

Birmingham Metropolitan College

General further education college

Inspection dates		18–22 May 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:

- too few learners on 16-19 study programmes achieve their qualifications, too few achieve the grades expected of them, and in too many subjects attendance at lessons is poor
- not enough learners achieve their qualifications in English and mathematics
- the proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their qualifications has declined and is low on most programmes
- managers' strategies for improving provision do not have a sufficient impact and teaching, learning and assessment require improvement in too many subjects
- teachers make insufficient use of information learning technology (ILT) to further learners' understanding and progress and enable them to continue learning outside lessons
- too few learners on study programmes complete work experience or other activities to improve their understanding of how the vocational skills they learn are applied in the workplace
- not enough teachers and assessors make sufficient use of precise targets with learners, based on their prior attainment, to support them to achieve their potential

This college has the following strengths:

- teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding in manufacturing technology apprenticeships, and good on college-based programmes in sport and visual arts
- learners and apprentices have a positive attitude to learning; their conduct at college and in the workplace is good, and they relate well to each other and to staff
- in almost all subjects, teachers make effective use of the industry-standard workshops and resources so that learners and apprentices gain good practical skills
- through their highly effective partnerships with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), local authorities and employers, managers have adapted the curriculum well to meet local and regional priorities and to support unemployed adults to gain work.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Improve learners' progress, including in English and mathematics and on apprenticeships by
 - ensuring that teachers set them challenging targets and tasks that match their individual needs
 - taking account of their prior attainment and the progress they make
 - raising learners' expectations regarding attendance at lessons
 - ensuring that all teachers give feedback on learners' assessed work that identifies what they need to do to improve further.
- Develop further the use of ILT to improve learning in the classroom. Provide online resources for learners so that they make more rapid progress through continuing to learn outside the classroom and between workplace assessments and reviews.
- Ensure that all learners on 16-19 study programmes develop a comprehensive understanding of how the subjects they study apply in the workplace through work experience and visits to employers.
- Ensure all subject managers raise expectations and standards by evaluating teaching and learning more accurately, including the use of a broader range of evidence beyond that available through the observation of lessons, and focusing more precisely on the impact of teachers' activities on learners' learning.
- Strengthen the management of staff performance and hold them more accountable for learners' performance. Ensure that staff have clear and precise action plans and that managers review these frequently to enable them to tailor continuing professional development closely to individual staff needs. Develop staff development activities so that they involve all teachers in improving their practice, and ensure that teachers in high-performing subjects share their best practice.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Approximately two fifths of learners are aged 16 to 18, mostly on full-time study programmes. Around three quarters of these learners are on study programmes at level 3, including AS- and A-level qualifications. The remainder are on study programmes at levels 1 and 2. Most adults study part-time with the majority on programmes at levels 1 and 2. Subcontractors provide around a fifth of the adult provision. Approximately 2,000 learners are on apprenticeships.
- Too few learners aged 16 to 18 successfully complete their qualifications, in particular on study programmes at level 1 and level 2. A high proportion of learners achieve qualifications on study programmes at level 3, but not enough achieve the grades expected of them given their prior attainment. While most AS- and A-level learners stay to the end of their course, pass rates have dropped, and for AS-level subjects they are very low. The proportion of adults who successfully complete qualifications has risen in the past three years and is in line with similar providers.
- The proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programmes has declined, and is low. Apprentices make slow progress and in the majority of subjects, too few achieve their qualifications in the planned time. Apprentices in manufacturing technologies, pharmacy services and dental nursing achieve very well. A very small number of learners are on traineeships and of these, the large majority go on to apprenticeships or college courses.

- Learners' acquisition and use of skills in English and mathematics, while improving, is not consistently good across all subjects. The proportion of learners who achieve A* to C grades in mathematics has risen, but is still low, and in English it is very low. Too few learners on functional skills in English at entry level pass their qualifications, while pass rates on qualifications at level 1 and level 2 have risen and are high. In mathematics functional skills, the proportion of learners who successfully complete qualifications has declined and is low.
- Managers and staff have formed highly effective partnerships with Jobcentre Plus and employers to provide training to unemployed adults. Around 2,000 adults complete courses in subjects such as customer service to prepare them for jobs, with a high proportion finding work. Managers play a key role in regeneration projects within the city, in particular in supporting employers to recruit staff in a large retail development. In a minority of subjects, including dentistry, and engineering and electronics, learners achieve industry standards of work through the expertise, resources and equipment provided by commercial partners.
- Managers have implemented most aspects of study programmes successfully. In areas such as business and horticulture, staff prepare learners well for future employment through internships and work placements. In subjects including performing arts, hairdressing, beauty therapy and catering learners prepare for work by volunteering at local venues and through managing college events and projects to commercial standards. On a minority of courses, including science and information technology, learners do not gain a sufficient understanding of the application of the subjects they study to the workplace.
- Managers monitor well the performance of different groups of learners, and actions to reduce performance gaps are having a positive impact. Learners from minority ethnic backgrounds generally perform less well compared with their peers, particularly on courses for lower-level qualifications. Female learners aged 16 to 18 on study programmes perform better than male learners, but for adults this trend is in reverse with male learners performing better. Learners who receive extra help to achieve their qualifications perform as well as their peers, but staff do not identify well enough the support needs of all learners on entry-level programmes.
- Managers have improved their collection of data about where learners go on completion of their courses, but this still requires further improvement. A high proportion of learners on programmes at level 1 and level 2 continue for a further year at the college, but not enough go on to a higher level of learning. The proportion of learners on courses at level 3 who go to higher education has risen, and is high.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching learning and assessment require improvement and consequently not enough learners and apprentices attend all their lessons or succeed in all their learning goals. Managers have been unable to secure consistent improvements in learners' experiences across different subjects, and considerable variations exist. For example, teaching, learning and assessment on apprenticeships in manufacturing technologies are outstanding, but on apprenticeships in health and social care they are inadequate. In too many subjects, the quality of provision requires improvement.
- Recent management initiatives to raise standards are beginning to have an impact, but teachers' skills require further development. Teachers use a range of approaches to engage and motivate learners during lessons, but these are not always effective, as teachers do not match tasks closely enough to learners' abilities.
- Teachers assess learners' prior attainment accurately at the start of their programmes, but too often do not use this information well enough to plan learning that meets all learners' needs, in particular those who are more able. As a result, these learners do not receive sufficient challenge and lose interest as they wait for others to catch up.

- Staff provide a suitable range of additional support to learners who need help, including in ensuring those who have significant barriers to overcome are able to succeed. This support is particularly effective for learners who attend courses at the college's main sites. Staff do not provide enough support for adults studying at community venues, or for apprentices.
- Managers have been slow to ensure that teachers and learners have suitable information technology to support and enhance learning. Managers' recent installation of Wi-Fi at all campuses and upgrades to the virtual learning environment (VLE) are helping to improve this area. However, teachers in the majority of subjects do not place good enough resources on the VLE to aid the independent study of learners and apprentices and help them to extend their knowledge and understanding, in order to make more rapid progress.
- The majority of teachers and assessors use their vocational and professional expertise very well in industry-standard workshops to help learners develop the practical and personal skills employers need. For example, in dentistry, pharmacy, beauty therapy and hairdressing, learners develop their practice in safe, realistic and well-equipped working conditions.
- On the majority of programmes, staff assess learners' work accurately. Most teachers and assessors provide encouraging feedback to learners that indicates what they need to do to improve. In a minority of subjects, learners receive insufficiently detailed feedback to enable them to make progress. Too often teachers do not train learners well enough to interpret the qualification assessment criteria so that they can evaluate the quality of their own work; this limits learners' ability to make further progress through independent study.
- Personal tutors use a well-planned tutorial curriculum on the 16-19 study programmes to help learners to gain good personal and social skills, which is complemented by learners' participation in volunteering and charity events. Learners have a good understanding of social responsibility and a secure understanding of how to conduct themselves in contemporary society.
- Newly appointed 'English champions' for each subject area are now beginning to have a positive impact on teachers' ability to support learners to develop their use of English. Although requiring further improvement, most teachers correct grammatical and spelling errors in learners' written work and ensure they use technical and frequently used words correctly. Teachers provide guidance to ensure learners participate competently in group discussions and presentations in lessons.
- Teachers' skills in supporting learners to develop their use of mathematics require improvement. In the majority of subjects, learners and apprentices are able to use appropriate mathematical skills well. However, in a minority of subjects teachers provide insufficient guidance to learners, who make basic errors, such as using incorrect values to calculate the conductivity of electricity in science.
- In most cases, staff provide good guidance to learners to place them on the programme most suited to their needs. Learners receive good advice to plan their next stage of learning or to find employment. In a few cases, most notably on apprenticeships, staff have provided poor information about the requirements of the programme, and apprentices have not completed all the qualifications required for their apprenticeship.
- Staff support learners well to appreciate the diverse world in which they will live and work. For example, learners on foundation English and mathematics courses arranged a well-attended diversity awareness event for the college. They presented and displayed a range of activities, including mathematical methods from around the world and information about inspirational people from different cultures.

Health and social care**Apprenticeships**

Inadequate

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

- learners make inadequate progress with too few achieving their apprenticeships and only a small proportion achieving them within the planned time; learners' attendance at training sessions is poor
- subcontractors' staff provide inadequate advice and guidance to learners to ensure that they have a clear understanding of health and social care work and of the requirements for completing an apprenticeship; as a result, too many learners leave their programme early without achieving their full apprenticeship framework
- the majority of teachers and assessors do not use their skills and industry experience well enough to plan and teach lessons that enthuse and motivate learners; too many lessons are uninspiring and do not meet learners' individual needs
- teachers do not adequately ensure that learners have the skills and knowledge they need in their jobs, such as an understanding of different types of care, and confidence in communicating with users of care services and other health and social care professionals
- teachers make insufficient use of technology during lessons to assist learners in understanding key concepts; they provide very limited resources on the VLE which hinders learners' ability to work independently, and learners do not develop the research skills necessary for their future progression to higher levels of study
- teachers and assessors do not support apprentices sufficiently well to improve their use of English; learners are not skilled enough at identifying and correcting errors in their own work, or at using resources such as dictionaries to improve their writing, resulting in errors in documents such as care plans
- teachers and assessors do not adequately support learners to develop their use of mathematics within the context of care work to undertake routine tasks, including using thermometers, scales and body-mass calculators
- too few teachers and assessors ensure that learners have a sufficient understanding of the wide and diverse needs of users of care services, and of how to adapt their services to meet these needs.

In health and social care the provider has the following strengths:

- newly appointed managers have recently made positive changes to improve teaching, learning and assessment and to terminate the contract of a poorly performing subcontractor; learners aged 16 to 18 who started apprenticeships in the current year make good progress
- apprentices who stay on their programme enjoy their learning and staff provide effective support for their personal and welfare needs
- learners are respectful and have good relationships with staff and other learners.

Manufacturing technologies**Apprenticeships**

Outstanding

Teaching, learning and assessment in manufacturing technologies are outstanding because:

- most apprentices successfully complete their qualifications within the planned time, produce work to an excellent standard and develop outstanding work-related, personal and social skills
- highly knowledgeable and experienced trainers have high expectations of learners and use a wide range of very imaginative activities that constantly challenge all learners; in an outstanding lesson apprentices programmed numerically controlled robotic arms to perform a wide range of increasingly complex tasks, and tested and evaluated the accuracy of their set-up commands
- trainers and employers move learners quickly onto more complex work in order to prepare them thoroughly for employment and the next level of learning; for example, one learner is part of a team designing and manufacturing very high-standard shop fittings for a worldwide fashion retailer
- apprentices develop extremely high levels of resilience, confidence and independence when maintaining equipment, assembling vehicles and using computer-aided manufacturing processes; they broaden significantly their expertise and employability by rotating their work in all departments within their company
- trainers plan learning thoroughly and make excellent use of resources, including ILT and frequent homework, which contribute to apprentices continuing to learn quickly outside the classroom; high-standard employers provide exemplary training centres so that learners use the very latest manufacturing techniques with a strong emphasis on quality control
- trainers assess learners' work frequently and accurately and provide very clear evaluative feedback on how well they have done and what they need to improve; consequently, learners make rapid progress
- staff set targets with learners that focus well on skill development, attitudes and behaviours as well as developing knowledge and understanding; trainers monitor learners' progress very closely to ensure that all apprentices achieve or exceed their targets
- apprentices at all levels confidently use mathematical conventions and methodologies, for example, in the use of look-up charts for setting up welding plant and machine setting
- assessors mark learners' written work particularly closely and provide insightful advice on how to improve their technical report writing, preparing them well for employment and higher education
- staff have outstanding links with employers, industry trade bodies, steering groups and schools and use these to ensure they place apprentices on the right programme and support them well to achieve, particularly those who need extra help to succeed; staff are very successfully increasing the number of female apprentices into the region's workforce
- apprentices have a comprehensive understanding of how social diversity relates to the workplace; in an outstanding lesson on risk assessment, apprentices summarised their learning extremely well by calculating the cost and impact of fatalities and serious accidents on families and communities.

Construction crafts**16-19 study programmes**
19+ learning programmes

Requires improvement

Teaching learning and assessment in construction crafts require improvement because:

- while most adult learners achieve their qualifications, the proportion of learners aged 16 to 18 on study programmes who successfully complete their qualifications has declined and is low
- teachers do not set sufficiently high standards in theory classes and learners make slow progress in understanding key concepts; for example, learners on courses at level 2 have an insufficient knowledge of electrical regulations and the supply of electricity and wiring systems
- teachers do not set precise enough targets with learners to pace them to achieve their qualifications; their feedback on learners' written work does not provide sufficient information to help learners improve their work, particularly for those on programmes at level 1
- learners on courses for qualifications at level 1 and level 2 do not all receive enough support in developing their English skills and too often their written work and presentations in class contain errors that teachers do not correct
- teachers do not use information about learners' starting points well enough to plan learning that meets learners' individual needs; for example, teachers fail to provide sufficient support to a minority of learners on the electrical installation programme at level 2 to ensure that they are able to complete the science modules successfully
- staff do not support learners well enough to prepare them for employment, and do not routinely help learners work towards the achievement of the award of the construction site certification scheme as part of their programme – essential for work on construction sites; teachers do not plan work experience into learners' programmes of study, and the proportion of learners who progress into apprenticeships is low.

In construction crafts the provider has the following strengths:

- the majority of learners produce work to a high standard and a minority work to standards beyond those required by the qualification criteria; for example, learners in brickwork build cavity brick and block walls to a very high level of finish and tolerance
- teachers make good use of the very good, industry-standard accommodation, tools and materials to help learners develop valuable practical skills, and learners enjoy the realistic working environment found in most workshops
- technicians and additional learning support staff assist very well in developing learners' practical skills and ensuring that those who need extra help to succeed receive effective additional coaching and guidance
- managers and teachers insist upon high standards of health and safety and they consistently remind learners of the importance of employing safe working practices; learners work safely with power and hand tools, and conduct themselves responsibly in workshops and classrooms.

Sport

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in sport are good because:

- most learners achieve their qualifications and make good progress in relation to their starting points; on completion of their programmes, the proportion of learners who go on to the next level of learning or to employment is high
- teachers use their high level of sport and coaching expertise to develop learners' practical sports skills to a high standard; sports academy learners show high levels of performance, and learners on study programmes at level 1 make good progress in fitness training skills
- teachers provide a wide range of particularly effective learning activities and work placements that lead to learners gaining good skills to prepare them for employment; for example, learners on personal fitness trainer courses learn relevant communication skills through paired activities in class, and work placements in schools enable learners to apply and evaluate their own coaching skills
- teachers are skilful at helping learners to apply theoretical principles to practical situations; for example, learners capably adapt coaching regimes in order to meet the needs of school children
- teachers use ILT effectively in lessons to reinforce and develop learners' knowledge and understanding of sports theory and practice; they use video clips effectively to aid learners' understanding of the application of biomechanical theories in sport
- teachers use particularly effective strategies during lessons to assess and improve learners' understanding of sports-related theories; learners on a course at level 2 justify their judgments on the long-term effects of exercise following probing questioning by the teacher
- teachers assess learners' work well and provide precise feedback to help them improve; they give comprehensive guidance to learners on their written work that improves their spelling, punctuation and grammar and learners present their ideas confidently in class discussions and presentations
- learners treat each other with respect and provide support for their colleagues in lessons, such as in assessing each other's work; in the football academy, teachers foster good working relationships between the football learners and those following foundation courses.

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

- a minority of teachers provide insufficient support to learners in developing their use of mathematics within sport; for learners on study programmes, learners' attendance at, and achievement in functional skills mathematics qualifications require improvement
- teachers do not consistently use the VLE to enable all learners to work independently outside lessons which prevents a minority of learners from making the progress expected of them
- a minority of teachers do not monitor learners' progress closely enough and do not routinely set targets to pace learners to achieve their qualifications; consequently, a small minority of learners do not stay to the end of their course or do not make fast enough progress.

Visual arts

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in visual arts are good because:

- over the past three years the proportion of learners who successfully complete their qualifications has been high, with the majority of learners on study programmes at level 3 gaining places in higher education
- teachers carefully plan activities and projects to meet individual learners' needs, and the diversity and range of learners' work reflects their interests and ability well
- learners use their particularly well-developed research skills to provide creative designs for their portfolios; learners discuss their progress in a mature and self-critical way
- teachers make good use of their links with industry specialists so that learners complete projects which require them to work to professional standards and help them understand how the skills they acquire can apply to commercial scenarios
- technical and support staff complement the work of teachers very well to ensure that learners are supported to achieve; learners make very good use of the specialist workshops in order to continue work in their own time and develop confidence in the use of professional equipment and resources
- teachers make very good use of the mostly excellent resources to help learners develop high levels of competency in the use of a wide range of media, including photography, sculpture, metalwork, and set design and painting
- teachers' written feedback on learners' assessed work is detailed, supportive and helps them to improve their work; learners make very good use of frequent short-term targets which teachers regularly review in order to remain on track during complex projects
- teachers provide learners with good verbal feedback and use probing questions effectively to challenge learners to consider their art and design ideas in more detail; learners accurately review their progress against the assessment criteria in order to enable them to achieve high grades
- learners develop good written and verbal communication skills which they use well in their detailed research, regular class discussions and peer evaluations
- learners develop a very good awareness of themes related to equality and diversity by exploring a range of topics including British values, disability, mental illness and sexuality, and through foreign exchange visits.

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

- too few learners on study programmes at level 3 exceed their target grades; staff have implemented new strategies this year, including more frequent assessment and closer monitoring of learners' progress, but it is too early to judge their impact
- teachers do not provide sufficient training for learners in the acquisition of garment production skills on fashion courses; learners do not use industry-standard equipment and the standard of their work is too low
- not enough learners go on work placements to ensure they fully understand the rigour of a professional environment.

Foundation English

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Requires improvement

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

- the proportion of learners who achieve A* to C grades in GCSE English has declined and is very low, and pass rates on functional skills qualifications are too low
- learners' attendance is poor in too many lessons, particularly for learners aged 16 to 18 on GCSE courses, and this limits the progress that a minority of learners make; staff actions to improve learners' attendance do not have sufficient impact
- teachers make insufficient use of ILT during lessons in order to help learners improve their English or to maintain learners' interest during lessons
- functional skills tutors do not set realistic and measurable short-term targets to help learners build up their skills in English and challenge them to move quickly to the next stage of learning
- teachers do not have an adequate overview of the progress learners make; on GCSE courses teachers do not monitor closely enough learners' progress in achieving or exceeding a grade C, and on functional skills courses they do not review closely enough their progress in mid-year examinations
- teachers provide too few resources for learners on the VLE, and learners do not do enough independent learning between lessons, which limits their progress.

In Foundation English the provider has the following strengths:

- managers' actions to raise the quality of provision in English are beginning to bring about improvements, and most teachers have high expectations of their learners; in GCSE lessons learners develop their communication skills well and have a secure command of technical aspects of writing, such as the use of 'hyperbole' and 'alliteration' in literary texts
- adult learners on functional skills courses who speak English as a second language develop well their self-esteem and confidence in using English in their everyday lives
- teachers provide learners with effective feedback on their work, with clear explanations and detailed points for development closely referenced to the assessment criteria to help learners prepare for examinations
- support tutors provide good support to learners who need extra help to succeed, and these learners make progress in line with their peers; teachers arrange well-attended extra workshops prior to examinations
- learners have a strong awareness of equality and diversity themes and teachers promote these well in lessons; learners also contribute to other learners' appreciation of cultural diversity by participating in the college's 'Diversity Day'.

Foundation mathematics**16-19 study programmes****19+ learning programmes**

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics require improvement because:

- too few learners successfully complete functional skills qualifications and too few learners on GCSE courses achieve grades A* to C; learners' attendance is low and this impacts on their progress and achievement
- teachers do not plan lessons well enough to meet the needs of all learners; in lessons with learners of mixed abilities, teachers too often set the same tasks for all learners and do not provide more challenging and complex tasks for more able learners who consequently do not make the progress expected of them
- in functional skills lessons, teachers do not vary the approach they take in helping learners to learn; for example, teachers rely too much on the use of paper-based worksheets for long periods of time, which learners find repetitive and uninspiring, causing them to lose interest
- teachers make insufficient use of ILT, both in lessons and for learning outside the classroom in order to quicken and extend learners' knowledge acquisition; for example, learners spend too long drawing bar and pie charts on paper rather than learning how to record and interpret data
- teachers do not check learners' understanding in lessons well enough and rely too much on questions presented to the whole class; more able learners provide mostly accurate answers, whilst others make few responses and teachers have a limited understanding of the depth of their knowledge in order to plan the next stage of learning.

In mathematics the provider has the following strengths:

- adult learners in GCSE mathematics are highly motivated to learn, they build confidence in their ability to solve mathematical problems and develop their skills to high standards
- during revision lessons, teachers coach individual learners well and provide clear explanations, such as the use of ratios and proportions, based on gaps that learners have identified in their knowledge; learners greatly value this individual attention and support which contributes well to their progress
- teachers make good use of well-produced revision work-books which provide a clear summary of key concepts, including space, shapes and probability; the majority of learners use these well to test themselves in relation to examination criteria
- teachers provide learners with helpful individual feedback on their marked work, both verbally and in writing; learners know their individual areas for development and how they can improve
- learners who speak English as a second language make good progress in specific functional skills classes that teachers design to meet their specific needs; teachers are skilled and successful at coaching learners in the use of English so that they are able to interpret examination questions.

Administration**Apprenticeships**

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in administration require improvement because:

- too few apprentices in intermediate and advanced customer service and in intermediate business administration successfully complete their programmes; a significant proportion who started their qualifications last year make slow progress
- teachers and trainers accurately assess apprentices' abilities at the start of their programmes, but they do not use this information to create individual training plans that provide a suitable challenge to all apprentices; too few apprentices develop skills beyond the basic requirements of the course
- staff do not ensure that apprentices already in permanent employment are set motivational targets based on their personal career aims; they do not support these apprentices adequately to develop their skills beyond those required for their current jobs, thereby limiting their future career options
- assessors' written feedback on apprentices' work is often too brief and limited to cursory comments which provide insufficient guidance on how to improve, resulting in too many apprentices making slow progress
- assessors do not routinely identify spelling and grammar mistakes in apprentices' written work and do not teach them strategies to overcome these; in a few cases apprentices have produced information sheets or leaflets for employers that have not been suitably proof-read
- assessors do not provide adequate resources so that apprentices can do more self-directed study; this slows the progress of apprentices' learning in the periods between assessments and reviews
- for apprentices who started their programmes in the last academic year, who make up around two-thirds of learners, trainers and assessors have failed to plan the teaching and assessment of functional skills well enough, and a significant minority of apprentices now struggle to complete their apprenticeship framework in the planned time as a result.

In administration, the provider has the following strengths:

- managers have made positive adjustments to the structure of the programme, with all apprentices now on day release to college and receiving more frequent and timely training in technical knowledge and functional skills; apprentices who started in the current academic year, who make up around a third of learners, make good progress
- the majority of apprentices have secured permanent jobs by developing good work skills, including providing informative presentations, taking the initiative to chair meetings, writing agendas and promoting corporate social responsibility events
- apprentices who need extra help to achieve their qualifications, such as those with dyslexia or who speak English as a second language, receive good support to enable them to achieve
- apprentices have a good awareness of health and safety to ensure that they use office equipment safely; during a fire drill, an advanced-level apprentice was able to co-ordinate safe evacuation of the building and to guide colleagues efficiently back into the building when it was safe to do so

- apprentices' understanding of the importance of equality in the workplace is good and they are able to use appropriate strategies to find out sensitively the needs and expectations of internal and external customers.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new principal and senior leadership team have been thorough in consulting widely with learners, staff and other stakeholders to create a mission, vision and values for the college which focuses clearly on the needs of learners and the aim of providing them with a high standard of provision. Learners now have good opportunities to express their views and give feedback and managers are responding well to issues they raise.
- Governors have a high degree of expertise and a wide range of relevant skills. While they have not always received sufficiently precise information to monitor the college's performance, the new principal has worked assiduously to improve the accuracy of data to enable them to check in a timely and effective manner how effective the college is. In the current year, governors are better able to challenge managers and hold them to account.
- The principal and governors have taken decisive action to understand the college's current financial position. They have assessed the implications of a substantial budget deficit and put in place a recovery plan. Governors frequently and closely check progress with the implementation of actions and their impact. Senior leaders work persistently to minimise the impact of the financial situation on their work to improve standards for learners.
- Leaders and managers work very successfully with a range of organisations including employers, LEAs, local authorities and higher education institutions to plan a curriculum that meets local and regional priorities. Managers are developing a thorough understanding of the different local community needs for the various college sites and they provide learners with good opportunities to progress to further study, apprenticeships and employment.
- Leaders and managers have sharpened their focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment and are taking appropriate improvement actions. However, their progress in tackling areas of weakness has been inconsistent. Although they recognise the need to improve attendance, success rates and the progress learners make relative to their starting points, managers do not evaluate sufficiently the relationship between these weaknesses and the quality of teaching.
- Through their observations of lessons, managers do not have an accurate enough picture of the quality of teaching and learning. Observers do not take into account the impact of learners' absenteeism on the progress they make or correlate this to the quality of teaching. Consequently, teachers and assessors whose practice is not of a sufficiently high standard do not always receive individual support to help them to improve.
- While managers monitor the performance of all teaching staff and set objectives that include learners' outcomes, they are not all sufficiently skilled at developing teachers' skills where observers identify under-performance or learners' outcomes that require improvement. Managers' recent expansion in the number of advanced practitioners to support teachers is at an early stage and beginning to have an impact, as is the programme of college-wide staff development.
- Over the past three years, managers have presided over a decline in the performance of apprenticeships and their oversight of the college's own apprenticeships, and those of subcontractors, is poor for most subjects, with manufacturing technology a notable exception. Managers have recently overhauled the management arrangements for all apprenticeships and reduced substantially their dependence on subcontractors. They now have a better understanding of apprentices' progress and of the quality of their experience, which is improving across most subjects.

- The leadership and management of 16-19 study programmes require improvement. Managers have put in place good progression routes to further study, apprenticeships or employment, and ensure learners improve their English and mathematics skills, but too few learners achieve their qualifications in these subjects. Although staff have very good links with employers, in a minority of subjects learners do not have sufficient insight into the demands of employment.
- In the past year, managers have undertaken a much more realistic evaluation of the college's performance than was previously the case. They now accurately identify most of the key strengths and areas for improvement. These follow through well into quality improvement plans, but managers do not identify precisely enough the actions they need to put in place to bring about improvement, and do not use measurable targets and interim milestones well enough to assess the impact of actions. Consequently, managers make slow progress in resolving a number of key issues, such as learners' poor attendance at lessons.
- Managers increase learners' awareness of diversity well through college-wide activities such as a highly successful multi-cultural and multi-faith event where learners shared experiences through activities such as music, performance and artwork.
- Managers' arrangements for safeguarding learners are good. Suitable checks take place and all staff and governors have appropriate training. Managers have created a safe environment for all learners. Learners' understanding of aspects of personal safety, such as e-safety, is too variable, though staff include most key aspects of this area in the tutorial curriculum for those on study programmes. The college has strong links with local agencies, including the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Key senior staff understand the 'Prevent' agenda for the protection of learners from radicalisation and extremism well and liaise with relevant agencies. All staff are undergoing 'Prevent' training, but this has yet to take place for learners.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Birmingham Metropolitan College

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and Social Care	4
Manufacturing Technologies	1
Construction Crafts	3
Sport	2
Visual Arts	2
Foundation English	3
Foundation mathematics	3
Administration	3

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	14+

Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	30,215							
Principal/CEO	Mr Andrew Cleaves							
Date of previous inspection	February 2011							
Website address	www.bmetc.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+
	1,317	5,777	1,647	3,040	7,070	2,262	110	847
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	544	705	303	398	58	53		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	11		10		21			
Number of learners aged 14-16	226							
Full-time	0							
Part-time	226							
Number of community learners	443							
Number of employability learners	1,910							
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"> ■ Aspirations ■ Avanta ■ Care First ■ Carillion Plc ■ CSR ■ Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Adult Education Department ■ JBC Computer Training Ltd ■ LEAD ■ QTS ■ Skill Centre Ltd ■ Staffordshire Operator Training Ltd ■ The NVQ Training Centre ■ Train2Succeed ■ Venture Training. 							

Contextual information

Birmingham Metropolitan College is a very large college with campuses in Birmingham, Sutton Coldfield, Stourbridge and Kidderminster. It primarily serves the communities in the Birmingham and Dudley local authorities. Its links with employers are mostly within the regions covered by the Black Country and Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnerships. In Birmingham and Dudley, unemployment rates are slightly above regional and national rates, as is the proportion of the population without qualifications. The proportion of school leavers in Birmingham who achieve GCSE grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, is around the national rate, but below in Dudley. In the Black Country, the growth sectors are in manufacturing, transport technology, construction and environmental technologies and business services. In Greater Birmingham and Solihull, the growth sectors are in the City Centre Enterprise Zone, which includes business and financial services and creative and media technologies.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Rieks Drijver HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and nine additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Quality and Standards 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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