

Solihull College

General further education college

Inspection dates		09–13 March 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 college requires improvement because:

- not enough of the large proportion of adult learners on level 2 courses gain their qualifications
- the development of learners' English skills in four areas requires improvement and the proportion of learners aged 16 to 18 who attain high grades in GCSE English is very low
- more able learners often receive insufficient challenge to reach their potential; too many learners on level 3 courses do not make the progress they should, given their prior attainment
- in too many lessons, teachers do not plan activities to meet the diverse needs of their learners, so that they do not progress to their potential
- the tracking and monitoring of learners' progress do not enable all learners to achieve their best
- leaders and managers are insufficiently self-critical in their self-assessments and judge areas of their provision to be of a higher standard than they are, resulting in a lack of impetus to improve
- too few learners on 16-19 study programmes take part in meaningful work experience to enhance their understanding of the employment aspects of their vocational area
- the quality of lesson observation and the related performance management arrangements is insufficient to drive the required improvements in teaching and learning.

This college has the following strengths:

- the proportion of successful learners at level 3 aged 16 to 18 has increased significantly and is high
- good work with the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce and employers ensures that the curriculum meets local and regional needs very closely, including through very successful employment programmes
- well-qualified and knowledgeable teachers who develop learners' vocational and practical skills
- very effective initial advice and guidance and additional learning support that assist learners to choose the most appropriate course and then continue with their studies
- high-quality accommodation and specialist resources support learning well.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Urgently re-appraise and rectify the lesson observation process so that it provides an accurate representation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Ensure that observers evaluate learning and the progress that learners with diverse individual needs make, and make sure that teachers benefit from the most appropriate development and performance management arrangements to increase the quality of the learners' experience.
- Increase the quality and usefulness of the self-assessment process so that it is very self-critical and evaluative and that judgements are supported by clear evidence. Ensure that the consequent quality improvement action plan is challenging and implement its actions rigorously, so that the quality of provision increases.
- Provide high-quality training, guidance and support to teachers in order that they have the skills and confidence to improve their learners' English skills, increasing their chances of success in education, training and employment.
- Ensure that managers determine the key factors affecting the under-performance of adults on level 2 courses and take action to increase their successful outcomes.
- Increase the challenges that level 3 learners experience, including those who are more able, so that far more of them are inspired and motivated to make at least the progress expected of them, given their previous attainment.
- Develop and implement cross-college strategies to ensure that learners on 16-19 study programmes experience meaningful careers advice and guidance and suitable individualised work experience so that they have a greater understanding and experience of employment related to their area of study and their interests.
- Check that all teachers know the results of their learners' initial and diagnostic tests and plan their lessons accordingly to meet their needs. Increase teachers' skills in devising learning activities that each learner finds appropriately challenging, and in checking learning through questioning and assessment.
- Apply the good practice in tracking and monitoring learners' progress that exists in certain areas of the college to the other parts, so that staff will advise and guide their learners and agree targets with them that will enable them to make progress each according to their potential.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Nearly all learners are on vocational courses. The college offers 16-19 study programmes in all fifteen sector subject areas. Approximately two-fifths of learners are aged 16 to 18, of whom the great majority are full-time. The largest number of these learners study on level 3 programmes, whereas the largest number of adults study on level 2 programmes. About one tenth of learners are apprentices, mostly at intermediate and advanced level.
- The proportion of classroom-based learners who complete their qualifications successfully is close to that of similar colleges. Learners aged 16 to 18 achieve better than adults, too many of whom do not gain their qualifications in the expected timescale. The younger learners on level 3 courses attain very well, whereas the outcomes for adults on level 2 courses are poor.
- Successful outcomes for functional skills English are similar to those of other colleges, whereas for mathematics, they are better. The proportion of learners aged 16 to 18 who succeed in

gaining high grades in GCSE English is extremely low, but that for adults is similar to other colleges. For mathematics, however, these proportions are well above those in other colleges.

- Learners who achieve the highest levels of success are on courses in: engineering; social sciences; business, administration and law. In health, public services and care; retail and commercial enterprise; and leisure, travel and tourism, too many learners do not gain their qualifications.
- Almost all groups of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds succeed as well as or better than those from a White British background. Younger males attain well, but adult males and females are less successful than those in other colleges. Successful outcomes for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have decreased significantly over three years and are low.
- Too few learners on level 3 vocational courses make the progress expected of them, based on their prior attainment. Learners on the 90-credit diplomas in health studies and applied sciences, however, make good progress. Data provided by the college from a national awarding body indicate that a high proportion of learners achieve high grades.
- Too few learners for whom external, personalised work experience is a required part of their study programme have the opportunity to undertake this. Managers agree and aim to remedy this soon.
- Many learners develop good practical skills, including apprentices in administration who demonstrate a high level of workplace standards. Learners' progress on their course varies significantly, ranging from average in Foundation English and visual arts to good on land-based provision. The improvement of learners' English and mathematics skills is also inconsistent, from being good in visual arts to being less effective in information and communication technology (ICT) and parts of land-based provision.
- Many learners develop good employability skills, such as independence, safe working practices, good supervisory and technical skills. Part-time teachers in health and social care and new teachers in ICT relate current and recent practice to their learners who gain a good insight into modern working practices. Too many learners, however, do not attend sufficiently to keep on top of their studies. Attendance is low overall and is especially so in functional skills English and mathematics, sport, art, hairdressing and beauty therapy. A minority of learners do not improve their independent working abilities and are too reliant on others.
- The proportion of successful intermediate-level apprentices has increased over the last three years and is above that for other colleges, whereas the proportion for advanced apprentices is close to that of other colleges. The proportions completing their programmes within the planned time are typical of the sector.
- The rate of progression of learners between different levels within the college is relatively low and has been so for three years. Approximately half progress between entry level, level 1 and level 2, but only two-fifths progress between levels 2 and 3.
- Most leavers progress to suitable employment, or further or higher education. Very few progress to apprenticeships. The successful employment programme (targeted at emerging local employment opportunities) enables most of its leavers to enter employment, apprenticeships, further education or training. Managers wish to make greater use of their destination findings to ascertain how effectively courses prepare their learners for employment, higher education and apprenticeships.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Inspectors looked in depth at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in six specific areas, as evaluated later in this report. These constitute about a third of the total enrolments. Although the provision in four of these areas is good, too much teaching, learning and assessment across the college requires improvement. Inspectors also inspected teaching,

learning and assessment in other areas of the college, through joint observations with college staff, by direct observations and by scrutiny of assignments.

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as reflected in the outcomes for learners and the quality of learners' experiences is too variable. The college's internal assessment of the quality of teaching and learning is too optimistic. As a result, not all teachers have been challenged sufficiently to develop their teaching skills to a level that ensures that all learners achieve to their potential.
- Too much teaching is focused on the requirements of qualifications without sufficient recognition of, or planning to meet, the individual and diverse abilities of learners. This approach results in many learners who are more able or less able not receiving sufficient challenge or support to ensure they achieve of their best. Assessment of learning meets the requirements of the awarding bodies, although the checking of learners' understanding during lessons requires improvement. For example, many teachers are too quick to accept superficial answers to their questions before moving on to the next activity, and so do not ensure that learners understand key concepts fully.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and practical experience and many impart their knowledge and experience in lively ways to develop their learners' vocational skills. Accommodation and learning resources are very good, although a few classes are too cramped and this impedes effective learning. Teachers and learners' use of technology is well established in many lessons, such as in ICT lessons where learners use their own mobile devices to develop their research and learning skills successfully. Most learners enjoy lessons. They behave very well, even when the pace of learning is slow and/or the teaching activities lack interest.
- In the best lessons, teachers ensure that learning is exciting and stimulating through an effective range of learning activities that motivate all learners to succeed and progress well. As a consequence, learners achieve high standards and develop effective, industrial practical skills. Teachers inspire their learners to progress onto higher education or into demanding work roles, as exemplified in the best health and social care lessons.
- The quality of the tutorial process is too variable and requires improvement, although its effectiveness has improved recently. For example, the monitoring of learners' progress and the setting of demanding targets to improve their skills range from outstanding to weak. Not all learners receive sufficient careers advice to help them make informed choices about their next step. For learners aged 16 to 19 on study programmes where work placements are not a mandatory requirement, such as in health and social care, too few learners benefit from meaningful work experience.
- Pastoral support for learners is good; teachers and tutors respond well to ensure that learners at risk of withdrawal or non-achievement remain on programme. Pre-course advice and guidance are good. Learners in need of additional learning support receive very good advice and guidance that aid their progress. Staff have been very effective in increasing the proportion of apprentices who make good progress.
- The standard of English and mathematics teaching and learning requires improvement. Initial testing of learners' English and mathematics skills ensures that learners are placed on the most appropriate level of study to meet their needs. In too many cases, however, the results of these tests do not inform the effective planning of learning. Functional skills lessons typically contain learners with diverse abilities working towards different levels of qualifications. Teachers do not employ learning strategies effectively to meet the wide range of individual learning needs. Attendance in mathematics and English lessons is too low. The teaching of GCSE mathematics, however, is more effective and this is reflected in the higher outcomes for learners.
- The development of learners' equality and diversity awareness, linked to the vocational subject area lessons, requires improvement. Too many teachers fail to exploit opportunities in lessons or plan lessons that extend learning beyond that of basic understanding. In ICT, teachers do not help learners discuss how equality and diversity issues can affect their work and the implications for the computing industry. In administration, however, apprentices develop a good

understanding of equality and diversity so that they deal with clients' sensitive issues with respect and understanding.

Health and social care

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes
Apprenticeships

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care are good because:

- a high proportion of learners in classroom-based learning who account for the large majority of learners complete their courses successfully and progress to related employment or higher level courses, and the majority of apprentices complete their qualifications within the planned time
- teachers and assessors are well qualified and have extensive vocational experience in diverse care settings; they use this expertise to ensure learners make clear links between theory and practice and understand the varied needs of service users
- teachers provide excellent pastoral support helping learners to cope with personal issues so they make good progress; consequently learners respond positively to teachers' high expectations and are motivated to achieve high standards
- learners are actively involved in setting targets for improvement during tutorials, and teachers monitor their progress very effectively
- good verbal interaction and good written feedback after assessment help learners to improve their work and achieve high grades
- teachers use excellent specialist accommodation and equipment very effectively to develop learners' practical skills prior to work experience; for example learners practise giving injections, lifting patients, monitoring heart rates and providing personal care for dummy patients in order to overcome their initial fears of working with real patients
- staff manage work experience well and make good use of extensive employer links so that learners benefit from placements in a diverse range of settings that increase their awareness of employment opportunities and employability skills
- learners feel safe and demonstrate safe working practices in complex and high-risk care settings; they recognise the importance of keeping vulnerable service users safe
- information, advice and guidance are good, ensuring that learners are placed on the right course
- vocational teachers provide specialist support for learners progressing into higher education courses such as nursing and midwifery, or into employment as care workers.

Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care are not yet outstanding because:

- in the majority of lessons, particularly at advanced level, teachers do not make effective use of learners' prior skills and starting points to plan learning that closely matches the diverse range of abilities within large groups
- the lack of variety in teaching and assessment methods means that a few learners are not challenged to progress to their potential
- vocational teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on developing their learners' skills in English and mathematics lessons and too many learners do not attend these lessons; teachers

do not always check learners' understanding of difficult technical terms, and learners do not fully appreciate the significance of mathematical concepts.

Horticulture and forestry, animal care and veterinary science

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in horticulture and forestry, animal care and veterinary science are good because:

- while the proportion of learners who successfully achieve their qualifications is at national rates, the achievement of high grades is very good and in year retention is high; learners attend well and make good progress in their studies with a very large majority progressing into employment or further study
- learners benefit from good resources; they develop good practical and technical expertise and readily acquire the skills they need to obtain employment in their chosen career; for example, level 3 second year learners practise supervisory skills in the animal care unit while undertaking routine duties
- learners produce a high standard of work that is appropriate for their level of course, and teachers challenge them to strive towards the next level of study
- teachers devise good group work tasks that enable learners to practise skills needed in employment, such as working in teams, maintaining animal health and dealing with different client groups
- learners develop their employability skills fully; those on study programmes undertake well-managed work experience with relevant employers and routine duties in the animal care unit and on the college grounds that provide realistic working environments
- teachers use information learning technology very effectively to enliven their teaching and increase learners' acquisition of knowledge; the virtual learning environment contains a wide range of suitable materials which learners use frequently to enhance their learning
- learners feel safe at college; health and safety form part of all lessons, preparing learners well for employment in a safety-conscious industry; teachers promote e-safety well
- teachers develop learners' mathematics and English skills well; for example, in the animal feed room learners develop their understanding of ratios, weights and measurements and learners in level 1 horticulture measure plots and discuss plant aspect ratios.

Teaching, learning and assessment in horticulture and forestry, animal care and veterinary science are not yet outstanding because:

- in a minority of lessons learners make slower progress than expected because they spend too much time on undemanding tasks, particularly on level 3 programmes
- assessment for learning is underdeveloped because questions to learners in a significant minority of lessons are too general and open-ended, meaning that too few learners participate and teachers do not know how well learners have understood key concepts
- targets set in individual tutorials are insufficiently challenging resulting in a minority of learners obtaining module grades that are lower than expected.

Information communication technology for practitioners and for users

16-19 study programmes

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in information communication technology are good because:

- the majority of learners complete their qualifications successfully; many achieve high grades and move onto more advanced studies or appropriate employment
- teachers have high expectations of their learners and learners make good progress compared to their starting points; learners are aware of the targets set for them and these are reviewed regularly to promote progress
- the range of appropriate courses to give learners opportunities to progress through a variety of routes is good and learners take additional courses such as industry computer networking to support their specialisms
- teachers are well qualified and have good subject expertise and experience that enhance their teaching and enable learners to develop a good awareness of current developments in technology
- teachers plan their lessons well so that learners take part in a variety of learning activities that motivate and inspire them
- support for learners is good; teachers are enthusiastic and assist learners with their outside interests such as encouraging them to undertake sporting activities for charity and helping them develop their business websites; for example two learners were helped to design a website for a clothing company
- learners benefit from good tutorial support that helps them to continue in learning and achieve; staff identify individual learners' needs quickly and plan support well
- learners benefit from using high-quality accommodation and resources, including a wide variety of software and mobile technology, which support learning both inside and outside the classroom.

Teaching, learning and assessment in information communication technology are not yet outstanding because:

- a minority of learners make slower progress because teachers do not use a wide range of strategies to meet the needs of more able learners
- teachers do not develop their learners' skills in English and mathematics well enough, especially in vocational lessons and, in particular, learners do not demonstrate high levels of English skills as a consequence
- targets for learners are insufficiently challenging and measurable and so learners do not aspire to higher outcomes
- learners aged 16 to 18 on study programmes do not undertake work experience with external employers and this limits learners' experience in relation to the course they are studying.

Visual arts**16-19 study programmes**

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in visual arts require improvement because:

- although a high proportion of learners gain high grades and progress to higher education, too many do not make the progress expected of them; attendance is low and learners are frequently late
- the majority of practical lessons require improvement, because learners make slow progress in acquiring their technical skills
- learners are mostly attentive, but teachers do not challenge them enough to work quickly and efficiently
- in too many lessons, learners working in small groups become disaffected and lose interest, because they leave the tasks they should be doing to the more able learners in the group
- staff's links with commercial industries are underdeveloped so that learners' understanding of working practices and the needs of employers are insufficient; learners do not improve their knowledge of working practices in a range of modern industrial environments
- a few studios are too small for the activities taking place; the cramped environment restricts learning activities; in the textiles studio, learners do not use the industrial machines and so do not develop their technical skills sufficiently
- learners receive insufficient information, advice and guidance and careers information about the opportunities in the locality and the wider region; this limits their knowledge of, and interest in, what is available.

In visual arts, the provider has the following strengths:

- tutors and learning assistants provide good support for learners and know which learners require extra help; they use initial assessment and continuous feedback to good effect
- teachers make good use of technology to support learning; for example they design informative presentations that inspire learners to develop their vocational skills
- learners use their electronic individual learning plans well and set personal learning goals which help them to manage their work load
- teachers integrate English and mathematics into lessons effectively so that learners develop their skills; for example, they make good use of sketchbooks to depict their ideas, they employ mathematics skills in pattern drafting, cutting and estimating fabric usage and older learners use their mathematics skills well to design page layouts in graphics lessons.

Foundation English

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English require improvement because:

- while the majority of learners gain a qualification in English, they are not challenged sufficiently well so that they achieve their full potential; learners studying for progression awards make the best progress but overall the proportion of learners achieving qualifications has not increased
- a small minority of learners do not attend functional English lessons regularly and so do not make good progress; teachers and support staff track and monitor attendance but this has had little impact on ensuring that barriers to learning are overcome, and attendance has not improved sufficiently
- teachers do not use the detailed information from the comprehensive initial assessment to plan learning sufficiently well and so not all learners make good progress from their initial starting points
- too often learners with varied skill levels work on the same tasks for the same length of time, regardless of their abilities and their individual targets and so do not make the progress they should
- in functional skills English lessons, teachers do not always plan relevant learning; lesson activities have few links to younger learners' vocational study programmes or to everyday situations of work and life in the adult world
- subject teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on improving the precision of learners' spoken communication
- teachers do not use digital technologies effectively so that learners can practise their skills in using email styles and conventions; learners do not routinely use on-line resources that would help them develop and practise their communication skills independently.

In foundation English the provider has the following strengths:

- most learners enjoy their lessons, behave well and arrive ready to learn; they gain confidence in how to improve their skills and realise how good communication skills will support their employment goals
- most teachers help learners develop very specific, skill-based targets against which they can evaluate and track their progress, and learners receive good support in lessons from teachers and support workers
- specialist English teachers provide very detailed feedback to learners on the progress they are making; written work is well annotated with constructive suggestions on how they can develop more effective skills, for example in proof reading their own work
- unemployed learners benefit from a very well designed 'return to learn' programme on which they increase their motivation and confidence; many move on to employment or further education and training.

Administration 16-19 study programmes Apprenticeships	Good
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Teaching, learning and assessment in administration are good because:

- a high proportion of apprentices and learners successfully achieve their qualifications; apprentices and learners attend well, and the majority make good progress in their studies
- apprentices and learners produce high standards of work and develop good work-related, personal and social skills; apprentices manage client accounts and are often responsible for managing budgets and supervising other team members
- the majority of apprentices acquire good independent learning skills that increase their self-reliance as a valuable employability skill; assessors set challenging tasks, which apprentices readily achieve prior to the next workplace visit
- good planning of learning and assessment by assessors ensures apprentices have a thorough understanding of their qualification and the high expectations staff have of them; assessors are very good at linking workplace activities to learners' vocational qualifications
- apprentices and learners benefit from good resources that support learning; teachers and assessors use information learning technology, on-line resources and work-related guides to encourage apprentices and learners to develop their skills and knowledge
- teachers and assessors teach good health and safety practices; apprentices regularly update risk assessments in their workplace and use and promote safe working practices
- assessors and teachers thoroughly assess apprentices' and learners' work; accurate and timely verbal and written feedback are clear and informative and guide apprentices and learners on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve
- assessors help apprentices to develop good mathematical skills; apprentices are confident in using mathematical calculations and terminology, for example calculating profit on sales to clients, insurance premiums and transportation costs
- staff plan business administration learning programmes well to meet the needs of employers and the community; local employers are taking on more apprentices to assist with their business expansion.

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

- assessors do not adequately help apprentices develop their English skills; spelling and grammar mistakes on emails and letters are frequently corrected by employers prior to sending
- a minority of apprentices are making slow progress; managers have identified previously poor administrative practice and while robust measures have been put in place to resolve these, some apprentices have not completed sufficient work as indicated by their learning plan
- work placements with external employers for learners aged 16 to 18 on study programmes are not yet planned into the curriculum.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following the recent appointment of the Principal, senior leaders and governors have consulted quickly and effectively to develop a clear vision to improve the quality of their provision. They have been slow, however, to address areas for improvement from the previous inspection, in particular that relating to self-assessment, especially with regard to the quality of teaching. Consequently, teaching, learning and assessment require improvement.
- The outcomes of the internal lesson observation scheme are very positive, but they do not correlate with learners' outcomes which remain average. Managers place too much emphasis on the profile of lesson observation grades to determine the quality of provision. These do not provide managers with a sufficiently accurate picture of the quality of learning and learners' progress. Too many lessons are graded too highly. Consequently, it is unclear which lessons require improvement.
- The self-assessment of provision requires improvement. Course reviews inform detailed curriculum reports, but these are too descriptive and lack rigour. As a result, middle managers do not devise appropriate action plans or targets for improvement. Targets are insufficiently challenging. Senior managers have recently improved systems to monitor and track learners' progress, but this has yet to have an impact on the quality of the provision. Many of the self-assessed judgements and gradings are higher than those judged by inspectors.
- Staff development requires improvement. Regular meetings and training opportunities are not improving teaching and learning rapidly enough. Performance management systems are coherent and a small minority of staff are supported well to improve their practice. The inaccurate lesson observation process, however, means that too few teachers are supported through performance management to improve.
- Managers have been slow to respond appropriately to the requirements of the 16-19 study programme in many parts of the college. Too many learners do not benefit from their entitlement to external work experience placements. Too many learners do not develop their English and mathematics skills because teachers do not address their individual learning needs. Consequently, learners do not make the progress they should.
- The Principal, together with governors and senior leaders, has consulted widely to produce a strategic plan that focuses effectively on raising expectations and meeting the aspirations of learners, apprentices, employers and the local community. Robust financial management results in learners accessing good resources, such as highly technical engineering equipment, that meet current industrial standards. Close relationships and effective curriculum offers continue to reduce the unemployment rates in hard-to-reach community settings through, for example, the 'work ready' scheme.
- Managers have developed recent strategic plans, which encompass Local Enterprise Partnership priorities and collaborative work with the Chamber of Commerce, to ensure that learners have the right skills at the right level to meet local and national priorities. Senior managers and local employers agree the industrial skills required by learners so that they are ready for work. Middle managers respond effectively and develop relevant curriculum offerings. They monitor the quality of their small subcontracted provision well to ensure learners achieve.
- Senior managers have improved the quality of the apprenticeship provision significantly and as a result they have increased apprentices' achievement. Most employers rate their apprentices highly and consequently many apprentices sustain employment or progress to a higher apprenticeship programme.
- Governance is good. Governors are well informed about financial, educational and training matters. They understand the key priorities needed to increase the quality of the provision. Governors possess a wide range of valuable expertise and skills, which they apply to the benefit

of learners and managers. Governors participate fully in the self-assessment validation processes and activities to address radicalisation and extremism.

- Managers analyse the data concerning different groups of learners rigorously and ensure that most gaps in achievement are closed. They and staff promote equality and celebrate diversity across the college and inform learners of their expectations of respect. A culture of respect and equality of opportunity is evident. Learners participate in planned cultural events throughout the year to celebrate diversity and to raise their understanding of living in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. Leaders and managers maintain and check records effectively and carry out appropriate risk assessments. Managers work closely with local police and co-ordinators to combat radicalisation and extremism. All staff have carried out mandatory safeguarding training and understand the range of support that is available to keep all learners and apprentices safe.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Solihull College

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and Social Care	2
Horticulture and Forestry	2
Animal Care and Veterinary Science	2
ICT for practitioners	2
ICT for Users	2
Visual Arts	3
Foundation English	3
Administration	2

College details

Type of provider	General further education college							
Age range of learners	14+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	16,034							
Principal/CEO	Mr John Callaghan							
Date of previous inspection	May 2010							
Website address	www.solihull.ac.uk							
College information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	427	1,219	1,103	1,410	1,984	1,260	83	1,022
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	219	295	229	214	3	21		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	981							
Number of employability learners	135							
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"> ▪ Auctus Training Solutions Ltd ▪ The English Golf Union ▪ MPower Training Solutions Ltd. 							

Contextual information

Solihull College is a large general further education college situated to the south-east of Birmingham. It provides a range of programmes from entry level to higher education in all fifteen sector subject areas. Several colleges and many independent training providers are situated within a 25-mile radius of the college. A sixth form college is nearby. Approximately two thirds of learners come from Birmingham and one third from Solihull. The larger campus, at which 80% of learners study, is situated close to Solihull town centre and serves areas of minor deprivation. The smaller campus is situated in north Solihull and serves areas of significant social and economic disadvantage. Solihull has a population of 209,000, of which 86% is from a White background. The proportion of Solihull residents qualified to level 4 is slightly above the England average, whereas the proportion of residents with no qualifications is lower than in the region and nationally. The proportion of young people not in education, training or employment in Solihull is low. The proportion of pupils aged 16 in Solihull who achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A*- C, including English and mathematics is above the national average. In the north of the borough, this proportion is well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Shaun Dillon HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), an associate inspector and six additional inspectors, assisted by the Vice-Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment 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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