

Richmond Adult Community College

General further education college

Inspection dates		19–22 May 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
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 very large majority of learners achieve their qualifications or learning aims
- most learners make good progress with their studies and a very high proportion of those who apply for university places receive and accept offers
- learners benefit from a wide range of exceptional support, complemented very well by external agencies and charities
- teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good; staff have created a good environment for learning and learners and tutors respect each other
- governors, leaders and managers have taken very effective action to improve the quality of the provision
- work with partner organisations is outstanding; leaders and managers have developed a well-planned curriculum which meets the needs and aspirations of the diverse community very well.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- the more able learners do not always attain higher grades or reach their full potential
- tutors do not develop learners' English and mathematical skills consistently well in vocational subjects
- attendance in many subject areas is below that expected by college managers
- although managers review staff performance effectively, they do not yet routinely measure and document the progress staff make in reaching the targets set following appraisals.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve outcomes for learners by maintaining and expanding the already well-developed arrangements to improve the quality of the provision.
- Ensure that tutors provide appropriate activities and materials that suit the different capabilities of the full range of learners and allow them to reach their potential.
- Ensure that all tutors develop learners' English and mathematical skills routinely and successfully during vocational lessons.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Richmond Adult Community College (RACC) provides academic and vocational courses with the aim of learners progressing into further education, university or appropriate and sustainable employment. The vast majority of learners attending courses at RACC are adults and attend part-time, with a small minority on full-time courses. Very few learners are aged 16 to 18 and following study programmes.
- Outcomes for learners are good overall. Between 2011/12 and 2013/14, success rates increased for the vast majority of qualifications. For example, learners working towards qualifications in science and mathematics now make good progress and achieve well. Leaders and managers have worked with subject staff effectively and improved outcomes in subjects such as health and social care, and child care, where success rates in previous years were not good. The number of learners on non-accredited courses who achieve their learning aims is high.
- The proportion of adult learners who achieve GCSE English and mathematics qualifications is high. The number of learners who achieve A*-C grades in their GCSE mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. However, functional skills in English and mathematics are not improving consistently well, for adult learners, in all vocational areas.
- College managers and staff have taken effective action to ensure no discernible variations in performance exist between groups of learners. Those learners with clearly identified individual needs receive good support and achieve their qualifications well. The majority of learners acquire good subject knowledge and good practical skills. For example, in jewellery making, learners design, produce and sell their jewellery in the college shop and, as a result, gain additional valuable skills. By the end of their courses most learners complete practical tasks to a high standard and produce good work in the classroom.
- Learners enjoy being at the college; they contribute well to college life and appreciate the welcoming environment and activities available for them. Learners work well together and a culture of mutual respect exists between learners and staff. Attendance in classes overall has improved significantly since the previous inspection; however, in the majority of lessons observed during the inspection, attendance was too low.
- Many learners develop valuable personal, social and work skills. For example, learners attend a high quality 'executive job club' to gain the work skills that will assist them in acquiring sustainable employment.
- A high proportion of learners progress into further study or employment. A large majority of those who apply for university places receive and accept their offers, which are often from prestigious and well-regarded universities.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Effective teaching, learning and assessment and very good support for learners have led to improvements in outcomes for learners. Tutors' planning is careful and takes good account of learners' personal circumstances and starting points, so that the majority of learners make good progress in their lessons. Learners receive constructive and informative feedback from tutors that encourages them to improve their work. However, tutors do not always pay enough attention to providing additional tasks or challenges to enable more capable learners to reach their potential or develop their skills more quickly.
- Tutors make learning enjoyable and pertinent to learners; they interest them by using well-chosen examples in their teaching that are relevant to their interests and studies. They are creative and resourceful in developing learners understanding of more difficult concepts. For example, one tutor used the everyday example of ambulances to illustrate how emergency vehicles make use of the reflection of light to alert other drivers to their presence; this made it easier for learners to grasp this complex concept.
- Tutors' checking of learners' understanding and grasp of new ideas in class is sometimes haphazard. For example, tutors do not always systematically recap the work covered during a teaching session, and their questions to learners do not always sufficiently check understanding or help learners to reflect on what they have learned.
- Information and learning technology (ILT) and other classroom resources are good. However, many teachers do not make sufficient use of the ILT available to them to enhance or enliven lessons.
- The environment for learning is excellent and is characterised by the good working relationships and respect between tutors and learners. Classrooms and buildings reflect the achievements and success of learners. For example, an early years' classroom has displays of topical issues and information alongside learners' work on child development. Learners enjoy the sense of ownership this brings to their working areas.
- Tutors provide good support for learners in lessons. Learners receive helpful and timely assistance from both tutors and learning support workers. The range and quality of additional support for learners is exceptional and includes excellent support to enable them to manage difficulties such as bereavement or mental health problems. Staff use well-established and productive links with external agencies very well to provide further help. Staff have made a particularly good partnership with a local charity which regularly raises funds to support learners and facilitate better access and resources for disabled learners.
- Tutors' assessment of learners when they start their courses has improved since the previous inspection and is good. Tutors are making better use of the information from these assessments when planning learning with learners. The introduction of a new system for monitoring progress has helped tutors to keep a closer check on learners' progress.
- Staff provide good guidance to learners both before they start and during their courses. They ensure learners receive clear, helpful advice to enable them to make informed choices about their next steps.
- Learners' development of functional skills in English and mathematics in vocational lessons requires improvement. Tutors in vocational subjects do not routinely provide individual help to those learners who need to improve their English and mathematics. Tutors have recently received training to improve their ability to integrate mathematics into their lessons, but have not yet put this fully into practice. Tutors' correction of learners' spelling, punctuation and use of English is not consistently good.
- The majority of tutors help learners to appreciate what diversity means in the context of modern Britain and their own circumstances. Learners respect each other, the staff and the college premises. Tutors pay good attention to health and safety and are very alert to minimising risks learners may encounter.

Performing and visual arts

Good

19+ learning programmes

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

- overall success rates are high, and the rate of progression to higher education is good , with many learners being accepted at highly prestigious and competitive institutions
- visual and performing arts are a fundamental part of the college's provision; the quality of the new accommodation and specialist resources, in addition to the existing and centrally located gallery, is excellent and enables learners to produce a good standard of work, including some which is sold publicly
- tutors are extremely well qualified and most are current practitioners who regularly exhibit their work, and have excellent knowledge of their specialism; their demonstrations of particular skills and techniques inspire learners, and promote confidence and achievement as tutors encourage learners to try out new skills and techniques and not to be afraid of failure
- tutors and learners use ILT and other technologies very effectively to enhance learning and assessment; for example, in a drama lesson, learners were filmed rehearsing a choreographed sequence from *Blood Brothers*, that was subsequently shown on the interactive whiteboard, enabling immediate self- and peer- assessment
- assignments which are well-constructed and helpfully scheduled reflect commercial practice and focus on developing work-related skills; for example, graphic design learners create DVD covers for films, such as *12 Years A Slave* and *No Country for Old Men*, with imagination and confidence
- assessment is thorough and detailed, and learners know what they need to do to improve; tutors pay much attention to the correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar to promote professional standards, and emphasise the importance of literacy and numeracy in relation to final submitted work and potential employment
- equality and diversity are integrated well into lessons, tutors and learners are mutually respectful and enjoy each other's company; much emphasis is given to nearby exhibitions involving new art forms from Africa and Latin America; in assignments, learners design images to illustrate issues that affect today's diverse society
- tutors constantly enrich learning through educational visits, and by enabling current practitioners and past learners who are now in higher education to visit the college and talk about their work; recently, visual arts learners were able to visit the Victoria and Albert Museum to work specifically with the resident ceramicist there.

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

- some small group sizes and poor attendance make it difficult for planned collaborative learning activities to succeed
- in a small minority of lessons, tutors do not pay enough attention to meeting the individual needs of learners.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and foundation English

Good

19+ learning programmes

Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English and ESOL are good because:

- the large majority of learners make good progress in relation to their starting points, achieving relevant qualifications they use as stepping stones to further study and to improve their employment prospects
- learners enjoy not only gaining useful, practical communication skills but also self-confidence; they use their skills at work, for example sending emails or writing a letter, at home to help their children with school work, or simply to participate fully in society
- GCSE English learners have acquired good understanding of grammar and are using their skills creatively and imaginatively
- tutors give clear instructions, understand the difficulties faced when learning a new language and know their learners well. They engage learners effectively by using their experiences to develop language concepts. For example in one lesson the tutor used a learner's experience of assembling a barbecue to explain to other learners the features of good instructions
- tutors provide good opportunities for learners to develop their skills through work experience and visits, for example pre-entry level catering learners studying English enjoyed visiting two cafés to compare them and to learn to recognise signs and notices; another group read *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, after a library visit, thus learning about autism whilst improving their English
- tutors assess learners' skills well upon entry, ensuring that learners join the correct level of course and helping to identify what they need to learn; they assess work carefully, providing helpful feedback so that learners know what and how to improve
- managers have ensured that there are good progression routes to higher level studies in foundation English and ESOL so that learners can continue their studies when their current programme ends. Whether they need good English skills and technical vocabulary to be able to practise as a doctor, or need the conversational skills that allow them to participate effectively in society, they know their next steps and staff provide good support to help them reach their goals
- tutors incorporate useful work on numbers into most lessons; for example, a beginner's ESOL group used packets of medicines and remedies to practise talking about prices and doses at the chemist, and more able and advanced learners learned to complete forms for online banking
- tutors create a safe environment in which learners from different cultures support one another well; their improving English helps them to develop good friendships which continue beyond the classroom.

Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English and ESOL are not yet outstanding because:

- tutors do not always sufficiently challenge more able learners by tailoring work to meet their individual needs; and for the small minority of more able learners the pace of lessons is too slow
- tutors do not provide enough opportunities for group and pair work, which reduces the opportunities for speaking practice and collaborative learning.

Accounting, finance and business management**19+ learning programmes**

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in accounting, finance and business require improvement because:

- the minority of learners are making slow progress in completing assignments due to the way their work has been scheduled and now have much left to cover in the time available; as a result learners have units that have not been completed in line with the assessment schedule
- tutors do not plan all lessons sufficiently well to take into account the different starting points or needs of learners; as a result, some learning activities do not meet the individual needs of learners, including challenging the more able, or provide stimulating learning activities that enthuse and motivate all learners
- tutors do not ensure that, learners understand the importance of good work practices in relation to punctuality, attendance, and time management
- tutors do not develop learners' communication skills sufficiently to ensure that they are well-prepared to meet the specific challenges of the business world; they do not plan opportunities to develop these skills, for example through debating or making formal presentations to a professional standard.

In accounting, finance and business the provider has the following strengths:

- learners develop good accounting skills and industry practices using commercial computer programmes; they can set up customer profiles, calculate overtime premiums and apply direct and indirect costs to retail and manufacturing products and services
- tutors provide regular, helpful and detailed written feedback on learners' work; their comments explain where improvements can be made and help to develop learners' knowledge
- tutors provide good initial information, advice and guidance; they use results from initial assessments of learners' skills in English and mathematics effectively to plan study pathways which ensure learners have the opportunity to progress to further study
- tutors and learners respect each other; tutors enthusiastically and expertly help learners to understand they must respect and value the diversity of their colleagues in the workplace and how the law offers protection to all

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, senior managers and governors set high expectations for learners in the local community of Richmond. Their mission and strategic plans are coherent and well-matched to the needs and aspirations of learners. They have focused effectively on improving aspects of the provision identified as requiring improvement in the previous inspection, and this has led to better outcomes for learners.
- Governors have good knowledge of the performance of the college. They use information well and challenge senior managers robustly to ensure continuous improvement. Governors enrich leadership and management by regularly seeking learners' views, taking an active part in the community and leading the validation of self-assessment and quality improvement.
- Leaders and managers have developed a well-planned curriculum that meets the needs of the local community very well. Managers consult with local authorities regularly to identify what courses are needed by local communities. The resulting curriculum provides clear progression routes to further learning and where appropriate, ensures learners develop the skills and knowledge necessary to gain sustainable employment.

- Leaders and managers have developed excellent and productive relationships with partners, having strengthened these further since the previous inspection. They interact well with the Chamber of Commerce and a vast range of partners, such as local charities and businesses, working responsively and collaboratively, and improving the educational opportunities for learners of all abilities. An example is the 'ready for work scheme' which provides bespoke employability training for adults who have recently become unemployed.
- Learners with identified learning difficulties and disabilities have access to a range of good provision and benefit from particularly good care and support. Learners for whom English is not their first language attend short introductory courses and progress well to higher level qualifications.
- Leaders and managers use accurate data expertly to monitor the performance and progress of learners. As a result, managers are able to assure the quality and performance of courses and subcontracted provision robustly. Self-assessment is particularly effective; managers identify strengths and areas for improvement accurately and set targets and take actions which improve the quality of the provision they manage.
- Senior managers tackle underperformance very effectively. For example, they have restructured the English and mathematics provision and the appointed new managers which has led to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment and learners' achievements.
- Training for tutors is regular, effective, and leads to improvements to teaching, learning and assessment. However, the reviews of staff performance, whilst effective, are not yet routinely documented and used effectively to monitor progress and to ensure performance targets are met.
- Managers and staff promote equality of opportunity very well and respond well to the diversity of the college's learners. The college environment is harmonious and welcoming to all. Managers ensure that learners all have an equal ability to receive education, care and support. Learners receive good support from specialist staff at the college through drop-in centres, while staff seek regular training and advice which enables them to support the differing needs of learners.
- Managers, staff and students all contribute to ensuring the acceptance of diversity and the development of a respectful culture at the college. British values are promoted well, through events such as a recent 'hustings' to discuss freedom of speech, and a celebration of the Indian festival of Holi.
- Safeguarding is good. Leaders and managers have implemented good arrangements for ensuring learners are safe, including risk assessments. All staff attend regular high quality training sessions; established managers and tutors have recently attended training to help them to safeguard staff and learners against radicalisation and extremism. Sessional tutors have yet to receive this training.
- Tutors and learners use good online resources well. Topics include female genital mutilation and safe internet use. As a result, learners feel safe and understand how to stay safe in the college and in the wider community.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Richmond Adult Community 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	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
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
Performing arts	2
Visual arts	2
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	2
Foundation English	2
Accounting and finance	3
Business management	3

Type of provider	General further education college								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	6,710								
Principal/CEO	Ms Gabrielle Flint								
Date of previous inspection	February 2014								
Website address	www.racc.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+	
	5	717	7	894	3	107	-	12	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	-	-	-	-	-		-		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	-		-		-				
Number of learners aged 14-16									
Full-time	-								
Part-time	-								
Number of community learners	808								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	▪ E-training Ltd								

Contextual information

RACC is a general further education college, with the main campus located in Richmond, Surrey. The curriculum includes courses from foundation level to higher education, across a very large number of subject areas. Most learners are adults taking part-time courses. Approximately half of the learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who leave school with five or more GCSE qualifications at A* to C, including English and mathematics, in Richmond is above the national rate. Richmond is an affluent travel-to-work borough and unemployment levels are low. A significantly higher percentage of the population has higher-level qualifications than in most parts of England. The main employment in the immediate locality is in the service industries.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Steve Hunsley HMI
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Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), an associate inspector and three additional inspectors, assisted by the assistant principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

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

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