

# Calthorpe Vocational Trust

## Independent specialist college

<b>Inspection dates</b>		<b>20–22 April 2015</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding-1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- the college provides an outstanding range of work placements, including paid employment, for learners, that very successfully develop the skills they need to fulfil their aspirations for employment and independence
- all learners develop their communication and daily living skills very well; they make outstanding progress in the way they manage their behaviour and relate to each other and the wider world
- learners develop excellent English, mathematical and communication skills, particularly by using them in the workplace and in the local community; extensive practical learning experiences promote learners' development and confidence in these skills in their day-to-day lives
- learning support staff are highly skilled at working in partnership with teachers and employers and use very effectively strategies to manage learners' behaviour; they carefully monitor and assess learners' support needs, reducing the support provided as learners gain in confidence
- learners thrive in an inclusive environment, promoted and modelled by senior leaders, that is exciting, aspirational and challenging
- creatively devised programmes and outstanding engagement with employers meet local and national needs particularly well, taking full account of the priorities of businesses.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- self-assessment does not drive improvement across the provision; strengths and areas for improvement are not clearly identified and linked to the improvement plan
- the strategic plan does not set out clearly enough how the priorities of the college will be achieved
- written and verbal feedback does not always make clear to learners how they can improve.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen strategic planning by making sure that the plan clearly articulates the ambitions, priorities and direction of Calthorpe Vocational College (CVC); ensure that it is grounded in well-considered plans for the ambitious expansion of the college.
- Improve the self-assessment process and the quality of the report so that it is more evaluative and identifies areas for development, providing a stronger foundation for improvement plans.
- Ensure that written and verbal feedback takes good account of learners' self-evaluations and informs the next steps they need to take to achieve their targets.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Outstanding
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- Established in September 2014, CVC moved to new accommodation in October 2014. At the time of the inspection, CVC had been delivering study programmes for seven months. The college offers educational provision for learners aged 19 to 25 with autistic spectrum disorders, significant behavioural needs, and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college curriculum prioritises work placements. All learning is planned, embedded and reinforced through high-quality work placements.
- CVC makes exceptional provision for work placements, including paid employment, with local, national and multi-national organisations. During the inspection, inspectors visited all of the work placements that CVC currently provides and met with the most senior managers in many of those organisations. At all levels, managers understand the purpose of the placements and fully understand learners' developmental and learning needs. They know and understand the targets that learners have and work very successfully in partnership with learning mentors to ensure the placements provide the right opportunities for developing learners' skills.
- Across all aspects of the study programme, learners make excellent progress relative to their starting points and against their individual targets. All learners are set minimum and aspirational targets; these individual targets, combined with accredited programmes and work placements, are challenging. They link closely to the life skills learners need to support their future independence.
- The working environment provides rich opportunities for learning and learners make excellent progress in understanding the world of work through their carefully considered placements. They develop their employability skills well, improving time-keeping, communication, English and mathematics through a wide range of job roles. For example, they restock toiletries and beverages in hotel rooms, check and record the supply of stock in settings in the local children's hospital; they show visitors around, and answer their questions, at the local botanical gardens.
- Learners are motivated to achieve high standards. Teachers and learners review progress towards their targets frequently. College data show that in the seven months since the programme began, all learners are achieving their short-term goals and almost all are making very good progress towards their medium- and longer-term goals. Once learners achieve a short-term target, they agree a new and more challenging target with their teacher. Learners spoken to during the inspection said that they felt inspired to make the best possible progress in their learning, especially in the workplace.
- The progress learners make towards improving and managing their behaviour at college, in the workplace, and at home, is outstanding. Many learners join the college displaying various levels of challenging behaviour. Highly individualised and well-conceived learning plans and targets,

developed in conjunction with the learner, provide clear strategies to manage and reduce the incidences of these behaviours. Learners who find change difficult cope increasingly well with sudden alterations of routines, or of staff, in their workplace.

- Learners participate fully in a broad range of experiences inside and outside the classroom that develop their English and mathematical skills particularly well. Currently a group of learners has an exhibition of their art and craft work on display at a local art gallery. Learners market, price and sell their work to the public. The quality of one learner's work is so high that he currently has a commission to create a bespoke piece of art for a customer.
- Systems for monitoring and recording learners' progress are coherent, well planned and highly effective. Managers and teachers make good use of these data to identify gaps and variations in provision as well as the individual progress that learners are making. For example, an early analysis of the data identified gaps in learners' progress towards developing literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, managers made immediate changes to the structure and delivery of learning sessions, to provide more bespoke delivery of these subjects.
- Destination and transition planning starts as soon as the learners first come to the college and is an integral aspect of all of the learners' activities. Long-term targets are aspirational and realistic, matching learners' skills and interests. The programme is at an early stage of delivery and consequently there are no destination data. Attendance and punctuality are good; behaviour is exemplary.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good enabling all learners to access an outstanding range of work-placement opportunities to build and enhance their employability skills and grow in confidence in the workplace. This leads to excellent outcomes for all learners.
- All staff have high expectations of learners who receive very good individual support in all settings across the study programme. Staff encourage and motivate learners to work as independently as possible and to develop their decision-making skills to meet challenges with minimal intervention from staff.
- Teachers and learning mentors know their learners extremely well and use this knowledge to plan and develop highly individualised learning programmes. They plan sessions well to incorporate all areas of the curriculum into practical workshops and out in the workplace. For example, learners are using their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to develop a website displaying the college's craft products and to produce an e-marketing site for the products. A learner who has developed good skills in using spreadsheets is working within his craft company work placement to support the employer with recording stock and sales.
- Learners develop valuable research and study skills through highly effective use of a total communication strategy incorporating photographs, symbols, videos and communication boards, enabling them to plan their own work and to follow clear guidelines. Learners demonstrate initiative in the workplace through using skills developed over time to complete tasks with little or no support from staff.
- The good use of symbols supports learners with complex communication needs. The input of therapy teams is evident in the centre, the workplace and, where appropriate, with parents and carers. For example, the communication co-ordinator supports one learner in the workplace to use symbols on his tablet computer to check and record stock in the aids and adaptations store at the hospital; staff then use this to re-order stock as necessary. This highly effective support is enabling the learner to become increasingly independent in the workplace.

- Staff are excellent role models for their learners, they are highly enthusiastic and successfully create a learning environment that is challenging but calm. They are appropriately qualified to meet the needs of all the learners, in the classroom, workshop and workplace settings.
- In lessons, the workplace and tutorials, staff make skilful use of questioning techniques to check learners’ understanding and to prompt, assess and monitor progress. They provide detailed feedback on progress. However, verbal and written feedback does not clearly identify what a learner needs to do to make further progress. Learners complete innovative self-evaluations of their progress but not all teachers use these well enough to plan further learning or new targets for a learner.
- Working closely with employers and an awarding body, CVC has developed a specific qualification, Inspiring Confidence in Employability (ICE) at entry level 1 to ensure the skills learners are working towards meet the needs and requirements of employers. Plans are in place to develop further qualifications at higher levels to meet the needs of learners as they progress through CVC.
- Staff make excellent use of ICT to record and provide evidence for skills learners have acquired at the college and in the workplace. Careful recording of the progress learners are making informs the planning of further learning very well. However, recording of evidence towards achieving the ICE qualification is less good; it is not always systematic enough to ensure learners, teachers and learning mentors are clear about the elements of learning attained. Portfolios of evidence do not contain a comprehensive summary that records the elements of the ICE qualification achieved.
- All teachers, support staff and employers are skilful at embedding English, mathematics and life skills into learning. For example, learners re-stock clothing in a section of a supermarket, placing footwear in age and size order, and count and place the correct number of bottles on the correct shelf. At the children’s hospital, one learner skilfully replaced files using a complex, reverse numerical system. Learners use a range of programmes on personal tablets to communicate confidently with other workers and staff.
- The college has a thorough initial and baseline assessment that ensures learners build on their existing skills and access a curriculum that enables them to make progress. Good information, advice and guidance enable learners to make informed decisions about the type of work placement that would help them to progress. Frequent, aspirational tutorials support learners to develop a clear understanding of the needs of employers, helping them plan for transition from the college.
- Staff foster a safe, welcoming learning environment. As a result, learners display high levels of respect at CVC and in the workplace. Learners’ continual engagement with the wider community supports the development of a good understanding of the cultural mix within the city and the workplace. CVC celebrates and explores the diverse heritage of the learners and staff well. However, in a minority of cases teachers and learning mentors fail to raise the awareness and understanding of other aspects of diversity that learners may encounter in their wide-ranging workplaces.

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management</b>	Good
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- The trustees and senior leaders have exceptional aspirations for all learners. They work relentlessly to ensure all staff have the same high expectations and provide good-quality training and work opportunities for all learners. The strategic plan is ambitious but it does not clearly identify how CVC will achieve all of its aspirational goals. For example, targets for rapid increases for the recruitment of learners have been set, but plans do not take full account of all of the factors required to secure the quality of or funding for the larger provision.

- Trustees are appropriately experienced and oversee the work of CVC effectively; they scrutinise the performance data of CVC and hold managers to account for the performance of staff and learners. They provide good support to leaders and managers through their involvement in a range of college activities. For example, direct action from the trustees has resulted in the securing of paid employment for learners with the local children's hospital.
- Outstanding engagement with employers is at the heart of this provision. The information, advice and guidance co-ordinator is relentless in the pursuit of the very best placements for learners. Supported by the senior team, the co-ordinator works closely with employers to explain the specific needs of learners, and, more importantly, the expectation that the college has of employers. In particular, CVC places an expectation on all employers that they will ensure continuity of placement opportunity, meaningful and useful work roles and, where possible, that these will lead to opportunities for paid employment.
- Employers support learning exceptionally well, through contributing to the development of relevant accredited programmes for learners, improving learners' interview skills and supporting their own staff to understand disability. CVC staff analyse the needs of local employers and match the college curriculum to meet those needs. As a result, learners are better equipped to fill potential vacancies. Employers are firmly committed to rise to the challenge of increasing the number of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in employment. Employers benefit from the skills of CVC staff and those of Calthorpe Academy, through the provision of bespoke communication training, and the use of learners' and staff's knowledge to support them in the development of websites and publicising their businesses.
- The performance management of staff is good and links closely to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Senior leaders and managers monitor all staff against key performance measures throughout the year. Formal appraisals and regular supervision use challenging targets that drive improvement. The observation process for monitoring the quality of sessions and the effectiveness of the teacher and learning mentor focuses clearly on learning and the impact staff have on learners' progress. Feedback from lesson observations is clear, constructive and developmental. Senior leaders provide good support through coaching and individual guidance to enable staff to reach the high standards the college sets.
- Although the self-assessment recognises the strengths of the organisation well, it is overly descriptive. It fails to record the impact of the good work that has taken place or any areas for improvement. Consequently, the development plan is not precise enough as it builds on an evaluation of the provision which is insufficiently self-critical.
- Ongoing discussions with learners ensure that teachers and learning mentors capture their views well and act upon them. For example, learners have been involved in discussions about the timing of the college day and breaks from lessons. However, arrangements to ensure that learners' views are consistently communicated to the trustees and used in the self-assessment process are at an early stage of development. CVC has very recently formed a student committee with elected learner representatives; plans are in place to appoint a student governor.
- The analysis and evaluation of data on learners' overall performance and progress are good. Robust electronic recording systems provide all staff with up-to-date information about learners' progress. An effective alert system flags slow and rapid progress. If learners achieve their targets quickly, they are changed to provide more challenge.
- The development of the curriculum is good. Staff adapt the curriculum so that it meets the needs of individuals and they regularly review its effectiveness to ensure it continues to be challenging and supports learners' progress and development. For example, managers have made alterations mid-year to the summer term timetable to allow learners to take part in a larger variety of vocational training sessions.
- An ethos of equality and diversity pervades the day-to-day operational management of CVC. The rich mix of wide-ranging workplaces and international visits, combined with the varied skills, qualifications and life experiences of the staff, provide learners with many experiences of cultural diversity. Staff manage well the very rare incidences of concern raised by learners.

- Arrangements for safeguarding are good and the college meets its statutory requirements. All staff promote the well-being and safety of learners through individual and activity-based risk assessments and through e-safety initiatives. Staff follow up any safeguarding issues promptly and appropriately using the college's clear procedures and guidelines. Health and safety are consistently reinforced in learning and work placements, as well as in sessions involving community access. CVC is beginning to work with learners through all aspects of their learning to increase their understanding of sexual exploitation and radicalisation and, importantly, to increase their ability to recognise possible concerns and to respond appropriately.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Calthorpe Vocational Trust

<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	2					2			
Outcomes for learners	1					1			
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2					2			
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2					2			

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Independent living and leisure skills</b>	<b>2</b>

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent specialist college							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	19+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	0							
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mr Graham Hardy							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected							
<b>Website address</b>	www.calthorpe.bham.sch.uk							
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A							
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A.</li> </ul>							



## Contextual information

This is the first inspection of this provision. Calthorpe Vocational College is an independent specialist college. It is a registered charity and caters for learners with high needs across Birmingham. All learners attend daily; the college does not have any residential provision. A board of trustees oversees the charity. Currently CVC makes use of human resources and some teaching staffing from Calthorpe Academy, a through-school for children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs.

The college started to offer programmes funded by the Education Funding Agency from September 2014. A one-year pilot, funded by the local authority, preceded the introduction of the programme. The provision moved into purpose-built accommodation on 1 October 2014. At the time of the inspection, CVC had been in receipt of EFA funding for seven months and had been offering provision for five working months. All learners attend from the surrounding local authority areas and attend for five days a week. Currently, the senior management team from Calthorpe Academy oversees CVC. The manager of the college is dedicated to CVC and will ultimately run the provision as a separate charitable organisation. A board of trustees was established in 2014 specifically to oversee the study programme and includes two senior managers from large businesses/statutory organisations and the deputy head teacher at Calthorpe Academy.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Elaine Clinton HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Deputy Head Teacher of Calthorpe Vocational Trust 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](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012)

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