

New College Swindon

General further education college

Inspection dates		1–5 December 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- most learners' achievements are good, particularly for learners aged 16 to 18 at level 1 and for those who study short programmes. Success rates for apprentices and workplace learners are outstanding
- partnership working with subcontractors is effective and benefits learners who receive a very high standard of training
- most teaching, learning and assessment are good and, as a result, learners make good progress and produce work of a high standard
- support for learners who need extra help to achieve as well as their peers is effective and, as a result, they make good progress
- learners benefit from a very good range of additional activities and events organised by staff and the learner body. Learners develop highly useful work-related, personal and social skills
- college leaders collaborate closely with the Swindon Local Enterprise Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce and, as a result, the well-developed curriculum provides a close match to learners' and employers' needs, as well as to local and regional employment priorities
- financial and resource management are very good. Learners value the high-quality specialist accommodation and facilities, which mirror the professional standards found in industry.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- teaching and learning are not yet outstanding and, as a result, not all learners achieve higher grades than those expected of them and a minority of learners on the second year of their A-level programme and in GCSE English do not make good or better progress
- target setting is not yet of a consistently high enough quality and teachers do not always provide learners with sufficiently detailed feedback in order to develop further their English and mathematics skills
- leaders and managers do not use rigorous self-assessment or the evaluation of data well enough to inform and prioritise quality improvement actions.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Implement fully, actions to ensure that teachers promote good or better progress for all learners within and outside lessons by ensuring teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of all learners to encourage them to achieve their full potential
 - focus specifically on skills development rather than the completion of tasks, providing feedback of a consistently high quality to learners on the standard of their work, so that they know more precisely what they need to do to improve their performance
 - measure learners' progress more frequently and thoroughly, and use challenging targets to help learners achieve their potential.
- Reinforce clearly the expectations of vocational teachers in developing English skills across all subjects and support them to become confident and expert in these. Improve further learners' English and mathematical skills through skilful use of vocational examples in learning and improve the teaching and learning of English by the specialist team.
- Develop further the offer and increase the uptake of work experience so that all learners on vocational courses have a real experience of work.
- Improve the way in which managers use the full range of data available to them to self-assess more accurately the relationship between outcomes data and the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The college provides study programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 at levels 1, 2 and 3. These make up just over half of the provision. Most adult learners are on work-based and short courses at levels 2 and 3. The number of learners aged 16 to 18 and adults studying A levels accounts for around a third of the provision. The number of apprentices, the majority of whom are on intermediate level apprenticeships, has increased significantly over the past three years. A small cohort of learners aged 14 to 16 attends college on part-time vocational courses; a minority attends on a full-time basis.
- Over the past three years, a high proportion of learners on college-based vocational programmes have achieved successfully. The large majority of learners aged 16 to 18 who complete level 1, 2 and 3 study programmes achieve their main qualification. Success rates on vocational courses are particularly high in mathematics and statistics, performing arts, information and communication technology (ICT) for users, travel and tourism, and administration. Most learners aged 14 to 16 achieve their qualifications.
- Learners' achievement of high grades on the majority of AS-level courses is good and is particularly strong in science, mathematics, and social sciences. High-grade pass rates for learners on the second year of their A-level programme are good for learners in science and mathematics subjects. However, learners do not always make the progress expected of them in the minority of other A-level subjects.
- Success rates for apprentices and learners studying courses in the workplace are outstanding. Good partnership working with a range of employers and subcontractors results in substantial benefits for learners. They progress well at work and are very successful in achieving their qualifications. The college works effectively with a number of subcontractors to provide a

significant number of unemployed people and offenders with skills that enable them to progress into employment.

- The college has responded positively to the implementation of study programmes. As a result, the number of learners studying for GCSEs in English and mathematics has increased significantly in 2013/14 and is now high. Learners enrol with low prior attainment in both English and mathematics. The proportion of learners who were successful in achieving GCSEs at grades A* to C in 2013/14 is higher than the low national rate in mathematics, but lower in English. Functional skills success rates are generally high, particularly for the significant numbers of adult learners.
- Most learners who continue with the study programme in their second year progress to a higher-level functional skill or to a GCSE in mathematics. However, only a few of the learners progress to a higher level in English. Learners develop good mathematics skills alongside their main studies. The college has an appropriate strategy for English, which has started to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, the development of learners' English skills requires further improvement.
- Learners attend well and are usually punctual. Learners behave well in lessons and around the college. Learners enjoy, and take pride in, studying at the college and feel safe. The college environment is inclusive and friendly and learners' respect for each other is evident.
- The college has a very strong focus on developing learners' work-related skills through a range of successful and, in many cases, innovative initiatives. For example, learners take part in a number of cross-college enterprise events, work with live business project briefs, and participate in volunteering activities. Small cohorts of learners take part in mentoring schemes offered by local businesses to improve their knowledge about work. Student executives organise and deliver thought-provoking additional activities events that develop personal and social skills.
- Learners on study programmes in hairdressing, beauty therapy, media, performing arts, leisure and tourism, and sport develop very good practical skills and become more knowledgeable about their subject areas, both in lessons and through a wide range of other work-related activities, including placements with employers.
- Learners mostly make rapid progress in acquiring good levels of skills. For example, learners on health and social care and early years courses in the workplace develop very high levels of skills that meet closely the needs of employers. In one AS-level history of art lesson, learners developed a broad understanding of the concepts of modern architecture by analysing how a range of architects creates very different modern structures by manipulating modern materials.
- Leaders and managers have been successful in reducing the gaps in achievement for some, but not all, learners. Learners aged 16 to 18 who receive additional learning support, the small cohort of learners aged 16 to 18 who care for others at home and those who were previously in receipt of free school meals, all achieve well. However, male learners do not perform as well as their female peers, particularly at level 3.
- Staff have been successful in collecting data on progression and destinations from learners when they finish their courses. Progression rates are particularly high for learners on level 3 courses into higher education, employment and training. Progression to higher education for those learners on level 3 courses who apply through UCAS have improved and are consistently high.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in learners' outcomes. Most lessons observed during the inspection were of a good quality. However, inspectors observed less outstanding practice than the college's lesson observation records indicated.

- The subject areas reported upon represent a sample of the most significant provision at the college. In addition, apprenticeships and workplace learning were included in the inspection as a result of significant growth in this work over the past three years.
- In most lessons, teachers set high expectations and, as a result, learners' skills are well developed and learners produce high quality work. Teachers regularly set learners suitably challenging homework. Teachers use questions skilfully to check, extend and deepen learners' knowledge of a topic.
- Staff assess and use learners' starting points comprehensively to identify the need for extra targeted support. Learners receive timely, high levels of support, both in and outside lessons. Support teachers and subject teachers communicate effectively and share relevant information. As a result, these learners complete their courses successfully.
- Teachers and assessors use their good skills and commercial experience well to deliver high quality teaching and learning. The college's staff training programme has a strong focus on teaching, learning and assessment.
- In weaker lessons, teachers do not always plan suitable learning and assessment activities that meet the needs of all learners. They rely too heavily on questions that fail to challenge the more able and support the less able learners. Teachers do not always use whole-group discussions well enough to develop learners' understanding of a topic, or to check and assess learning. As a result, not all learners make the progress of which they are capable.
- High-quality specialist accommodation and facilities contribute well to learners' progress. For example, teachers very skilfully use interactive whiteboards and make good use of their features to make lessons captivating and interesting. Teachers use the virtual learning environment (VLE) innovatively to support teaching, learning and assessment and to provide extension activities for the large number of learners who use it during the week and at weekends. In some areas, such as media, electronics and biology, the VLE is particularly well developed. Learners increase and extend their independence in learning using this resource.
- Most teachers provide learners with well-considered feedback. Learners in electronics, biology, ICT, and travel and tourism often receive immediate, helpful written feedback from their teachers using the VLE or email. In an A-level sociology lesson, learners took time to reflect on written and verbal feedback and considered how they might use it to improve further their essays on Marxism. Many learners make good use of peer assessment in lessons and learn effectively from each other. Assessors regularly assess apprentices in the workplace and use a wide variety of effective methods, such as quizzes and professional discussions, to check and develop learners' knowledge and practice.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Prospective learners and their parents and carers have access to a wide range of independent careers advice that fully supports the transition from school to college or to other providers. Learners enjoy attending information sharing events and find them helpful when making choices about study programmes and future career choices. Recent changes to interview and induction processes have not resulted in a reduction in the very small proportion of learners who leave their courses very early
- Learners on study programmes receive good advice and guidance regarding their career options. For instance, health and social care learners planning progression on to paediatric nursing were realistic about the high demand and the levels of competition for the limited university places available.
- Learners feel very safe. The majority of learners complete an e-safety qualification, which they use well to help them use the internet safely.
- The development of English and mathematics in subject areas requires further development. The better teaching and learning of English and mathematics are characterised by effective planning, and clearly linked to opportunities to develop the skills that prepare learners for future work and life. However, despite appropriate and timely training, subject teachers do not always sufficiently reinforce the importance of good levels of English and mathematics skills, or

routinely correct spelling, grammatical and syntax errors in learners' work. College apprentices access good support for English and mathematics at the study centre; as a result, they develop very good skills in these subjects.

- Target setting is not of a consistently high standard. Teachers' monitoring of learners' progress is not sufficiently rigorous; the complexity of different grades for the same subject often results in confused learners who are not clear about the levels that they are working at. As a result, a minority of learners at level 3 are working below their minimum level and do not make the expected progress or exceed the grades expected of them.
- The development of learners' work skills is good. Learners benefit from a wide range of work-related activities that teachers align well to their study programmes. For example, A-level law learners visit the law courts, and public services learners perform role play as part of the recruitment of new officers by the local police force. However, too few of the younger learners on study programmes undertake work experience with external organisations. Many learners have part-time jobs, but teachers do not always capture the skills and experience that they develop at work to enhance their learning at college.
- Learners treat each other and their teachers with respect. Many learners engage in a wide range of additional activities which helps to prepare them well for their future life in modern Britain. Many teachers promote equality and celebrate diversity in teaching and learning well. For example, sports learners play wheelchair basketball and compete with learners who are wheelchair users. A-level government and politics learners write essays and engage in discussions on the current world conflicts, and adult health and social care learners of Indian and Asian heritages at level 2 share information regarding their cultural attitudes and practices towards death and those dying with other learners. However, the celebration of diversity in lessons requires further improvement in a minority of subject areas.

Health, social care and early years

Outstanding

Apprenticeships

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding, reflecting the very high success levels for apprenticeships and workplace learners, most of whom achieve their qualifications within the time allocated. Apprentices develop good skills in English and mathematics and a high proportion successfully achieves their functional skills qualifications.
- Training partners and college-based assessors provide high-quality level 2 and level 3 health and social care and early years programmes for learners working in care and early years settings. Learners, such as domiciliary care providers and hospital transport drivers, receive customised training in a range of organisations. Learners make very good and sustained progress in their learning; they reflect well on the development of their professional practice and develop good research skills, which effectively prepare them to meet the needs of the adults, young people and children with whom they work.
- Assessors plan and structure programmes for health and social care and early years learners very well, with excellent options available to learners to meet individual and organisational needs. For example, hospital transport drivers complete specialist units including 'providing support on journeys' and 'supporting individuals who may be distressed'. Assessors ensure that learning programmes include a wide range of teaching and learning methods, which best suit individual learners. Assessors give very clear feedback, with good guidance and coaching to ensure learners understand what they have to do to complete the next activity or assignment.
- Assessors are very well qualified and strong advocates for their vocational areas. They regularly attend courses to update their knowledge in specialist areas. Learners benefit from relevant, real-work examples shared by the assessors using their previous experiences. Assessors motivate learners very well as they focus directly on developing learners' practical skills and knowledge, instilling high professional standards and expectations. For example, one assessor

used the professional discussion approach to enable a learner to provide evidence of a consistent approach to managing inappropriate child behaviour, both at nursery and at home.

- Staff use an outstanding range of initial assessment activities, including the exploration of learners’ existing skills and the opportunities in the workplace, to develop new skills and understanding. Learners and their managers use this analysis very well to develop individual learning programmes and, as a result, learners clearly understand their strengths and the areas they need to develop. For example, a few assessors are able to provide sensitive and practical support for dyslexic learners by enabling them to select and state their preferred assessment methods and approach to support.
- Thorough internal verification processes ensure a high level of consistency and high standards across all provision. Learners’ work is marked carefully, with constructive feedback and guidance on how to improve and, as a result, standards of work are high. Assessors effectively support learners to create neat, paper-based portfolios of evidence. These include well-written reflective journals, which clearly detail the day-to-day and night-to-night roles that carers/early years workers undertake, including examples such as providing night-time care for terminally ill clients. Learners use this evidence very well to illustrate their assignments with rich examples of their practical skills.
- Assessors use a very good range of strategies that develops learners’ confidence and skills in English, mathematics and information technology (IT). Assessors frequently monitor learners’ progress towards the achievement of functional skills qualifications, with a particular focus on early achievement. Employers value the good training opportunities available for their staff and appreciate the professionalism and high standards of the partner and college-based trainers.
- Learners receive very good support from assessors and employers in assessment and review sessions. They provide good advice and guidance on supporting learner development and improving independent learning skills.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and the celebration of cultural diversity are good. Assessors are imaginative and plan opportunities to thread references to equality of opportunity and awareness of cultural diversity within all health and social care training and in early years. For example, assessors make good reference to cultural preferences in care needs and in diet plans. Assessors embed safeguarding well within training. Learners feel confident in their work, are well equipped and provide the highest level of professional care for the adults, young people and children with whom they work.

Mathematics and statistics

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good which reflect the success rates of learners, which are mostly above national rates. Learners on AS- and A-level courses make good progress and most exceed their expected grades based on their GCSE entry grades. Learners without a mathematics GCSE grade C also make good progress.
- Teachers set high expectations and standards for their learners. They plan and manage well-focused lessons which create a productive working atmosphere. Group work within lessons encourages the development of communication, speaking and listening skills. However, teachers give insufficient attention to ensuring that learners explain their solutions with good mathematical layout and words.
- Teachers use effective question and answer techniques to provide pace and develop learners’ understanding. Teachers provide more difficult extension work for higher-ability learners. For example, in one lesson, teachers asked learners who completed an exercise early to convert their algebraic answers for successive transformations into a single matrix.

- Teachers are enthusiastic and are keen to develop and extend learners' understanding. They effectively explain how mathematical techniques and formulae are derived from first principles. However, on occasions, this approach goes beyond the understanding of many of the learners and can result in confusion.
- Teachers plan the assessment of learners' work well. They track progress against the target grades and learners know what they need to do in order to improve. Learners enjoy the coursework element of the programme and say it helps to consolidate their learning. They enthusiastically seek to use data from their interests or work outside of college. One learner used data from his work in a fast food outlet for a critical path analysis to determine the best timings of activities for serving meals in the minimum time.
- A wide range of subject enrichment activities promotes and encourages learners' progression to mathematics at a higher level. These include talks from visiting mathematicians, additional classes beyond the syllabus content, and entry into national competitions in mathematics. However, teachers do not always relate the importance of the applications of mathematics to business and industry in lessons.
- Learners benefit from high levels of support. They confirm that this is a key strength of the mathematics provision. Learners appreciate the availability of support through self or teacher referral, through planned additional classes or by drop-in sessions during their free time. Teachers use the college-wide system effectively to set target grades, to motivate and to keep learners on track.
- The wide range of courses meets the needs of learners well. Many of the course options and pathways, including different areas and applications of mathematics, offer learners a wide choice and increase the progression opportunities on to higher education or employment. However, staff do not track learners enough after they leave to know if the course offer is successful in achieving sustainable progression opportunities.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires further development. Support staff with sound mathematical knowledge work effectively alongside teachers and this ensures that learners with an identified learning need can make good progress in lessons. However, teachers do not use opportunities in lessons to develop learners' understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as is evident in the good progress learners make in lessons. Success rates are high overall. However, the subject area has not yet rectified the low success rates on AS- and A-level ICT and level 2 IT diploma courses, although some progress is being made.
- Last year, the expected progress of learners in relation to their prior attainment was low on the majority of courses. Teachers now have much higher expectations of their learners. They have adopted new assessment strategies and encouraged learners to aim for their target grades and higher. Attendance and punctuality are good.
- Learners are keen, enthusiastic and enjoy working effectively in lessons on tasks such as programming or using IT applications. Learners use mind maps well to analyse problems and consolidate their thoughts before planning solutions. All learners on work-related courses gain the skills for designing, coding and testing their programmes.
- All learners benefit from the good care and support they receive from their teachers and the carefully planned learning support. Full-time learners develop good independent learning skills

through teachers’ coaching and the use of online resources. The majority of learners make good progress in their studies and their standard of work is high.

- Most teachers plan carefully for individual learning needs, taking into account the full range of learners’ abilities. Learners use technology and the VLE very effectively within the college and at home. They acquire a fluent understanding of information technology through a range of teaching methods and challenging learning activities. This helps them to apply theory to practical situations. For example, learners used their skills of three-dimensional modelling well to produce the design for a room of their choice to include a variety of surface types and objects. In another lesson, learners were able to state clearly how security policies relate to IT systems in a doctor’s surgery.
- Teachers use learners’ starting points well to assess the need for extra targeted support, which is available when required. Assessment is good. Teachers assess learning frequently in lessons through a variety of methods, including the use of online feedback. Teachers’ effective questioning checks and extends learners’ understanding, enabling learners to apply their theoretical insight well and to improve their answers to practice examination questions. Learners effectively assess each other’s work against marking criteria and gain a better understanding of how to gain marks in examinations.
- Teachers provide learners with helpful written and verbal feedback, which enables them to increase their skills, especially computer system designing skills. Teachers set realistic short-term targets in discussion with the learners, who reflect on their learning in order to improve their performance and attendance. However, learning centre staff do not always encourage learners to reflect on the progress that they make; as a result, not all learners develop independent learning skills.
- Learners receive good pre-course advice and guidance and, as a result, most remain on their course. Staff provide learners with specialist help and advice regarding their progression to further and higher education during tutorials. Good quality work placements, visits to businesses and guest speakers from industry help to inspire learners when they plan their future careers and employment opportunities.
- Teachers develop successfully learners’ skills of logic and mathematics through naturally occurring activities in lessons. They develop learners’ English skills well through written assignments.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity requires further development. All learners have fair access to learning and assessment. However, not all teachers routinely plan to improve learners’ appreciation of equality or to celebrate diversity in lessons. Few females enrol on full-time courses; however, good initiatives are now in place to promote ICT to girls in local schools and within college. Learners develop well their knowledge of the diverse use of ICT in education systems globally in lesson activities and with visits from local employers.

<p>Performing arts and media</p> <p>16-19 study programmes</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which lead to learners making good progress in completing their study programmes. Attendance and punctuality are good. Learners work diligently, enjoy their learning and acquire good employability skills by aiming for professional standards in all aspects of their work.
- The standard of practical work is good overall and high in performing arts. Learners make good and, at times, significant progress in lessons, particularly where they set personal targets to evaluate in the lesson. Performing arts learners demonstrate their ability to rehearse

independently and successfully. The pantomime performed by level 3 learners captivated an audience of small children with powerful singing and choreography.

- Well-qualified teachers expect professional standards from all learners. Production arts learners apply prosthetics and colour inventively to their own faces and carefully consider the transformations. Challenging questions deepen their understanding of the technique. Level 3 media learners discussed the best clothing and equipment needed for a film runner working in different geographic locations through inventive role play. Teachers effectively encourage level 3 dance learners to become self-sufficient in their analysis of dance rhythm and movement.
- Teachers encourage the development of learners' skills and their understanding of theory. In creative media games, a starter activity of noughts and crosses, skilfully planned by the teacher, increased learners' understanding of chance, repetition and strategy related to digital games. In a music technology aural skills test of gospel music, learners were highly motivated to discuss oscillation theory and the history of synthesisers.
- In a minority of lessons, learners make less progress, particularly where target setting, critical analysis and self-evaluation are missing. In these lessons, learners do not gain sufficient confidence to reflect on their work and to plan their next stage effectively. At times, teachers do not adequately use questioning to include all learners, extend the theme or to check understanding. Teachers often overlook opportunities to develop further learners' English and mathematics skills.
- Learning resources are good overall and learners' access to technology and rehearsal spaces enables learners to work outside lessons. Resources on the VLE promote further learning well. Learners on music and media courses use online resources effectively to extend their learning and adopt the most current practices in their career area. Learners make good use of social media as a communication tool with staff. In a minority of classrooms, learners are too cramped and work with unsuitable furniture that occasionally, despite the best efforts of teachers, limits opportunities for effective group work.
- Teachers provide learners with good support, which is effective in helping learners to stay on course and achieve. Assistance for learners requiring specialist support is effective. Learners are successful with their intended progression routes. Staff provide learners with good guidance when applying for university, in particular the support for the preparation of show reels and audition repertoires. Performing arts and media learners progress well to higher studies.
- Assessment is good. Written work is of an appropriate standard and teachers mark with clear comments on how to improve. Teachers correct spelling, grammar and syntax. In performing arts lessons, teachers use plenary discussions effectively to develop learners' reflective skills and promote confidence in discussion. However, in a few lessons, learners do not have sufficient opportunities to develop these important transferable skills.
- Learners appreciate the range of enrichment activities that reinforce their career aspirations. Active partnerships with local companies provide learners with valuable opportunities to undertake live projects. Learners benefit from visits to film festivals, theatre productions and music events. The college has a choir, orchestra and dance company. Many learners perform in college and public venues.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity effectively. Teachers establish supportive learning environments where all learners feel able to contribute to discussions without embarrassment. In one media lesson, learners discussed the sensitive issues of gender, sexuality and the male gaze, while they identified the visual and written codes on magazine covers. Learners study music, media and performance texts from a wide cultural, social and political context. Drama learners enjoyed developing their understanding of diversity and valuing differences when studying the central character in the *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

English and modern foreign languages

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, reflected in the below average proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications. Too few learners meet or exceed their expected grades compared to their prior attainment, and the proportion that achieves grades of A* or B at AS or A level is below average. The proportion of learners who were successful in achieving GCSEs at grades A* to C in 2013/14 is low. However, managers have secured improvements so that current A-level and GCSE learners' progress has improved.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information to plan learning effectively. As a result, weaker lessons can be undemanding and do not use activities or set work that matches learners' abilities closely enough.
- Teachers' use of discussions to develop learning points does not always ensure all learners participate sufficiently. Teachers do not always use questions effectively enough to seek contributions from a minority of learners. This means that they often are unchallenged, and do not extend their understanding.
- Most foreign language teachers use their specialist language very effectively, including in lessons for beginners. For example, a lively Spanish GCSE lesson involved a high proportion of spoken Spanish and the learners made good progress in listening and understanding. However, teachers' strategies to encourage learners to gain confidence in speaking the foreign language are not always effective enough and, in a minority of lessons, teachers allow learners to revert to using English too easily.
- Teachers give learners valuable feedback in lessons. Teachers' marking and feedback on English assignments are mostly of high quality. In foreign language lessons, teachers help learners improve the accuracy of their grammar and vocabulary, for example while discussing their favourite food in French. However, teachers' feedback on the pronunciation and intonation of words and phrases is not always effective in helping learners become proficient in these skills.
- The teaching team is making improvements to the provision of advice and guidance and to the initial assessment it makes of learners' skills and aptitudes for studying languages. Consequently, in the current year, more learners are on the right courses relative to their ability level and career aims.
- Teachers use the increased amount of information they gain about learners' starting points well. Teachers use this information effectively to understand each learner's needs, to plan learning and assessment and to support learners during the course. For example, teachers support less-able learners well with managing coursework deadlines. However, teachers do not set sufficiently clear and specific targets during lessons or in tutorials. As a result, learners do not always understand what actions to take to help them to develop their skills further.
- In the best lessons, teachers ensure that learners produce work of a high standard and develop their skills well. For example, in a German lesson, learners read a challenging text on the fall of the Berlin Wall competently and demonstrated good learning of new vocabulary. They then produced accurate summaries of the content and compared their answers using a bar chart.
- In lessons, teachers often choose wide-ranging and relevant topics and use these to encourage learners to develop their interests and to appreciate the connections between different genres. For example, in an English literature lesson, the teacher led the learners skilfully from their knowledge of contemporary comedy to an appreciation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.
- Teachers are appropriately qualified and they produce good quality resources to support learners in lessons. However, the quality of the English and foreign language resources on the virtual learning environment are under developed.

- A wide range of English and foreign language courses is offered, covering several levels of study which support learners’ good progression from beginner to a more advanced level. In particular, the foreign languages curriculum is very good and includes French, German and Spanish, as well as Arabic, Polish and Portuguese.
- Staff encourage full-time learners to take part in a wide range of activities to extend their personal and social skills as well as prepare them for further study and employment. They support learners to take additional qualifications in managing personal finance, internet safety and employability skills.
- Teachers promote themes of equality of opportunity and awareness of diversity well. They make good use of the materials used in lessons to explore concepts such as tolerance and diversity. Learners treat each other with respect. However, a minority of teachers make too little use of naturally occurring opportunities to discuss topics such as tackling discrimination.

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

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which reflect the functional skills’ success rates of learners, which are high, particularly at level 2.
- Teachers identify quickly where learners lack confidence and are reluctant to work on their English skills as result of previous, unsuccessful learning experiences. They provide a wide range of support which has improved previously low attendance rates and learners’ motivation.
- In the most successful lessons, teachers introduce learning in clear, small steps. They encourage learners to work independently and to produce good standards of written work. As a result, learners make good progress. Teachers have particularly high expectations of adult learners and, as a result, adults enjoy their lessons, are highly motivated and make very good progress.
- In the majority of lessons where teaching and learning are most successful, teachers use clear skills-based objectives, a wide range of activities and a structured approach to developing learners’ understanding of key concepts such as different approaches in reading for meaning. Learners benefit from small group work to practise their communication skills and extend their reading and writing techniques.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers use lesson activities which focus on task completion rather than skill acquisition and do not always explain the purpose of these well enough. They place insufficient emphasis on the development of learners’ confidence and their abilities to use a range of skills, for example reading to identify key information and responding clearly both orally and in writing. Learners often depend too much on teachers to provide additional explanations and solutions rather than thinking for themselves.
- Most teachers make good use of interactive display boards and video clips to illustrate new ideas and summarise key points in lessons. They ensure learners have access to computers for in-class work. For example, adult learners in a community class used laptops very effectively to research the range of vocabulary used in describing images.
- Teachers correctly identify individual learners’ needs at the start of their course. They use this information well to ensure that learners are on the appropriate level of course and grouped with similar learners, maximising support and learning opportunities. Learning support staff work with teachers well to support learners with personal issues, specific learning needs or barriers to learning.
- Teachers provide detailed and helpful feedback on assessed work, so that learners know what they need to do to improve. Teachers often provide constructive, verbal feedback for learners on functional skills courses in lessons.

- Most learners receive good support from staff; as a result, they understand the importance of gaining an English qualification to help with their future career aims, including their route into employment.
- Teachers promote equality of opportunity well so that learners feel safe, behave well and treat others with respect. Learners widen their knowledge and understanding of the diversity in the wider world, as teachers use course materials routinely which consider issues such as differences in culture and values relative to race and heritage.

Accounting, finance and business management

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as reflected in the progress learners make. Although learners' achievements are broadly average on the smaller provision of accountancy, learners on finance courses make good progress and achievements are good. However, AS-level business studies and AS-level applied business learner achievements require improvement. Learners attend lessons punctually and they arrive ready to learn.
- Learners benefit from a very high level of subject enthusiasm and care from their teachers, who are well qualified and strong advocates for their subjects. Intermediate-level learners receive very good support from additional academic instructors who provide additional help in lessons; as a result, the majority of learners are engaged and enjoy their learning. Accountancy learners benefit from a strong VLE; they use the interactive online resources well to check and extend their learning.
- Teachers carefully plan their lessons and they make good use of a broad range of contemporary business examples in well-prepared teaching resources. A narrow, and not always effective, range of activities for checking learning during lessons limits the progress that learners make and impedes the progress of the most and least able learners.
- Teachers use questioning techniques widely and frequently in lessons. However, teachers are often too quick to develop learners' initial answers themselves, rather than opening the opportunities out for other learners to extend their understanding. Too often, teachers' questioning is limited to a dialogue with an individual student, and other learners in the class lose interest and concentration; this is more prevalent within the business studies provision.
- In the better lessons, teachers use more innovative strategies well to allow learners to check their own progress. For example, accountancy learners enjoyed a starter activity which involved completing a definition quiz on their smartphones, providing good and prompt feedback on their understanding of basic accounting principles. However, teachers do not always include sufficient opportunities to check learning within or at the end of lessons and learners miss the opportunity to reflect on, and assess, their own learning.
- Learners benefit from teachers' consistent focus on how to improve their performance in subject-based assignments and examinations. For example, business studies learners extended their understanding of the 'think global, act local' business practices in a global economy, using a contemporary campaign adopted by a well-known biscuit brand. Teachers do not always give enough attention to the importance of good English skills development to support further progress. Few lessons include opportunities for learners to develop speaking and listening skills and to gain feedback on the accuracy of written English; this is particularly apparent for less able learners.
- Learners benefit from opportunities to develop their mathematics skills through both planned activities and naturally occurring opportunities. For example, GCSE business studies learners were encouraged to develop their understanding of percentages by estimating the proportion of the average worker's salary paid in income tax versus the rates of tax paid by some large

multinational companies. This resulted in a lively and focused discussion on the importance of percentages, rather than raw amounts of money, to appreciate the significance of monies involved.

- Teachers set homework regularly and learners receive concise and helpful comments on how to improve. Learners are encouraged to maintain good records of their learning and, in the better lessons, teachers regularly remind learners of how these comments can enhance their revision of the subject.
- Teachers' monitoring of learners' progress is not sufficiently rigorous. The complexity of the different graded marks used by teachers often results in learners being unclear about the precise level at which they are performing. Although learners receive good pastoral care and support from teachers for their wider welfare needs, there is a lack of focus in enabling learners to set precise and relevant targets for their academic performance and to identify specific improvements, including the further development of English skills.
- Intermediate level learners enjoy and benefit from the strong employability focus on their programme of study, but advanced level learners do not have access to sufficient opportunities to develop their work-related knowledge and skills. The promotion and celebration of diversity within the curriculum is underdeveloped and requires improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The Principal and managers promote strongly a friendly, inclusive and enjoyable learning environment. Learners and staff work harmoniously and respectfully together. The Principal and governors set a clear strategic direction and ambitious strategic aims. They are making good progress in achieving most of these aims; however, milestones and success criteria to measure progress are underdeveloped which limits accurate assessment. Managers and governors review performance regularly compared to five main indicators, which include challenging targets. Managers have not met the single high-level target set for learners' success, but have met other targets including those for financial stability, increased recruitment of learners and curriculum development.
- Rigorous performance management of staff is contributing significantly to improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, personal objectives set for staff are not always sharply focused on relevant improvement points. Only recently have managers placed enough focus on making sure learners make the best possible progress by using targets and ensuring they receive demanding teaching. Staff receive extensive and valuable staff development, which is increasingly matched well to their individual needs.
- Managers' use of quality assurance arrangements is improving rapidly; however, several aspects, including the lesson observation scheme and subject level self-assessment, require improvement except for in work-based learning where these are effective. Revisions to the lesson observation scheme have increased its rigour, but managers' overall evaluation of the quality of teaching is over generous. Course-level reviews are very useful; however, other self-assessment reports lack rigour. Managers' use of data to inform improvement actions is extensive; but some evaluation, particularly at team level, lacks a sharp focus on evaluating the full range of main performance measures.
- Since the previous inspection, managers' actions for improvement alongside close monitoring of learners' performance have ensured that most groups of learners' outcomes have improved. In particular, younger learners' success on vocational courses at level 3 has improved markedly. However, over the last three years, the rate of improvement in adults' outcomes on classroom-based courses has been too slow. Managers have ensured that the majority of the large AS- and A-level provision is of good quality and are making improvements, albeit recently, to the minority of subjects which underperform.

- The management structure is strong, particularly through the recent inclusion of additional posts with specific responsibilities for quality assurance and improvement, adult provision, and senior subject team leaders. The management of apprenticeships and workplace learning is highly effective, particularly in subcontracted partnership provision, as shown by learners' excellent outcomes, including their good development of English and mathematical skills. Managers' very good and well-established links with employers are beneficial for both parties. Resources and accommodation are of high quality and managed very well.
- Governors monitor the college's performance and its finances carefully. They are particularly effective in their overview of curriculum development so that it meet the needs of local and regional employers and learners in Swindon. They review learners' qualification success rates regularly; however, their overview of the quality of teaching and learning requires improvement as it does not draw on a wide enough set of indicators to establish accurately the quality of provision.
- Because of the relevant and interesting curriculum and the college's good reputation, the number of learners has increased significantly since the previous inspection. Managers have carefully developed the curriculum to meet the learners' needs, particularly younger learners. Curriculum planning includes thorough consideration of local and regional employment needs alongside close collaboration with the Swindon Local Enterprise Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce. Managers are reviewing the curriculum for adults to align this more closely to learners' needs.
- Staff promote learners' understanding of diversity well. The support provided for learners, particularly the increasing proportion that are vulnerable, is well resourced and managed very effectively. However, managers' strategies to promote male achievement, particularly on level 3 courses, have not yet been fully effective.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good and meet statutory requirements. Knowledgeable and experienced managers use well-developed strategies and careful risk assessment to promote learners' safety and reduce risks of harm. The safeguarding team deals very effectively with a wide range and increasing number of safeguarding concerns in a supportive way. The team works closely with the local children's services department and a range of external agencies, including those that support learners with mental health issues, to promote learners' safety. Managers promote e-safety very well and prioritise the staff training in protecting learners from the risks associated with radicalism and extremism.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

New College Swindon


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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	1
Early years and playwork	1
Mathematics and statistics	2
ICT for users	2
ICT practitioners	2
Performing arts	2
Media and communication	2

English	3
Modern foreign languages	3
Foundation English	2
Business management	3
Accounting and finance	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	10,544 (13/14)							
Principal/CEO	Mr Graham Taylor							
Date of previous inspection	19/01/2009							
Website address	http://www.newcollege.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+
	135	670	720	717	2419	516	-	1
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	73	380	29	255	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16	158							
Full-time	53							
Part-time	105							
Number of community learners	374							
Number of employability learners	NA							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Academy of Music & Sound (Swindon) ■ Astara Training ■ Best Practice Training ■ Bulford Community Learning Centre ■ Dorset Football Association ■ Haddon Training ■ Integer Training ■ Lean Education & Development ■ Royal Artillery CPD ■ Salisbury & District Value Cars ■ Stepping Stones Training & Education ■ Tribal Education 							

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- Universal Learning Streams
 - Wiltshire County Football Association

Contextual information

New College Swindon is a medium-sized further education college in the town of Swindon. The college provides courses nationally for adults and for companies. Most full-time learners aged 16 to 18 live within a 25-mile radius of the main Swindon site. The college has grown rapidly in apprenticeships, workplace learning and community skills learning. The college offers courses in 14 of the 15 sector subject areas; the largest areas are mathematics and science, preparation for life and work, information and communication technology, creative arts and business. The proportion of pupils achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, in Swindon in 2013 was well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Denise Olander HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and eight additional inspectors, assisted by the director of quality as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on 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 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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