

Stockport College

General further education college

Inspection dates		08-12 December 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate-4
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications or apprenticeships varies between subjects and is too low in a few
- although improved since the last inspection, the quality of English and mathematics teaching requires further improvement. Teachers do not support all learners sufficiently to improve their English and mathematics skills
- recently improved quality assurance arrangements have led to rapid improvements across most areas in the college but progress in some subject areas is too slow
- not all teachers use the information gathered at the start of courses about learners' prior achievements and individual support needs sufficiently well when planning learning activities
- aspects of assessment require improvement. Teachers in a few subject areas do not relate assessment tasks to employment scenarios and written feedback is not always sufficiently clear to show learners how to improve their work
- not all teachers adapt the range of resources available to promote equality and diversity sufficiently well for learners to consider the relevance to their planned careers.

This provider has the following strengths:

- the considerable commitment of the new leadership team to bring about rapid improvements across all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. This has much improved staff morale and raised learners' aspirations
- staff provide very effective information, advice and guidance to learners to place them on the correct level of study. This has resulted in many more learners staying on their courses this year
- in most subjects, learners develop good practical skills to prepare them well for the world of work
- the successful and well-managed curriculum changes to make the college a centre of vocational provision. Managers respond very well to the priorities of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the needs of local employers.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that improvements in teaching, learning and assessment lead to a further increase in the number of learners who make good progress so that the proportions who successfully achieve their learning goals improve significantly.
- Managers should ensure that standards of teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics improve further, particularly for learners on 16 to 19 study programmes, so that more learners achieve qualifications in these subjects.
- Managers should focus efforts on implementing quality assurance arrangements across all curriculum areas to bring about improvements to remaining underperforming courses. Through this, improve the progress that learners make in developing skills and achieving qualifications.
- Ensure all teachers use information about learners gathered at the start of their courses more effectively when planning learning. Meet all individual learners' needs better so that all learners make good progress in relation to their starting points.
- Improve the quality of written feedback that teachers provide to learners and apprentices, to help them understand what they need to do to improve. Ensure that, in all subjects, teachers set assessment tasks that relate closely to employment scenarios to better prepare learners for the workplace.
- Ensure teachers plan more carefully the topics relating to equality and diversity to support learners and apprentices in improving their understanding of how these relate to their future employment.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The college offers a range of courses covering the majority of subject areas. Study programmes for 16 to 18-year-olds from entry to level 3 accounts for approximately 37% of learners. Programmes of study for adults from entry to level 3 accounts for approximately 52% of learners. Apprentices and advanced apprentices make up the remaining 11% of learners. The subject areas selected for grading on this inspection cover the learning programmes of around 40% of learners and apprentices. ▪ Managers implemented a range of appropriate actions towards the end of last academic year, which were successful in improving the quality of provision. Further enhanced and strengthened in the current academic year, these have resulted in far fewer learners dropping out of their courses compared to the same time last year. Although only recently introduced, improved monitoring procedures now ensure that learners are making at least adequate and sometimes good progress towards achieving their learning goals. ▪ Actions taken towards the end of 2013/14 were successful in enabling a good proportion of learners who had fallen behind schedule to achieve. Success rates remained low for the year, declining in a minority of subject areas, because too many learners had left their courses, without completing them, early in the year. ▪ Across subject areas, success rates in 2013/14 varied. In hairdressing, beauty therapy, hospitality and catering, and arts, subject areas that have high numbers of learners, success rates improved and were high. In other subject areas, for example construction, the proportions of learners of all ages who completed their qualifications successfully were below the average for similar colleges. 	

- The proportions of apprentices, including those following programmes with a subcontractor, that successfully completed their framework improved from a low starting point in 2013/14 but require further improvement. The proportions who complete within the planned time have also improved, but a significant minority of apprentices still make slow progress.
- Close monitoring and robust actions have resulted in a narrowing of achievement gaps for many learners. However, females continue to do better than males. Although the difference is reducing, more looked-after children leave courses early compared to their peers. Much improved initial assessment and the earlier provision of appropriate support has reduced the number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who leave early.
- In 2013/14, learners made slow progress in improving their skills and achieving qualifications in English and mathematics. The proportions of learners achieving GCSE grades A* to C or functional skills qualifications in English in 2013/14 were low. In mathematics, although the proportion of adults achieving GCSE mathematics improved, this remained below the average for learners at similar colleges. For learners on 16 to 19 study programmes taking GCSE mathematics, the proportions who achieved high grades were too low. For learners of all ages taking functional skills qualifications success rates were also too low. Improved arrangements for the delivery of English and mathematics this year have resulted in learners making better progress in these subjects. Low attendance at some functional skills lessons hinders the progress made by a few learners.
- Attendance has improved compared to 2013/14, although it remains an area for improvement in a few subject areas. Learners attend well in many curriculum areas such as business studies, science, information and communication technology, English for speakers of other languages and hospitality and catering. In a few construction subjects, and in mathematics and English, attendance is too low.
- Learners enjoy their studies and develop good practical skills. Those on study programmes improve their personal, social and employability skills well through good enrichment, work-taster activities and work placements. In the majority of vocational areas, learners have good opportunities to participate in skills and sports competitions, often achieving high success and recognition.
- College data indicate that the majority of learners progress to higher levels of study at Stockport College, into higher education institutions, apprenticeships or jobs. The college is working hard to reduce the numbers of learners whose destination is unknown.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Since February 2014, a new management team has successfully implemented a wide range of measures to improve teaching, learning and assessment. They introduced these measures too late to prevent the high number of learners that dropped out of their courses in the autumn of 2013. Managers and staff ensured that most of the improvement actions were in place for the 2014/15 academic year. Improvements include better guidance to learners applying for courses, more accurate assessment of learners' skills in order to place them on the correct programmes, and improved planning for learning and assessment. These actions result in teachers and support staff providing a much-improved experience for learners. The proportion of learners who have remained on courses is much higher in the current year than at the same period last year.
- Teachers have completed extensive staff development in the past six months, focusing well on improving their planning of learning. Teachers carefully plan the skills or knowledge learners will acquire in each lesson, and in most cases check that learners have gained these at the end of the session. In many subjects, teachers make good use of information learning technology (ILT) to explain or deepen learners' understanding of topics taught. In mathematics, teachers use ILT effectively to explain ratios.
- Teachers are not yet sufficiently skilled at planning learning that meets all learners' needs. Too often teachers do not set increasingly complex tasks for learners that are more able: they

complete work quickly and become disinterested as they wait for others to catch up. Equally, teachers do not adjust their teaching to match the pace of slower learners, who at times struggle to understand instructions and are unable to complete tasks.

- Assessment of learning requires improvement. Although teachers have improved the scheduling of assessments so that they are more regular, in a minority of subjects learners do not know how or when they will be assessed. Teachers in a few subjects do not link the assessment tasks closely enough to the vocational context of the subject in order to improve learners' preparation for employment.
- Most teachers provide good oral feedback that helps learners understand what they have achieved. In a small number of subjects, teachers do not provide enough formative feedback to help learners improve early drafts of their work. Too often, written feedback on learners' work lacks enough detail to help learners make improvements.
- Teachers use targets with learners well on the majority of study programmes and undertake regular reviews so that learners know how well they are doing. The majority of apprentices receive good support, but assessors do not have a comprehensive enough overview of the progress apprentices make across all aspects of their programmes.
- Staff provide good guidance to learners to inform them about their options at college and most learners enrol on programmes that meet their learning and career goals. Learners make good use of the college's links with a national recruitment agency and the local careers service to find employment and to receive training on how to apply for jobs. Although arrangements to provide independent careers guidance are adequate, staff have yet to ensure that all learners on study programmes receive comprehensive guidance, particularly those who do not plan to continue in education or training.
- On the majority of study programmes staff focus well on helping learners gain skills for employment. This is particularly successful in catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, where all learners complete work experience in addition to learning valuable skills in the college's training restaurant and salons. On a minority of study programmes, including in construction, teachers do not reinforce employment skills such as attendance and punctuality sufficiently.
- Staff accurately assess learners' skills in English and mathematics at the start of the course, and use this information well to place learners on the correct level of study in these subjects. Subsequently, the proportion of learners who have transferred between levels of learning has reduced substantially compared to previous years.
- Staff accurately identify learners who need extra help to be successful and provide additional support quickly and effectively. In a small number of cases, insufficient support is available in class and this impedes learners' progress.
- Teaching that requires improvement and low attendance in mathematics classes results in learners making insufficient progress in improving their mathematics skills. Within vocational subjects, not enough teachers incorporate teaching of mathematical skills into lessons. In a minority of subjects, teachers ensure that learners have a good knowledge of relevant mathematical skills to aid them in future jobs. For example, learners in the military academy successfully learned how to calculate timings on a 24 hour clock.
- The majority of learners develop good skills in the use of spoken English. Teachers guide learners well on how to present information orally, for example when making presentations in class. The majority of teachers use effective strategies to help learners with their written English. For example, in catering, teachers frequently check learners' ability to spell technical words associated with cookery. In a minority of subjects, teachers and assessors do not adequately show learners how to spot and correct errors in their written work.
- Teachers make insufficient use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to extend learning outside the classroom. In a small minority of subjects, including GCSE English and vocational courses in information technology, learners make good use of the broad range of resources available. In the majority of subjects, teachers and assessors have yet to provide interesting resources, or plan learning activities so that learners extend their learning and quicken the progress they make on their programmes.

- Staff are successful in ensuring that learners feel safe in college and that they respect their peers. Teachers mostly plan activities well in order to integrate different groups of learners. They do not sufficiently develop learners' understanding of issues related to social diversity. In a minority of subjects, teachers plan highly effective activities that help learners understand the importance of tolerance and social awareness for specific jobs. For example, public services learners are aware of social stereotypes and the need for police officers to retain an open mind about different groups of people. In too many subjects, teachers do not adapt materials sufficiently to raise learners' awareness of how an improved understanding of social diversity will help them in future jobs roles.

Health, social care and early years and playwork

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and reflect outcomes for learners. Although improved in 2013/14 the proportions of learners who achieve their qualifications remain just below or around the average for similar colleges.
- Although reducing, the proportion of teaching that requires improvement remains too high. In these lessons, teachers do not plan sufficiently well to match learners' needs and abilities. For the most able learners, the pace of learning is too slow and tasks have insufficient challenge. For learners of lower ability, the pace of lessons can be too quick giving them insufficient time to complete tasks effectively.
- In the increasing proportion of good lessons, teachers engage learners well in challenging activities through which they make good progress and improve their skills and knowledge. In a level 3 lesson, learners researched the origins and aspects of complementary health therapies and evaluated their effectiveness in treating medical illnesses in comparison to orthodox treatments. In another session, learners investigated how changes to nutrition levels affect different client groups.
- Most teachers use their vocational experience well to deliver learning in a realistic context. They plan a good range of activities that develop learners' work-related skills, such as visits to nurseries, schools, residential care homes and social care settings. A minority of teachers are not up to date with current practices. This limits the richness of work-related examples that they can use in their teaching. All learners have work experience planned as part of their study programmes. Teachers encourage learners well to reflect on their practice when on work placement and emphasise the importance of maintaining professional standards.
- Learning resources require improvement. Teaching rooms used for the practical development of health and social care skills are cramped. Set out as standard classrooms, they do not reflect realistic working environments. Interactive whiteboards are not used to their full potential in the majority of classes, their use mostly limited to displaying presentations. A few teachers use online video clips well to illustrate vocational scenarios and stimulate discussion.
- Teachers use the results of initial assessment well to set clear targets for learners covering all areas of their programmes of study. They encourage learners to review their progress and set their own short-term targets, helping them well to focus on what they need to do to improve. Teachers encourage learners to refer to the comprehensive tracking documents to be clear about the progress they are making.
- Assessment requires improvement. The often good verbal feedback is rarely reinforced by detailed written feedback. As a result learners do not always know what to do to improve their work.
- Teachers improve learners' English skills well in most level 3 lessons. This is not always the case for learners at level 1 and 2 where teachers do not always correct spelling and grammatical errors.

- Teachers' planning to integrate mathematics into vocational teaching requires improvement. Although teachers now work more closely with specialist mathematics teachers to plan mathematics activities, their execution within lessons often confuses learners.
- Staff provide good advice and guidance to learners about their intended future careers. Learners on level 3 courses are very well informed about future learning opportunities and fully aware of the grades required to progress to higher learning.
- The integration of equality and diversity into teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. A few good examples exist; early years learners are involved in a project to raise money for Namibia after learning about the conditions that children and families experience there. In one well-planned health and social care lesson, a debate on the subject 'equality in an unequal society' challenged learners to discuss how examples of inequality affect health and social care provision. In most lessons, teachers make insufficient links between social diversity and the vocational subject matter even where the subject provides good opportunity.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. The proportions of apprentices who successfully achieve their qualification have improved, but remain low. In practical lessons and the minority of theory lessons where teaching is of a higher standard, skilful planning and relevant activities enable current apprentices to make good progress. Progress is not as rapid in theory lessons.
- In practical lessons, teachers ensure that apprentices develop their practical skills well. For example, teachers guide apprentices on engineering operations programmes so that they make good progress in improving their welding skills on tee and butt joints. Teachers encourage apprentices well to identify how they could improve their skills. As a result apprentices and employers recognise a progressive improvement in the standard of their work. Highly skilled workplace mentors are good role models, guiding apprentices well to develop their engineering skills and adopt good health and safety practices.
- Teachers and assessors identify apprentices' starting points accurately and the large majority of apprentices join courses at the appropriate level. Staff consider employers' needs well when apprentices' training programmes are developed. However, teachers and assessors do not make sufficient use of this information when planning learning activities, particularly in theory lessons.
- Teachers and assessors use their good industrial experience well to provide apprentices with relevant and interesting examples in lessons. Teachers' use of ILT to present learning points in a more interesting way in lessons is effective. For example, in one lesson, apprentices learned how to develop an oblique cone and how to rotate and view three-dimensional assemblies using a computer-aided design system. Although teachers have also improved the access apprentices have to online assessment materials, they do not sufficiently populate the college's VLE with good quality engineering study materials to enable apprentices to learn independently.
- Assessment requires improvement. Verbal feedback provided on completion of practical tasks is clear and helps apprentices to understand how they could improve. Feedback provided on apprentices' assignment and written work is often too brief, not providing sufficiently clear guidance about what apprentices need to do to improve further. For example, teachers and assessors fail to highlight incorrect line thicknesses in apprentices' engineering drawings.
- The quality of apprentices' progress reviews carried out by staff has improved notably but requires further improvement. Recent progress reviews have been more helpful to apprentices in enabling them to identify how well they are progressing. Targets set in reviews too often relate simply to deadlines for assessed work and do not sufficiently focus on the steps apprentices and their employers could take to improve their skills.

- Teachers have a good understanding of apprentices' progress in individual classes. Before recent improvements, overall tracking and monitoring of apprentices' progress across all aspects of their frameworks was ineffective. Apprentices often made slow progress as a result. A much improved but only recently introduced tracking system analyses better the progress of different groups of apprentices.
- Teachers promote and embed activities to develop apprentices' mathematical skills well, capitalising appropriately on the many links to engineering practice. However, approaches to improving apprentices' English skills require improvement. Staff do not sufficiently reinforce the importance of good English skills for future employment progression. Teachers and assessors do not identify or correct apprentices' spelling and grammatical errors in their written work routinely, and a small minority of learning materials contain errors.
- Apprentices feel safe in the college and their workplaces. They have a clear understanding of safe practices at work and their rights and responsibilities. The promotion of diversity requires improvement. Teachers do not plan lessons well enough to challenge and develop apprentices' awareness of equality and diversity themes beyond a basic level and do not sufficiently develop their understanding of the impact equality and diversity will have on their working lives as engineers.

Performing and visual arts

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and, as a result, a high proportion of learners achieve their qualifications. Learners progress well between different levels of courses within the college, and on to highly competitive universities.
- Imaginative teaching encourages learners to experiment freely using a wide range of techniques and materials to develop skills and knowledge rapidly. For example, textile learners created clever crabs' claw collages. Graphics learners produced quirky emoticons apps, and art and design learners produced vibrant commercial posters. High-quality drawing underpins learners' good progress. Sketchbooks are fresh and lively and contain a good range of sophisticated mark-making, including painting with treacle and chocolate. Performing arts learners' Christmas pantomime performance 'Robin Hood and his Babes in the Wood' received very good local press reviews.
- Good teaching, learning and assessment resources support learning well. Teachers are practicing artists, actors, dancers and designers. They use their vocational experience well to develop learners' employability skills. Well-crafted assignments contain challenging tasks. Learners often refer back to them as useful revision aids. Learners have sufficient access to industry standard facilities including fine art, fashion and textiles studios and theatres. Through these, they develop a rich skills base. However, a minority of the studios are cold, which impedes learners' concentration.
- Teachers plan good enrichment activities for learners including visits to theatres, galleries and gigs. Recent visits have included trips backstage to the Royal Exchange Theatre as well as a visit to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. These activities help learners to articulate their own ideas and career intentions more effectively.
- Assessment is well organised and effective. Teachers check learners' understanding frequently using a wide range of questioning techniques directed to both groups and to individuals. They also provide learners with detailed feedback on their written and practical work, which helps them to take responsibility for their own learning and progress. Performing arts teachers direct learners to the good range of material on the VLE for this subject area to extend learners' opportunities to research outside of the classroom.

- Teachers support learners well. Individuals' support needs are assessed efficiently at the start of their course and, if required, support is provided swiftly. Learners receive good advice and guidance on progression to higher education but advice for those seeking employment is limited and requires improvement.
- Learners' individual study programme plans contain clear and challenging targets. During personal tutorials, teachers thoroughly review progress with learners. Learners understand how to improve their work because of thorough and precise feedback from teachers. Learners perceive the college to be a safe environment in which to study and learn. Teachers consult with their learners regularly and use their views about the quality of the provision to make appropriate changes.
- Teachers integrate English and mathematics well into visual and performing arts coursework. Lively group critiques help learners articulate their ideas and intentions clearly. Fine art learners are guided well to use proportion and scale precisely when drawing life models. Teachers encourage textile learners to complete complex mathematical calculations when repeating motifs.
- Teachers carefully plan references to other cultures, values and beliefs in teaching and learning. As a result learners' sketchbooks and coursework are richer and often very refined. Well written assignment briefs give learners many opportunities to develop their knowledge of equality and understanding of diversity. For example, graphics learners explored the impact of conflict in society when they designed powerful images based on the poppy commemorating the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. Fine art learners recently explored the issues of human trafficking and slavery in suburbia.

Foundation English

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. This reflects outcomes for learners, which also require improvement. Pass rates in 2013/14 were low. The large majority of learners who started their English qualifications as part of their programme of study this academic year are making adequate progress.
- Reorganised delivery arrangements for Foundation English, for example in locating the delivery of specialist GCSE and functional skills lessons in curriculum areas, have improved learners' attitudes to the subject. The large majority of learners now attend English lessons regularly, an improvement on last year.
- Arrangements to assess learners' English skills when they first come to the college have improved. The majority of 16 to 18-year-old learners starting study programmes this academic year are enrolled onto English qualifications at the correct level, based on their prior attainment and initial assessment results. Transfers between levels have reduced compared to last year. Learners identified as requiring additional support benefit from well-planned help in lessons that concentrates well on their individual needs.
- A few teachers take insufficient account of the results of initial assessments when planning learning activities. As a result, in a minority of lessons, the more able learners are not given activities that are sufficiently challenging. Less-confident learners do not always receive sufficiently personalised support to improve their English skills.
- Teachers plan the majority of assessment tasks well. They keep accurate tracking records of learners' progress. Teachers provide clear and helpful verbal and written feedback about what learners need to do to improve.
- Teachers use ILT resources effectively to enliven learning by using video clips, interactive assessment resources and imaginative presentations. Learners respond well and develop their skills in critical writing. In one lesson, learners explored well different ways to describe the traits

of heroes and villains in a critical writing exercise after watching a video about Charles Dickens's *'A Christmas Carol'*.

- Teachers ask probing questions in the large majority of GCSE English lessons that challenge learners well. Teachers' use of the VLE to extend learning and challenge outside of the classroom has improved in GCSE English. This is not the case for the majority of English classes where learners work towards functional skills qualifications.
- In discrete English lessons, teachers systematically check and correct spellings, punctuation and grammar in learners' work. Through this, learners improve their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The extent to which teachers help learners to improve their English skills in vocational classes, although good in a few subjects, varies too much and requires improvement. Too few activities in English functional skills lessons are related to the vocational aspects of learners' study programmes.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity well in English lessons. They use good examples from literature to get learners to consider topics such as inequality in society as an integral part of their English studies.
- Teachers raise learners' awareness of e-safety well as part of the induction process and reinforce this effectively in the majority of lessons. In one lesson, learners improved their awareness of the need to stay safe when using social media by examining and differentiating between fact, opinion and bias.

Employability training

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement as do outcomes for learners. Although a good proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds who completed their study programmes last year progressed to further education or training or employment, too many left their programme early. This year, higher proportions have remained on their study programme compared to the same time last year. The majority of learners are making good progress. A high proportion of adults following employability programmes at the college's Manchester Airport academy gain employment. For adults following programmes at the college and with a subcontractor, the proportions gaining employment are low and the destinations of many adult learners are unknown.
- Most teachers set high expectations for learners within lessons. Learners make good progress in developing their employability skills. For example, learners improved their team-working and mathematical skills well by reading recipes: measuring and weighing ingredients to make mince pies.
- Despite recent improvements, too much teaching still requires improvement. In a few sessions, teachers do not plan activities sufficiently well to cater for the abilities and needs of learners working at different levels. As a result learners in these lessons work on the same activities and do not make sufficient progress towards their individual targets.
- Most teachers plan well to improve learners' employability skills through a variety of resources, community and employer links. For example, learners watched a video that demonstrated inappropriate behaviours in an interview situation leading them to consider thoughtfully how they could make a good impression during a job interview. Learners on study programmes experience a good range of enrichment activities, such as running a stall at a Christmas fair where they learned valuable employability skills in customer service and money management. Learners gain good skills in realistic work environments, such as a working café, where they prepare and serve breakfast and lunch items. All 16 to 18-year-olds have already completed, or will undertake, work experience this year.

- All learners receive good information, advice and guidance from college staff and other external advisory agencies prior to starting their course. Arrangements to assess learners' abilities and needs at the start of their course improved this year. Teachers use the outcomes of initial assessment to identify learners' starting points accurately. As a result learners are on programmes at an appropriate level. However, the individual learning and progress targets teachers subsequently set for learners require improvement. Insufficiently specific targets prevent teachers from providing detailed feedback to learners about what they need to do to achieve their goals.
- Teachers use verbal feedback well to praise and motivate learners in sessions. However, written feedback requires improvement. In too many instances, written feedback does not identify specific areas for improvement, or sufficiently correct errors in learners' written work. As a result too many learners are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers plan activities well to enable learners of all ages to improve their English and mathematics skills. For example, when writing covering letters for curriculum vitae, teachers reinforce the importance of proof reading to remove errors and ensure good presentation. Teachers support adult learners well to identify further opportunities to engage in learning, reinforcing the importance of gaining English and mathematics skills and qualifications that will help them fulfil their ambitions.
- Most teachers create and maintain an inclusive learning environment in lessons, in which learners behave and show respect for others. However, teachers do not relate matters of diversity to specific employment scenarios sufficiently well. They do not routinely adapt available resources to raise learners' awareness of how they will need to consider their views and approaches in future work situations within a socially and culturally diverse society.

Business management, law and legal services

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement, reflecting outcomes for learners, which also require improvement. Although the proportion of learners that achieved their qualifications improved in 2013/14, they remained low. The proportions of those who achieved high grades improved. Many more learners have remained on their courses this year compared to the same time last year.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan learning sufficiently to meet the different needs of learners. As a result a few learners become distracted, leading them to disrupt the learning of others. Teachers in these lessons do not structure the questions they ask sufficiently well to enable them to check learning.
- Where teaching is better, teachers plan activities well to cater for learners of all abilities. Teachers use information about their learners to plan lessons well, such as managing seating arrangements at the start of a lesson to enable effective peer support. For example, in a law lesson, learners challenged each other's research and presentations about negligence. In these lessons, teachers assess accurately progress and learning. As a result learners make good progress and enjoy learning.
- The majority of teachers do not use ILT sufficiently well to enhance learning. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards predominantly for slide presentations. Teachers have only recently begun to consider ways to use the college VLE to extend learning outside of the classroom.
- Teachers and managers have revised and improved initial advice and guidance, interview and induction processes this year to ensure that learners are on the right course. Teachers carefully monitor learners during their first few weeks in college to confirm that the course is right for them. Teachers and managers now closely monitor learners' attendance. A clear policy of intervention and support when learners are identified as being at risk for falling behind in their

studies is having a positive impact on improving attendance and ensuring that more learners remain on their course.

- Staff assess learners' abilities and prior learning accurately when they start their programme of study. A weakness in previous years, all learners this year underwent a comprehensive initial assessment of their learning and support needs. Not all teachers use this information effectively to plan learning and assessment activities.
- Teachers integrate employability skills into assignments well. Teachers involve employers and business representatives in marking and assessing learners work, adding rigour to the process and challenging learners to consider how their answers relate to employment situations. All learners on study programmes have work placements planned into their programmes this year. However, too little attention has been given to matching these to learners' individual progression and career aims.
- The majority of teachers do not plan learning sufficiently well to improve learners' English, mathematics and functional skills. Teachers provide dictionaries in every classroom but they are rarely used to improve standards of written and spoken English. In the majority of lessons, teachers do not routinely correct learners' spelling, grammar and pronunciation mistakes. Teachers develop learners' mathematics skills well where mathematics links closely to the vocational subject, such as in the finance unit of business courses. In the majority of lessons, teachers do not plan sufficient activities to link mathematics to the lessons.
- Teachers create a good atmosphere of mutual respect in lessons. Learners feel safe and enjoy coming to the college. In a minority of lessons, teachers plan to raise and consider diversity in society well. In a business lesson, learners discussed and appropriately considered how to cater for the menu requirements of people with different religious beliefs in planning an event. The majority of teachers do not consider sufficiently how to improve learners' understanding of social diversity and how this could help them be better prepared for future jobs in business and law.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement. Until the beginning of 2014, leadership was responsible for overseeing poor learner achievement and inadequate teaching. The new executive team appointed since then has successfully adopted a strategy of focusing on getting right the fundamentals of good teaching, learning and assessment. The college is now showing clear signs of sustained improvement. The back to basics strategy has improved the practice of teachers in the classroom. Initial advice and guidance and initial diagnostic assessment for all learners are much improved this year.
- Senior leaders and managers now set high expectations for the achievement of learners and standards in teaching, learning and assessment. The executive team communicate this message effectively to staff and learners through their high visibility in the college and a consultative management approach. As a result staff motivation has increased significantly, with learners experiencing the benefits of this renewed commitment to improvement in the classroom.
- Governance has improved and is now good. The board of governors has been strengthened by the addition of new members with extensive educational experience. Governors now effectively hold the executive team to account, challenging leaders to set demanding targets. Governors now have a better understanding of what represents a good standard in teaching and learning by linking to curriculum areas and joining managers in carrying out observations.
- Performance management of teachers is now more effective in challenging them to improve their practice, and removing those teachers who fail to respond to support. Reports following observations of teaching now identify accurately the areas of improvement. Resulting action plans set clear improvement targets for staff. Personalised training and support provided by a recently established group of advanced lecturers helps teachers to improve. These

improvements to performance management are relatively new and a few weaknesses in teaching remain.

- Strengthened self-assessment processes engage staff at all levels well. Curriculum managers and staff are clear about improvements required in their subject areas. Strengths and areas for improvement in the self-assessment report are accurate, agreeing broadly with inspectors' findings.
- Managers have developed a well-designed quality assurance framework, but the implementation of certain elements of this still requires improvement. For example, although a review of the use of the new electronic monitoring system to track progress against targets has confirmed this has been adopted by teachers and learners well in most subject areas, it has not recognised the slow pace in a few. Managers have effectively integrated their four sub-contracted providers into the quality systems of the College.
- Managers adapt and plan the curriculum very well in response to Local Enterprise Partnership priorities and the views of its partners, including the Chamber of Commerce. The strategic decision to drop A levels from the beginning of this academic year has enabled the college to become the major provider of vocational provision within the area. Managers have integrated core employability skills across the curriculum well in response to feedback from employers. However, the management of English and mathematics delivery requires improvement.
- The college community is diverse and inclusive. A quarter of learners are from minority ethnic groups, a much higher proportion than live in the local authority area. Relationships within classrooms are respectful and tolerant. Learners are confident in talking about sexuality and gender issues.
- Managers use data well to identify gaps in achievement between groups, but actions taken have yet to be successful in closing all of them. For example, looked-after children have underachieved for a number of years but actions to address this have not yet been effective.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching requires improvement. Although cross-college themes and activities have been improved, too many teachers do not understand how to integrate these themes into their delivery of lessons and assessments to make them vocationally relevant.
- Safeguarding arrangements for learners are good. The central register of staff cleared to work with young people and vulnerable adults is comprehensive and up to date. All staff are trained to an appropriate level. Managers ensure teachers update their safeguarding training on a regular basis, including on how to identify and tackle extremism. Learners feel safe at the college. Despite considerable financial constraints, investment in the appearance and layout of the college's buildings has improved the campus.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Stockport College

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	3
Early years and playwork	3
Engineering	3
Manufacturing technologies	3
Performing arts	2
Visual arts	2
Foundation English	3
Employability training	3
Business management	3
Law and legal services	3

Type of provider	General further education college								
Age range of learners	14+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	7,046								
Principal/CEO	Mr Ian Clinton								
Date of previous inspection	October 2013								
Website address	www.stockport.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+	
	415	875	721	1,647	1,048	555	1	30	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+			
	100	152	196	211	N/A	1			
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	N/A		N/A		N/A				
Number of learners aged 14-16	238								
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	238								
Number of community learners	N/A								
Number of employability learners	164								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency								

Contextual information

Stockport College is in the centre of Stockport, which is on the south western edge of the Greater Manchester conurbation. Around 285,000 people live in Stockport. Wards within Stockport vary in levels of deprivation. The proportion of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has improved in recent years and is above both the regional and national averages. The proportion of adults with advanced-level qualifications is higher than the regional and national averages. Levels of unemployment are lower than the national average. According to the 2011 census, approximately 8% of the population of Stockport are from minority ethnic groups.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Malcolm Fraser HMI
-----------------------	--------------------

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the Deputy Principal 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>

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too.

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



Employer View is a new website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too.

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

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

