

Milton Keynes College

General further education college

Inspection dates		8–12 June 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- since the previous inspection, the proportion of students who successfully complete their qualifications has not improved sufficiently and is still too low; completion rates vary too much between subject areas, age groups and programme levels, and outcomes for apprentices are low; attendance requires improvement on many courses
- students and apprentices make insufficient progress in the development of their English and mathematics skills and too few achieve their qualifications in these subjects
- too much teaching and learning are insufficiently effective to enable all students and apprentices to make the progress of which they are capable
- too few students on study programmes have access to work placements as part of their course
- improvements to the observation of teaching, learning and assessment arrangements are recent and not yet fully established.

This provider has the following strengths:

- good progression for students into employment and higher education
- good support for students with additional learning needs
- clear careers and progression advice for students from specialist staff and teachers
- a highly inclusive enrichment programme through which a significant number of students develop good personal skills and participate in healthy activities and elite sports
- excellent partnership arrangements that lead to a wide range of opportunities for students to further develop their skills and understanding
- recent and significant changes in culture effected by managers and staff who are determined that all students achieve their qualifications
- an inclusive and harmonious learning environment.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance through the consistent application of high expectations and making students fully aware of its importance to aid their progress and as an employability skill.
- Increase significantly the number of students on English and mathematics courses at levels 1 and 2 who achieve their qualifications and high grades at GCSE in both subjects; ensure that teachers prepare students fully for the exam and all vocational teachers effectively incorporate English and mathematics into their lessons.
- Increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning by fully assessing all students understanding in lessons, setting students challenging targets to achieve and giving them comprehensive feedback on coursework.
- Make more effective use of available information about students' prior knowledge and progress throughout the course to plan lessons that meet their differing needs and abilities.
- Develop courses throughout the college further so that they meet the requirements of study programmes fully.
- Implement further actions to maintain the improvements made to apprenticeships in all subject areas and to ensure that all apprentices complete their training in the timescales planned for them when they started their apprenticeship.
- Establish fully the lesson observation process to ensure that all teachers make sustained improvements and that the quality of teaching and learning is at least good.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Milton Keynes College offers a broad and varied curriculum to meet the needs of its local community. Most full-time students at the college are aged 16 to 18, with the largest cohort on study programmes at level 3. Adults make up the majority of students on short part-time qualifications, a large proportion of who study health and social care courses. Approximately 700 apprentices are training in the workplace, with engineering being the largest subject area. ▪ The numbers of students aged 16 to 18 who successfully completed their courses in 2013/14 were low, particularly on courses at level 2. By contrast, success rates on programmes at level 3 increased significantly, but still require further improvement. The proportion of adults who complete their courses successfully requires similar improvement. Success rates vary considerably between subject areas, age groups and programme levels. The proportion of apprentices completing their qualifications declined significantly in 2013/14 and was low. ▪ Success and progression rates are high for students who were formerly looked after children, those who were unemployed prior to enrolling at the college and ex-school pupils referred by the local authority. Success rates for students on courses delivered by subcontractors are very high. ▪ Managers have introduced comprehensive measures to monitor students' progress in 2014/15. College data indicates that retention on courses at levels 1 and 2 has improved significantly this year. However, retention on programmes at level 3 has significantly declined, particularly so for students aged 16 to 18. Managers recognise that too many students on two-year programmes leave early in the first year of their course. ▪ Success rates on mathematics and English functional skills courses are low. Similarly, too few students achieve high grades on GCSE programmes in these subjects. While leaders and managers have made a number of positive changes to ensure better development of students' 	

English and mathematics skills, for example by improving attendance, performance in both subjects requires further improvement.

- Leaders and managers have recently implemented a revised attendance monitoring and reporting process. Students' attendance has improved, but continues to vary considerably between subject areas.
- The majority of students acquire good employment and practical skills. In sports and public services, students develop their vocational skills to a very high standard. The numbers of students progressing to higher-level courses within the college and then into employment or higher education are high. Most students improve their personal and social skills through involvement in a wide range of learning opportunities, including events and competitions that develop high levels of confidence, communication skills and team building. Students enjoy their time at college.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The college offers a broad range of courses for students aged 16 to 18 and adults aiming to gain employment in the local area and/or progress to higher-level courses, including higher education. The five subject areas inspected and reported on represent a sample of the college's provision. Inspectors evaluated study programmes and foundation mathematics, reflecting government priorities.
- Standards of teaching and learning have improved recently, but are not yet consistently good across enough of the college's provision. Most teachers use their knowledge and experience to good effect to plan well-structured lessons. In particular, students benefit from teachers who demonstrate their industry-standard skills well in practical lessons. However, in a significant minority of theory lessons, teachers pay too little attention to meeting the individual needs of students. As a result, these lessons do not always enable students to make the progress of which they are capable. Teaching, learning and assessment overall are characterised by too much variability between subjects where they are good and those where, by contrast, students' experiences are not of a sufficiently high standard to ensure they fulfil their potential.
- Actions taken by teachers to support students to improve their attendance have not had sufficient impact. In too many lessons, students' poor attendance disrupts learning for those who do attend. For example, beauty therapy students often have to deal with too many clients because of the non-attendance of their peers in lessons.
- Learning support staff use the information gathered from initial diagnostic assessments of students' English and mathematics skills well to provide those students who need help in these subjects with additional support. However, too few teachers make sufficient use of this information to plan their lessons effectively or to recognise students' starting points and progress. For example, they do not always set more able students sufficiently challenging tasks.
- Too few teachers are sufficiently confident in incorporating English and mathematics in their lessons. The extent to which teachers plan strategies to integrate both subjects with their vocational teaching varies too much between subject areas. In construction, for example, teachers help students develop mathematics skills well, but are less successful in supporting the development of their English skills. By contrast, students on sports courses acquire good English skills, but are less successful at developing their knowledge of mathematics. Trainers do not integrate the learning of English and mathematics sufficiently with apprenticeship programmes.
- Staff provide good care for students with additional learning needs. Students benefit from rapid assessment of their requirements for support. Managers review this support frequently and reduce it appropriately over time so that students become more able to study independently. Staff use the college's well-established links with external agencies to provide help for students with specific needs, such as those arising from mental health conditions.
- Training for apprentices in the workplace has improved recently, but is not yet good. The majority of apprentices now receive high-quality support from trainers and employers who work together well to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training. However, in a minority of cases,

apprentices and employers are unclear about the demands of the qualifications, or the timescale within which students must complete them. Staffing shortages in manufacturing technologies slow apprentices' progress.

- The setting and monitoring of challenging targets for students on college-based courses varies too much and requires improvement. For example, in business management, sport, and public services, target-setting is effective in helping students to progress well. By contrast, in engineering and construction, target-setting is weaker and students make much less progress. In a minority of review meetings with students, teachers do not discuss students' progress in sufficient detail and do not set them meaningful actions to improve their learning.
- Most students receive timely written feedback on their work, which gives them sufficient guidance on how to improve it further. However, too many students receive feedback that tends to focus on meeting their minimum targets and not enough on making progress towards more aspirational targets. In a few cases, students use this feedback well to set personal short-term targets.
- Teachers use their good, and developing, links with employers to incorporate a wide range of employability themes within lessons. Students benefit from visiting, or working alongside, employers to gain greater understanding of the world of work and to develop their employment skills further. However, not enough students have access to work experience.
- Pre-course information, advice and guidance have been much more effective this year and has resulted in fewer transfers of students to other courses and reduced withdrawals from the college overall. Careers advice provided jointly by college staff and an in-house recruitment service, coupled with careful advice and guidance from teachers, helps students to successfully take their next steps in education or employment.
- Teachers provide clear guidance to help students understand safeguarding themes, including informal advice on how to recognise, and avoid, the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- Promotion of diversity in many lessons is effective. For example, teachers in sport, public service and business address these topics well.

Engineering and motor vehicle

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes
Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in engineering and motor vehicle require improvement because:

- too many apprentices, particularly those in manufacturing technologies, do not achieve their qualifications; success rates for students on college-based courses are higher than in previous years, but still require improvement
- staff do not have sufficiently high expectations of all students and do not set them sufficiently challenging tasks or targets that enable them to fulfil their potential
- apprentices in manufacturing technologies do not receive enough information from trainers about the progress they are making; they are not sufficiently aware of what they have achieved and when they have performed well, or what they need to do to complete their programmes successfully
- written feedback from teachers for college based students does not give clear advice on how they could improve their work further
- trainers do not develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills sufficiently well; too often, trainers fail to build on apprentices' existing knowledge of both subjects in order to acquire a greater understanding of their relevance to engineering

- too few students benefit from work experience opportunities on study programmes; as a result, they are unable to apply, and further build on, the good work-related skills they develop at college
- promotion of equality and diversity in the workplace requires improvement; for example, an activity to raise awareness of discrimination in the workplace failed to challenge and inform apprentices sufficiently well
- links between on-the-job training and college-based learning are weak and are not always clear to apprentices or their employers; as a result, a minority of employers are unable to support apprentices in the workplace effectively.

In engineering and motor vehicle the college has the following strengths:

- students on courses at level 3 achieve high grades in their studies
- teachers, tutors and assessors provide good support for students and apprentices to develop good practical skills in engineering and motor vehicle workshop sessions and in the workplace; for example, a motor vehicle apprentice was able to demonstrate effective problem-solving skills and good attention to detail while diagnosing and rectifying faults on vehicles
- students develop good personal, social and employability skills which improve their effectiveness in lessons and for apprentices, in the workplace; they improve their self-confidence which helps them to progress to higher-level programmes
- the majority of students participate well in lessons and make good contributions to discussions that help develop their knowledge and understanding of key engineering concepts; for example, students at the college demonstrate a good understanding of manufacturing processes in engineering industries
- students make good use of personal mobile telephone technology to support their learning in lessons, for example, when researching the cost of car parts
- college based students make good use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to upload assignments quickly, receive feedback and gain access to learning materials outside the classroom
- students develop a good understanding of equality and diversity in lessons at the college; for example, a final year project covered in detail the potential application of a bicycle-powered generator in developing countries to draw water from wells.

Construction crafts

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in construction crafts require improvement because:

- too few students complete their qualifications and progress to apprenticeships or employment within the construction industry
- activities and practical workshop tasks are insufficiently challenging for too many students; students on study programmes at level 1 finish their programme early, but do not make enough progress in developing a full range of skills; students demonstrate insufficient knowledge of tool handling and cleaning and site maintenance in all construction disciplines
- a significant minority of students do not attend regularly and arrive late for lessons, failing to achieve their qualifications and disrupting the learning for those who do attend and are punctual
- teachers do not challenge more able students sufficiently to develop the practical skills or standards of work of which they are capable; as a result, too many students lose interest in their courses and become demotivated

- teachers place insufficient importance on the need for students to develop skills to match commercial standards
- assessments, oral questions and written feedback in carpentry and brickwork require improvement
- personal and academic target-setting in tutorials is too vague to give students accurate guidance on how to make better progress, develop their skills and change their attitudes and behaviour
- teachers do not develop students' English skills quickly enough in order for them to gain the skills necessary for employment; many teachers have low expectations of students' written work, and students' notes and technical reports are often of a poor standard.

In construction crafts the college has the following strengths:

- teachers use their subject knowledge and industry experience particularly well to inspire and motivate students with low prior attainment; students enjoy practical lessons, for example, building models and then checking for accuracy
- the majority of students that remain on programme develop good personal and social skills that improve their confidence and motivation
- teachers develop students' mathematics skills well by requiring them routinely to set out their work from scale site drawings, calculate material orders and cost consumables
- pastoral support is good for students with particular personal problems; specialist staff are particularly effective at supporting students with learning and physical disabilities
- students behave well in lessons and are attentive of their teachers who use topics on diversity well that are relevant to construction, for example when challenging gender stereotypes.

Sport and public services

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in sport and public services are good because:

- skills-based qualifications success rates are high; managers' rapid actions and staff changes have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and, as a result, the majority of students are now making good progress
- teachers are very good role models and have increasingly high expectations of students; teachers are highly motivated and use their professional experience particularly well to develop students' interest in topics; as a result, students' behaviour and standards of work are good
- students develop highly effective employability and personal skills which further improves their acquisition of vocational skills; for example, students on a nationally recognised outstanding sports legacy programme develop highly relevant skills that enable them to progress into the personal trainer and fitness industry
- strong links with national sports bodies and participation in national events enrich courses and provide students with meaningful work experience
- teachers plan lessons well to provide students with a wide range of stimulating learning activities and assessment tasks; they use highly effective questioning techniques to develop students' understanding of key topics; as a result, students develop good vocational skills and knowledge
- teachers make good use of learning resources, mobile telephone technology and the VLE to support and improve upon students' learning

- sports students develop good leadership and training skills through their work with the significant number of students across the whole college who participate in the college's enrichment programme and elite sports activities
- teachers assess and monitor students' progress very well and encourage highly effective peer feedback; students are inspired from the detailed feedback and exceed their minimum target grades
- teachers develop students' English skills well; for example, in public services, learners create a glossary of vocational and technical language to support assignment work; in sport and exercise, students develop an understanding of how to research and analyse information for relevance, validity and accuracy
- teachers promote equality and diversity very well, for example by raising students' awareness of minority groups' participation in sport, and of discrimination within public services.

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

- too many students on two-year programmes have received poor pre-course advice and guidance and, as a result, retention and success rates on these courses require improvement
- teachers do not always extend students' learning so that they develop evaluative and critical thinking skills effectively; the pace of some lessons is too fast and teachers allow insufficient time for students to reflect on, and assimilate, key learning points
- the quality of teaching and the attendance of students in mathematics lessons require improvement; not enough sports and public services students achieve their qualifications in this subject
- too few students benefit from meaningful work experience as part of their study programmes; as a result, they are not able to practise and develop the skills they learn at college in a work setting.

Foundation mathematics

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics require improvement because:

- too few students gained functional skills qualifications or high grades in their GCSE studies in 2013/14; students aged 16 to 18 on functional skills courses at levels 1 and 2 do not make sufficient progress
- not enough students recognise the value of good mathematics skills for their future success; attendance is low and the standards of work are often poor
- too many teachers do not plan learning effectively in functional skills lessons for students of differing abilities and skills levels; students often work at the same pace and on the same tasks, as a result of which more able students do not make the progress of which they are capable
- teachers do not prepare students aged 16 to 18 in functional skills classes sufficiently well for their examinations; revision is not always well planned or structured and too many students fail to achieve their qualifications at their first attempt.
- teachers' questioning is not sufficiently effective; they do not use a broad enough range of approaches to check individual learning in classes, resulting in a minority of students who dominate lessons
- reinforcement of functional skills learning is ineffective for a minority of students aged 16 to 18; for example, when students do not understand a concept, such as how to work out percentages,

they do not have sufficient opportunities to practise the skills required to comprehend how to solve problems for themselves

In mathematics the college has the following strengths:

- adult students, and students aged 16 to 18 on foundation learning programmes, are making good progress
- teachers provide good individual coaching for students; this enables students to benefit from individual explanations and tailored strategies to help them to develop their mathematical skills
- adult students and students aged 16 to 18 on foundation learning programmes and on intensive GCSE courses benefit from teachers' effective management of learning; students work productively, make good progress and develop skills which prepare them for employment
- students benefit from the use of a wide range of interesting and helpful learning resources; these include games, puzzles, the effective use of in-class interactive technology and the VLE
- initial assessment has improved and is now effective in placing students on the right courses to suit their abilities; adult students and those students on intensive GCSE programmes receive good information, advice and guidance in relation to their progression
- teachers give clear and helpful feedback to students, both individually and through written feedback on their work so that students know what they need to do to improve further

Business management and administration

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes

Good

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

- the proportion of students who complete their qualifications successfully is high; two previously poorly performing courses have improved significantly this year and learners are progressing well
- teachers have high expectations of students who produce good-quality work; students develop good work-related, personal and social skills, and the majority of business management students achieve high grades in their studies
- students set themselves challenging personal targets in workshops which they make good progress towards achieving; business management students' progress well to higher-level qualifications
- teachers use a wide range of interesting activities to promote learning, linking business theory well to the workplace; for example, students analyse and discuss planning an extended marketing strategy which develops their skills of oral and non-verbal communication and their use of business vocabulary
- teachers use lessons, tutorials and assignments well to prepare students for the next stage of their education or employment; for example, by ensuring they are well informed about employers' expectations and the importance of good interview skills to support their progression into employment and higher education of which many students do
- teachers make good use of employers to ensure courses accurately reflect industry standards; for example, industry visits, talks by guest speakers and employer advisory boards ensure students gain relevant knowledge and understanding of business and develop their self-confidence
- teachers and students make very effective use of electronic systems to set clear targets and to ensure frequent monitoring of students' progress in completing assignments; the large majority of students make good progress as a result of helpful individual advice from teachers and

personal tutors; students with additional learning needs receive effective extra support which increases their confidence and helps them produce work of a good standard

- the development of students' mathematics and English is good on study programmes; students enhance their skills for employment, for example by carrying out financial calculations, or writing and delivering presentations
- promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is good and frequently helps broaden students' understanding of the social and ethical contexts of business, for example by considering the different requirements of business practice in foreign countries.

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

- for a small minority of students' attendance is low, especially on administration courses; as a result these students are missing valuable learning opportunities
- students on study programmes do not have sufficient opportunities to practise and develop their skills through meaningful work experience
- students have insufficient opportunities to gain access to online learning materials to support independent learning outside the classroom.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers at all levels have worked tirelessly to deal with the key areas for improvement identified. Following a complete management restructure just prior to the previous inspection, and more rigorous performance management, the current senior team has made significant improvements to the college's systems, policies and procedures. However, the impact of these changes has yet to be fully realised in the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for students.
- The Principal has set ambitious improvement targets and, leading by example, is establishing high standards and expectations throughout the college, resulting in a culture of reflection, evaluation and collective working towards sustainable improvement. Weekly meetings with managers to scrutinise data and performance have been received positively by staff who are now more accountable for the success of their subject areas and improvements in students' experiences. Of the three subject areas inspected at this, and the previous, inspection, engineering and business have improved inspection grades and sport continues to be judged good.
- Governance is strong. Since the previous inspection, governors have successfully challenged senior managers to increase the pace of change. They have ensured that they receive more frequent, detailed and comprehensive data on key performance indicators so that they are better informed of progress. Governors have improved their understanding of the context in which the college operates through good training and by linking with individual subjects and participating in observations of teaching.
- Self-assessment is thorough and largely accurate. Plans for improvement are more detailed and contain clearer targets than in previous years, but there is still too much variability in performance between curriculum areas. It is too early to judge the full impact of this year's continuous self-assessment process.
- The management of apprenticeship frameworks requires improvement. Much better procedures and systems implemented by managers this year are bringing the management of most courses in line with expected practice. However, the co-ordination of programmes in a small minority of curriculum areas continues to require improvement. The management and quality assurance of subcontracted courses are very good.
- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved this year, but managers have too positive a view of their quality. The improved arrangements for determining the quality of teaching are

comprehensive and managers use evidence from a broad range of sources to make their judgements. However, these procedures are not yet fully established and, in too many cases, standards of teaching as judged by college observers are overly optimistic.

- Managers and improvement coaches support teachers well to improve their practice, through a good range of individual targeted support. Managers continue to monitor teachers well to ensure that they are sustaining improvements through rigorous procedures in place that deal effectively with any underperformance. Managers have successfully instilled an ethos in which the vast majority of teachers continuously hone their classroom practice.
- The management of study programmes requires improvement. The student work-related learning opportunities currently in place are generally of a very high quality. For example, students benefit substantially from the very effective arrangements with the local NHS trust. However, managers acknowledge that more students should benefit from formal work experience placements that will extend their career options. Managers do not ensure that all teachers have the confidence or ability to develop students' English and mathematics skills. They do not use data well enough to identify poor assessment practices in mathematics.
- Partnerships with external agencies and employers are excellent. College leaders have very productive and beneficial relationships with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Milton Keynes Council, the Job Centre and a large number of businesses across both the private and public sectors. Leaders have very successfully prepared the college to respond to the rapidly increasing employment opportunities in the area, and they work very effectively with employers to ensure that the curriculum offer meets the requirements of the community. For example, in collaboration with employers, managers have designed A-level and vocational pathways very carefully to prepare students for employment in business, finance and legal professions.
- Staff promote and celebrate diversity in the college and ensure that it is a harmonious place to learn, where each student feels valued. A rigorous approach to, and policy regarding, bullying and harassment mean that incidents are rare; when they do occur, managers deal with them swiftly and effectively. Achievement gaps between different groups of students are narrowing, but have not been reduced sufficiently. The regular monitoring of individual student progress is now well established, however the data is not used effectively to monitor the achievement gaps of different learner groups.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of all students are good. Procedures for ensuring that all staff who come into contact with young people and vulnerable adults are properly vetted are rigorous. Teachers, support staff and governors have all undertaken appropriate training in safeguarding. Staff and students have had their awareness increased about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and good liaison with the police further raises awareness. Leaders provide a safe environment for learning and students feel safe. Teachers ensure that students are well briefed about ways in which to remain safe when working online.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Milton Keynes 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	-	-
Outcomes for learners	3	-	-	3	-	3	3	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	-	-	3	-	3	3	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	-	-	3	-	3	3	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Engineering	3
Motor vehicle	3
Construction crafts	3
Sport	2
Public services	2
Foundation mathematics	3
Administration	2
Business management	2

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	7,481							
Principal/CEO	Dr J Mills							
Date of previous inspection	February 2014							
Website address	www.mkcollege.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+
	418	1,279	755	1,788	1,152	1,095	24	354
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	174	164	112	218	1	14		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16	79							
Full-time	79							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Free to Learn ■ McKenzie Arnold ■ Premier Training ■ Thames Valley Police 							

Contextual information

Milton Keynes College is a large general further education college based on three sites. In addition to the courses offered at these three campuses, the college holds contracts for the provision of education and training for prisoners and offenders in custody and to enable unemployed people to gain work, both of which were not part of this inspection. Opportunities for employment in Milton Keynes are good. The city has seven wards that are ranked among the most deprived in England. In 2013/14, the proportion of pupils at schools in Milton Keynes gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including mathematics and English, was particularly low when compared to other local authorities.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Richard Beaumont HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the executive director for improvement and innovation 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 past three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews 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 of 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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