

New College Telford

Sixth form college

Inspection dates		10 – 13 February 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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 students who achieved their qualifications improved in the 2013/14 academic year, following a significant dip in performance in 2012/13, but is still too low
- the tutorial and study skills support students receive is not effective in helping them to achieve their full potential
- too few teachers provide timely and, detailed feedback on students' work to help identify how they can improve their performance
- the quality of assessment practices is too inconsistent to ensure all students achieve their qualifications or gain high grades
- too few students have access to work placements, where required, or appropriate work-related or non-qualification activity as part of their study programmes, and so too few students develop sufficiently the skills and knowledge associated with these
- action plans and development activities for teachers, following observations of teaching, learning and assessment, do not sufficiently focus on students' learning
- quality assurance arrangements are not sufficiently robust to ensure that all students make good progress and reach their potential.

This provider has the following strengths:

- the proportion of students who achieve high grades in their GCSEs in English and mathematics is good
- almost all students who complete their qualifications continue in further or higher education, or gain employment
- managers have established a more vocationally focused curriculum to meet the needs of a broader range of students and to fill skills gaps in the local economy
- the college has an inclusive environment; students enjoy their studies and behave well in a culture of mutual respect.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Develop the tutorial and study skills process so that all students benefit from subject-specific, high-quality, challenging support to ensure they achieve their targets and develop a good range of knowledge to help them to reach their potential.
- Share the good assessment practice in creative arts and business areas so that all students consistently receive detailed, helpful and timely feedback to help them to improve and to achieve their learning goals.
- Develop fully all aspects of programmes of study to ensure students have good opportunities to gain high-quality work-related skills, knowledge and, ultimately, work placements.
- Ensure that managers analyse clearly aspects of all teaching, learning and assessment that require improvement and put training and coaching in place promptly, for teachers, in order to improve students' experience as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that the self-assessment report and improvement plan focus sufficiently on the improvements needed to teaching, learning and assessment, in order to improve the progress students make against their starting points.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- New College Telford provides academic and vocational courses, with the aim of students progressing into further education, university or sustainable employment. Around one third of students follow recently introduced vocational courses, a further third follow a mix of vocational and academic studies, while the remainder are on AS-level and A-level courses. The very large majority of these are studying at level 3, the remainder mainly at level 2.
- The proportion of students who achieved their qualifications improved in the 2013/14 academic year, following a significant dip in performance in 2012/13, but is still too low
- Students on A-level programmes make insufficient progress in meeting their potential. Those students on vocational and AS-level courses make at least the progress expected of them, considering their starting points. Current students are making appropriate progress and numbers of students remaining on their courses are high in most subject areas.
- The setting of challenging and aspirational targets is too inconsistent across the subject areas to be fully effective. Too often, aspirational targets for students are not in place or discussed in tutorials. However, the proportion of students who gain high grades is increasing and is good in curriculum areas such as business studies, economics and English language.
- The proportion of students who successfully achieve GCSE English and mathematics qualifications at A*-C grades is high. However, those students who have already gained high grades face insufficient challenge in the further development of their English and mathematics skills in lessons, or in the work set for them.
- College managers and staff have worked well to ensure there are no discernible variations in the achievement of any groups of students. Since the previous inspection, those learners with identified learning needs now achieve well in comparison with their peers.
- The majority of students acquire good subject knowledge and/or good practical laboratory skills, for example, in chemistry and physics. By the end of their courses, they complete practical tasks to a good standard and produce good work in the classroom environment. However, teachers do not do enough to help students to develop their study and research skills, to equip them

more fully for progression into higher-level study, along with suitable access to resources which aid them to make the progress expected.

- The majority of students do not have access to work placements or appropriate work-related activity as part of their study programmes. Too many students on both level 2 and level 3 study programmes are yet to access relevant work-related activities. The minority of students that do take part in work-related activity talk confidently of its benefits and value the opportunity to increase their skills. They gain valuable workplace skills and knowledge, such as working to deadlines and working to a live client brief. A minority of students undertake extra-curricular activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and participate in college sports which help them to develop good team-working and personal skills.
- College managers and staff have a successful record of supporting students to progress into higher education. This is one of the key reasons why students come to the college and has been a key focus of the provision over many years. The overwhelming majority of students who complete their qualifications have a positive destination into further education, university or employment.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Inspectors looked in depth at teaching, learning and assessment in science, and business and law, as a representative sample of the college's curriculum. They found improvements in science and business management, but weaknesses that leaders and managers have not successfully resolved in law and other subject areas. Inspectors also investigated the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in many other subjects across the range of the college's work.
- Initiatives implemented since the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching and learning have had some positive impact on the quality of provision. However teaching, learning and assessment are not good enough to ensure that all students make good progress. Feedback to teachers, following observations of teaching, learning and assessment, and the actions to help them improve their practice focus too much on teaching rather than learning. As a result, the impact of improvement on student outcomes has been too slow.
- Teachers do not routinely demonstrate sufficiently high expectations of their students across the subject areas. Where teachers encourage students to work productively, challenging them to develop high-level skills and knowledge, they make good progress. Highly effective starter activities, which re-cap previous learning, prepare students well in a large majority of lessons. The pace of these lessons is often brisk, ensuring learners work purposefully to achieve tasks within clear time limits. As a result, students quickly improve their understanding and knowledge of the subjects they are studying.
- However, too often students make slow progress and become bored at the lack of challenge and frustrated at their inability to fulfil their potential. Teachers do not always plan their lessons in sufficient detail to ensure their teaching will meet the wide-ranging needs of individual students and this often results in slow progress by a significant minority of students.
- Teachers often use information and learning technology (ILT) well to enhance students' understanding of topics in lessons; for example, using video clips to illustrate key points, accessing topical resources to make learning interesting and using mobile phones to research facts and figures to include in their class work. However, not all students' independent research skills are developed sufficiently to enable them to take advantage of online resources outside lessons to help them achieve and excel.
- Too many students, for example, those in vocational science, do not receive detailed or specific feedback that enables them to improve the quality of their written assignments, or the standard of their work. Too often, students do not receive feedback on their submitted assignments as a matter of routine, or in a timely manner. By contrast, students in subjects such as creative arts

and business receive excellent, helpful, detailed and constructive feedback on marked work. These teachers correct poor spelling, punctuation and grammar in students' work regularly.

- Tutorial provision does not support students well enough. Planned activities within these sessions do not relate to students' main areas of interest or study. Too few students attend, or value, these sessions as a way to help them progress and achieve. The targets that are set in tutorials are not aspirational, effective or reviewed frequently enough to be meaningful. Students do not have access to the records of their targets outside of tutorial sessions and therefore they do not routinely review, or add to them, as they progress and develop.
- In the majority of vocational classes, teachers do not use the information gathered on induction and through assessment sufficiently well to plan learning which meets students' individual needs, particularly to improve students' skills in English and mathematics. A minority of teachers integrate successfully vocationally relevant English and mathematics skills into their lessons to ensure students progress and achieve well. A few level 3 students develop further their English skills by participating in an extended project to help them gain entry to more prestigious universities.
- A recently restructured college student services team now provides a strengthened initial advice and guidance service, but this still requires further improvement. Too many students change courses within the academic year. Students who want to progress into employment and other types of training do not receive sufficient careers guidance although the college has clear plans to address this. Too few students on level 2 programmes progress on to higher-level courses within the college.
- Managers and staff apply entry criteria more rigorously in the recruitment of students. This is starting to have a positive impact on retention. The college prospectus contains clear and detailed information about courses. Individual interviews with subject specialists aim to ensure students enrol on the right combination of programmes to suit their individual needs. In some curriculum areas, such as science, ongoing advice and guidance within courses are good. Level 3 academic students receive good support and guidance to help them apply to university.
- The promotion and embedding of all aspects of the programmes of study is still underdeveloped in many subject areas. Where programmes of study are implemented effectively, students gain good work-related skills and knowledge by participating in a range of initiatives such as, live project briefs, working with external organisations, taking part in shows and working in simulated working environments. This is particularly so in creative arts, health care and early years, and hospitality and catering. However, currently, only a third of students benefit from these types of initiative and opportunities. College managers recognise the need to improve, and are developing processes to address this.
- The promotion in the classroom of equality and diversity requires improvement in the majority of subjects. While there are many good examples in the creative arts area, too few teachers take advantage in lessons to develop students' awareness about different people's needs and the influence of other cultures in their everyday lives; for instance, by linking the topic being taught to relevant issues affecting people in different parts of society. Students benefit from a harmonious and inclusive environment, displaying high levels of respect and tolerance for each other and for their teachers.

Science

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in science are good because:

- students make good progress in lessons and develop good scientific skills, as reflected in the improved proportion of students who achieved their qualifications in 2013/14
- students benefit strongly from the emphasis that teachers place on the precise and correct use of English in science; for example in a chemistry lesson, students routinely scrutinised their written presentations on halogen alkanes and free radical substitution mechanisms, resulting in work that contained scientific language at an appropriate level and free of errors in spelling, terminology and grammar
- teachers provide challenging exercises and good coaching in mathematics that improve students' mathematical skills; for example, in a lesson on the origins of the universe, students were easily able to cope with the difficult unit conversions involved in calculating the age of the universe using Hubble's Law
- in most lessons, teachers ensure that students understand basic scientific concepts by using a variety of learning activities; for example in a physics lesson, students learned that the presence of matter causes the structure of space to warp by examining a model simulation, then progressing to a graphical explanation and, finally, to a mathematical illustration of the same concept
- teachers working with A-level students set challenging formal targets and review them regularly, in the light of students' academic performance; students respond well to the challenge by applying themselves diligently to their studies and making a good contribution to classroom activities and discussions
- many students benefit from good advice and guidance on careers and higher education
- assessment on A-level courses is fair, accurate and reliable and teachers often make good use of assessment outcomes to help students to improve; for example in chemistry, teachers identify common errors made by students in their mock examinations and set tasks to allow students to understand where they went wrong and work collaboratively to correct their own work.

Teaching, learning and assessment in science are not yet outstanding because:

- poor assessment planning and practice seriously disadvantage a significant minority of students on vocational courses; for example, a few teachers take far too long to return assessed work to students and fail to give sufficient feedback in a form that helps students to improve
- managers and teachers on vocational courses create unreasonable fluctuations in student workloads by failing to co-ordinate their assessment planning to achieve an even distribution of assignments
- tutorials, internal verification arrangements and self-assessment are ineffective in bringing about improvements to poor assessment on vocational courses; managers are unaware of the shortcomings in assessment practice on these courses.

Business management and law

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in business management and law are good because:

- students make good progress and the proportion achieving their qualifications is increasing
- a large majority of students on completion of their AS-level and A-level qualifications progress onto further and higher education, training or employment; for example most students completing A-level law, applied and A-Level business have progressed on to the next level
- students make good progress in lessons and gain good vocational knowledge relating to customer service, job descriptions and business structures; for example law students improved their understanding of legal structures when visiting the Supreme Court in London
- good support and care from teachers ensure all students are making at least the progress expected of them; for example the good promotion and use of on-line resources allow A-level students to share good practice, complete past exam papers and research law-related articles
- students benefit from experienced and knowledgeable teachers who use recent case studies to demonstrate the implications of poor financial management and hidden costs associated with, for example, payday loans
- teachers assess students' performance regularly, mark work promptly and provide developmental feedback; teachers and students track and monitor progress well, so students are aware of their current in-year position
- students improve their English skills very effectively; for example through diligent marking and engaging activities, such as the use of homophones to identify and remember different types of law cases
- students' mathematics skills improve strongly; for example students are able to calculate loan repayments, prepare accounting ratios and cash flow forecasts competently following activities in their lessons.

Teaching, learning and assessment in business management and law are not yet outstanding because:

- in law, which accounts for a small minority of students, too few complete their studies and gain their qualifications
- pastoral support and setting of targets in tutorials and study skills sessions require improvement; for example pastoral tutors do not follow up effectively concerns raised by subject teachers on attendance and progress
- study programmes are insufficiently developed, with no work placements undertaken by students at level 2 or 3; however, valuable work-related activities and visits are an integral part of their studies in college.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders and managers have not been successful in tackling all of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. These include the development of students' research and study skills. Not all of the challenging targets set by managers for a range of student outcomes have been achieved or show an improving trend. For example, attendance at tutorials and some level 2 provision is low and has not improved through the year, despite being well monitored at college leadership meetings. However, managers have acted promptly and successfully to raise success rates, including those for level 2 programmes.
- The self-assessment process is inclusive of the views of students and staff, and takes place throughout the year. Governors are closely involved with validating the self-assessment report and improvement plan. However, these documents do not focus sufficiently on the improvements needed to teaching, learning and assessment to improve the progress students make against their starting points.
- Performance management is not having enough impact on the quality of teaching. Managers identify accurately the individual professional development needs of teachers, through the observation of teaching, learning and assessment, and devise training, for all staff, on key aspects such as stretch and challenge. Teachers whose courses underperform are given notice to improve, and then work to a detailed action plan. However, too many of the actions managers identify, to improve standards, both in observed lessons and for courses, do not sufficiently focus on refining teaching and assessment strategies to improve students' aspirations and outcomes. Improvements focused on specific topics are more successful. For example, following training, a large majority of teachers start lessons in engaging and often innovative ways.
- Quality improvement arrangements are not good enough to ensure that all students make good progress. The monitoring of staff performance is effective. However, the actions following the monitoring of staff performance require improvement. Appropriate staff development does not occur in a timely fashion, or focus sufficiently on teaching, learning and assessment, or student outcomes.
- Senior managers and governors have high aspirations for the college to have a significant role in the local economy. Governors provide a high level of challenge and support for this strategic direction and new initiatives, due to their very good local knowledge and professional expertise. Managers have made marked progress towards this aim since the previous inspection, especially through new appointments of staff skilled in business development.
- Managers plan innovations to the curriculum well to meet the needs of students' employment needs and skills gaps identified by the Local Enterprise Partnership. Since the previous inspection, managers and governors have established a more vocationally focused curriculum. Learners benefit from apprenticeships, particularly in hospitality, with progression from intermediate to higher-level qualifications planned to be introduced as part of the strategy of the college. The college now owns a large local hotel that is an excellent resource through which to deliver this training. Managers make provision for the needs of a few learners not in education, employment or training through traineeships.
- Leaders motivate students to achieve through celebrating their success at awards evenings and inviting previous students, for example, one who is now a successful entrepreneur, to talk about their experience. Managers and staff have inspired students to raise their ambitions through employing a former student who is a Paralympian medallist as a student liaison officer. Senior managers reward staff who have performed particularly well by inviting them to monthly celebratory lunches.

- Managers and staff foster close links with the community and this benefits students, who gain a wider understanding of other cultures and the needs of other people. However not all teachers include this in their planning or lessons. Managers and teachers develop programmes to support specific local needs; for example, training volunteer guides at the local museums in Ironbridge. An annual Mardi Gras celebration brings together a wide range of local communities, and students plan a wide variety of successful fund raising activities for local and national charities.
- Diversity is promoted well in the college through the importance staff place on valuing the contribution of all students, listening to their views and acting on them. Managers and staff create an environment of mutual respect, where differences between people are discussed openly. Students are safe from bullying and harassment in the college environment, but they do not have sufficient information on how workplace bullying manifests itself so that they can protect themselves and others when they move into employment.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good and fully comply with all legislative, recruitment and training expectations. The designated officer has very good links with local safeguarding bodies. Governors and senior managers have received good training on their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. Managers take prompt action when they have concerns, for example about child exploitation or potential forced marriage. During induction staff explain to students what safeguarding is and how to report issues, although students do not always remember the detail well enough.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

New College Telford

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Science	2
Business Management	2
Law and Legal Services	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Sixth form college							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,450							
Principal/CEO	Ms Fiona O'Brien							
Date of previous inspection	March 2013							
Website address	www.nct.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+
	9	0	133	5	940	39	9	14
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	6	9	3	94	0	33		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	24		4		28			
Number of learners aged 14-16	1							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	1							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A. 							

Contextual information

New College Telford is based on one site in Wellington on the outskirts of Telford. Classroom-based courses are available in 11 of 15 sector subject areas and include both academic and vocational options. Most courses are at advanced level. Almost all students come from within the borough of Telford and Wrekin. Female students slightly outnumber males at the college. Four wards within the borough have high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Youth unemployment in the borough is above both the regional and national figure, however the number of those not in education employment or training has declined in recent years. Unemployment as a whole is in line with national figures. The proportion of pupils who leave school aged 16 with five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics in Telford and Wrekin is higher than the national rate.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Stephen Hunsley HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Assistant Principal Curriculum and 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:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012

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