvement in learners' theory and practical work are insufficiently challenging and not always specific, which leads to a slow rate of progress for a minority of learners. Too many learners do not use their time in independent learning workshops well. Teachers do not provide sufficient guidance on how to develop the skills necessary to use this time productively.
- In lessons, teachers make effective use of praise and encouragement to motivate learners and maintain levels of concentration. Feedback on assessed work is accurate and helps learners to understand what they have achieved. Teachers routinely correct spelling mistakes and poor grammar in written work, but they are less confident in improving relevant mathematics skills during lessons.
- Teaching and learning resources are good. A newly constructed fitness suite is equipped with resources of a standard used in commercial facilities. Learners training to become fitness instructors make effective use of modern specialist equipment to test the fitness levels of their peers. Excellent links with professional sports clubs result in good work placements. Frequent use of practical training facilities at Nottingham Trent University ensures learners put theory into practice, develop practical sports skills and raises aspirations.
- Teachers and learners use technology well to promote and support learning. For example, in a practical badminton lesson, learners videoed each other and evaluated the extent to which they had used correct technique during a game.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity well and treat learners fairly. Most learners behave well in lessons and demonstrate respect for one another. Managers and staff widely celebrate learners' success inside and outside college through awards ceremonies and photographic displays in public areas.

Independent living and leisure skills**16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes**

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. This leads to excellent outcomes for learners who greatly increase their confidence, the range of their experiences and their abilities to function independently in the adult world. Learners produce high standards of work in practical lessons.
- Learners develop a wide range of life skills because teachers plan and provide particularly lively and stimulating lessons, which learners are eager to attend. Learners set up breakfast clubs where they develop good planning and team-working skills, practise handling and managing money and improve their communication skills. They develop their creativity by making items for craft markets and develop their social skills and confidence by visiting restaurants. Learners often use money raised through their enterprise projects to support their frequent visits to places of interest, or residential trips where they further develop their life skills and confidence.
- Knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed staff use their skills and expertise very effectively to provide an outstanding range of interesting and creative tasks in college and the local community. Very occasionally, teachers do not give a small number of learners enough time to reflect and organise their thoughts or practise explaining what they have learned.
- Staff work closely with parents, social services and specialist agencies to identify learners' skills and barriers to learning when they start their course. They support learners well in communicating their hopes and aspirations. Staff gain a very clear understanding of the full range of learners' skills and use this knowledge well to plan courses that ensure learners make excellent progress.
- Learners receive outstanding information, advice and guidance throughout their programmes. Staff are highly skilled at finding very successful work placements that match learners' skills and preferences. Employers value the contributions made by learners and often continue the placements outside college hours. Staff design outstanding learning activities so that learners make very good progress in developing decision-making and employability skills for adult life. The vast majority of learners progress to further learning at higher levels or voluntary work and a small minority gain employment.
- Resources are of a high standard and teachers integrate English and mathematics well into the learning materials. However, on a very small number of occasions, teachers give learners written materials which are too difficult, causing a minority to rely too heavily on support assistants for direction and information. Skilled assistants encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning through careful questioning, but at times, they are too quick to intervene, which limits learners' progress.
- Learners learn in a centre where staff value and respect all individuals. They benefit from the excellent curriculum, which improves their experience and understanding of the world at large. They participate, often for the first time, in a wealth of activities in the region.
- Attendance and punctuality are excellent. Learning achievement coaches provide outstanding support. They swiftly tackle welfare and pastoral issues, which might hinder learners' progress, by liaising sensitively with parents, carers and key workers.

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

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement; this reflects the outcomes which are low for GCSE, functional skills for learners aged 16 to 18 at level 1 and entry levels 1 and 3. However, outcomes are improving and high for all ages for functional skills at level 2 and adults at level 1. Since the last inspection, learners are making better progress because teachers and support staff have better information about their learning needs, and mostly plan courses to take account of these.
- Teachers plan the majority of lessons well and they include an appropriate range of activities for learners working at different levels of functional skills within the same lesson. For example, following a discussion in class, learners at level 2 use the notes taken by learners at level 1 to plan a formal presentation. In a minority of lessons, teachers rely too heavily on work sheets that do not interest learners and these learners make little progress. Not all teachers plan appropriate activities for learners for whom English is not their first language. These learners do not get the support they need to understand the instructions in the lesson which stops them participating well or making sufficient progress.
- Teachers' expectations of learners are not always high enough. Where they are high, learners respond well to the challenge. For example, in a lesson where the teacher effectively demonstrated how to use academic vocabulary, learners used these words to improve their discussion of literary texts. However, in the minority of lessons where teachers have low expectations they provide tasks that are too simple to motivate learners and allow learners too much time to complete them.
- The majority of teachers ask probing questions skilfully that help learners to develop their knowledge and deepen their understanding. When this happens, learners make good progress. However, in a few lessons, teachers answer their own questions when learners do not respond quickly. As a result, learners become inactive and allow teachers to do the work for them.
- The quality of assessment varies from very good to poor. In a few cases, teachers use a detailed feedback form to give learners useful comments on the quality of their work and specific targets for improving their skills. However, a small number of teachers do not correct errors or they correct them without explaining why.
- Teachers effectively use their knowledge of learners' skills when starting their course to provide useful additional support. They use board markers and transparent overlays in appropriate colours to help dyslexic learners. Teachers use the specialist English support staff very well, briefing them fully so that they can help learners effectively.
- Learners show respect for one another and teachers promote diversity well through the content of lessons. For example, in one lesson learners enjoyed creating a one-pot meal to satisfy the dietary needs of everyone, whatever their medical or religious needs. The promotion of equality takes place in the majority of lessons, for example through specific topics related to racial inequality or gender discrimination in texts in GCSE English.

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

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, reflecting the low levels of learners' success across most substantial courses. Improvements in provision have not been at the pace needed and too many learners do not value their mathematics lessons or the relevance of the skills they can gain. Staff have made insufficient progress in improving attendance, which remains low.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers demonstrate excellent practice, which motivates learners and helps them to make very good progress. Learners improve their confidence and skills, for example in their use of fractions or common calculations such as percentages. These teachers include an appropriate range of activities, which helps learners develop their mathematics skills. However, this high standard is too infrequent and too much teaching fails to keep learners interested or helps them understand the relevance of mathematics to their life or work.
- Teachers accurately identify which mathematics skills learners need to develop and ensure learners are studying at an appropriate level. Most teachers set specific targets for each learner and plan effective lessons using, for example, different learning and assessment materials for learners in the same class. However, not all teachers have adopted this practice. Individual teachers have developed good resources, but they have not shared these sufficiently to raise standards across the college. In too many lessons, teachers rely too heavily on learners completing paper-based worksheets, while other more engaging approaches to learning remain underused. Useful electronic materials are available for learners on the college VLE, but few learners make use of them.
- Most staff are appropriately qualified although a small minority do not have specialist mathematics qualifications. Teachers and classroom assistants work well with learners and support their progress. However, support is not always available from the beginning of every course and a small minority of learners with dyslexia do not receive support early enough in their course.
- A minority of learners in mathematics classes have English as their second language. A few of these have well-developed mathematical skills but do not understand examination and other questions and do not get sufficient support to improve their comprehension.
- Teachers provide learners with useful comments on the quality of their work during lessons, but written feedback does not always tell learners what they need to do to improve. Too many learners are unsure how well they are progressing towards their qualification.
- Links between mathematics classes and learners' vocational programmes are underdeveloped. Teachers set too few assignments in which learners can develop the mathematical skills relevant to their chosen occupation.
- Learners and teachers work together well and have appropriate respect for one another and for the diverse cultures found in the college. Lessons include activities associated with appropriate cultural events such as Armistice Day and Diwali, providing good opportunities to learn about different cultures and British values.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior managers and governors have set a clear strategic direction for the college and have managed the complex merger of two colleges well. They have a clear ambition for the college to provide education and training of a high standard and to improve the local economy and the aspirations and quality of life for local residents.
- Senior leaders work successfully with the local authority, the Local Enterprise Partnership and employers to ensure that provision is highly responsive to local and regional priorities. As a result, learners have good opportunities to progress to further study, apprenticeships, and employment. For example, the college is meeting local priorities in media, science, engineering, and construction and has developed apprenticeships needed by employers such as laboratory sciences, dental health, ground-works, solar panel installation, and logistics.
- Leaders and managers work particularly well to develop skills of disadvantaged learners, for example, through their work with Jobcentre Plus and the effective collaboration with the Community Learning Trust. These learners develop the skills, including English and mathematics, specified by companies seeking to recruit new employees.
- Governors bring a wide range of business skills and expertise to the board. They are very well informed and have a very good understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement, including any areas of particular concern. They hold senior leaders to account well by asking searching questions.
- Study programmes provide clear progression routes and enable learners to develop their personal, social and employability skills well. The design of programmes includes an aspiration to improve English and mathematics skills but, in too many subjects, learners make insufficient progress to develop these skills. The revised strategy and management of English and mathematics programmes have not sufficiently improved teaching, learning and assessment or learners' outcomes and curriculum managers are not always held to account for their learners' achievements.
- Management of staff performance is good. Managers make good use of data to monitor staff performance against a range of performance indicators. Teachers and managers are clear about their responsibilities and senior managers hold staff to account well and swiftly tackle underperformance. Managers support teachers and assessors in improving their practice through effective action plans and good professional development. Teachers who need to improve their teaching receive good support from the recently appointed teaching and learning coaches.
- Managers identify underperforming courses well through rigorous self-assessment and course reviews and they monitor action plans closely. Most managers of subject areas accurately evaluate the quality of their provision. However, in a minority of subject areas, they do not sufficiently identify areas for improvement and the targets they set to tackle specific causes of underperformance are not sufficiently challenging. Senior managers and governors monitor closely the detailed improvement plan.
- Apprenticeships have improved rapidly over the last three years because managers use revised quality systems well. Managers now regularly hold partners and subcontractors to account well for the quality of their courses. As a result, learners in subcontracted provision exceed the performance of learners attending the college.
- The promotion of equality and celebration of diversity are at the heart of the college. Managers successfully increase learners' awareness of equality and diversity through events and promotions throughout the year. Learners with a wide range of abilities and from different backgrounds receive a high level of support to overcome personal barriers to learning. The induction and tutorial programmes develop learners' understanding and tolerance of diverse

cultures. Managers monitor performance gaps between different groups closely and have successfully reduced previous gaps.

- Managers have worked hard to improve the work-related activities for learners on study programmes, and increasing numbers of learners are now benefitting from these. However, not all learners have sufficient opportunities to develop their vocational skills in the workplace.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. Managers regularly review the arrangements in the light of safeguarding cases. For example, all staff now report concerns to the designated safeguarding officer when, until recently, a small minority had reported to their line manager. All staff and governors undertake regular training on safeguarding. Staff and designated officers carry out risk assessments of all college activity and take precautions to prevent incidents occurring. Managers enforce well the robust policy for recruiting appropriate staff. Staff have created a safe environment for learners who state that they feel safe when at college. Staff are very aware of dangers of the internet and highlight well the importance of on-line safety to learners. Staff have strong links with local agencies that support vulnerable people, including the local safeguarding children board. Managers and staff have well-established arrangements for safeguarding learners from radicalisation and violent extremism.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Central College Nottingham

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	3		3
Outcomes for learners	3	3		3		3	3		3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	3		3		3	3		3
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2		2		2	2		2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and Social Care	3
Science	3
Mathematics and Statistics	3
Manufacturing Technologies	2
Motor vehicle	2
Sport	2
Public Services	2
Independent living and leisure skills	1
Foundation English	3
Foundation mathematics	3

Type of college	General further education college								
Age range of learners	14+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	24,345								
Principal/CEO	Mr Malcolm Cowgill								
Date of previous inspection	May 2013								
Website address	www.centralnottingham.ac.uk								
College 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+	
	767	1,488	959	2,718	1,162	856	6	223	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	416	1,448	205	744	0		46		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	N/A		N/A		N/A				
Number of learners aged 14-16	209								
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	209								
Number of community learners	530								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency								
At the time of inspection the college contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Learning Curve (JAA) Limited■ Manatec Limited■ TCV Employment and Training Services Limited■ Nova Centric Limited■ White Rose School of Beauty and Complimentary Therapy■ Mitre Training■ City College Nottingham■ Manufacturing Excellence■ GRA(GB) Limited■ Staffline Recruitment Limited■ Advance Care Training Limited.								

Contextual information

Central Nottingham College is a large general further education college with 10 sites within the Nottingham area. The college is the result of a merger of two colleges in 2011 and it now provides a very wide range of courses including apprenticeships, study programmes, community learning and part-time provision for 14-16 year olds. The college and some of its subcontractors provide higher education courses in partnership with universities in the East Midlands. Learners attending courses in the large number of subcontractors come from all parts of the country. Over a quarter of learners are from minority ethnic groups, which is higher than the proportion in the local area. Educational achievement in local schools at age 16 is low and falling.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Steven Tucker HMI

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

What inspection judgements mean

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

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

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

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To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk

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