

Weymouth College

General further education college



10–13 November 2015

Inspection dates

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Since the previous inspection governors and leaders have taken decisive action to remedy the financial position of the college.
- Governors now carefully scrutinise the financial and academic performance of the college.
- Strategic management is now good. The curriculum is cost-effective and meets the needs of learners, employers and the local community well.
- Managers have developed strong links with employers and partner organisations, which help staff improve opportunities for learners.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The behaviour of learners is respectful and friendly and staff are skilled in managing and promoting good behaviour.
- Learners are supported very well, particularly those who are vulnerable because of their personal circumstances; they develop resilience and achieve well.
- Learners make good or better progress and a high proportion complete their main vocational or academic courses successfully.
- Careers advice and guidance are very effective in enabling learners to make the right choices and move on to further learning, training or employment.

It is not yet an outstanding provider because

- Not enough learners aged 16–18 achieve qualifications in English and mathematics.
- Standards in a minority of subject areas including beauty therapy, business and administration are not high enough and learners do not make sufficient progress.
- While good, the quality of teaching learning and assessment has not improved sufficiently. Managers overestimate the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment based on annual lesson observations.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Weymouth College is a small general further education college with one main site at Cranford Avenue in Weymouth. In addition, the college leases four sites; the Dorset Centre for the Creative Arts at Poundbury; an Outdoor School at the Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy; the Community Sports Centre at Redlands and a small town centre site for engaging hard to reach adults. The college offers provision in 14 of the 15 subject areas of learning and has a significant apprenticeship contact.
- Around 2,600 learners study at the college; of these, 1,169 are full-time aged 16–19, 667 are adults, mostly on access to higher education or part-time courses, and 368 are apprentices.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all learners gain the necessary qualifications in English and mathematics by checking they attend all their English and mathematics lessons, and they benefit from teachers fully integrating both English and mathematics into vocational lessons. Raise the profile and importance of learners achieving qualifications in English and mathematics by working with employers and parents.
- Provide further development for staff teams in subjects which are not yet good and ensure that they learn from higher-performing teams within the college.
- Develop managers' skills in assessing the quality of teaching, learning and assessment using a wide range of indicators in addition to annual lesson observations. Monitor the quality of assessor practice for apprentices and the impact of additional learning support. Encourage teachers to reflect regularly on their practice.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- In the short time since the previous inspection, the interim Principal and governors have made significant progress in improving the financial management and governance of the college. Senior managers now use accurate data intelligently to make sound budgetary and curriculum planning decisions. Leaders have set a balanced budget for 2015/16 while ensuring that provision and facilities for learning can be maintained. Leaders have assessed risks carefully and made suitable contingency plans. Leaders recognise the college to be in a stable, but nonetheless challenging, position.
- The leadership provided by the interim Principal and his senior team is highly effective, as is communication across the college. As a result, staff understand the college's strategic priorities and their responsibilities. They appreciate the open and honest approach and staff morale is high.
- Leaders have improved the quality of strategic management significantly since the previous inspection. Managers have successfully rationalised the curriculum and reduced expenditure while minimising the impact of financial pressures on learners. Learners continue to enjoy their time at college; the majority make good or better progress and complete their main vocational or academic courses successfully.
- Leaders and managers have good links with employers, local authorities, the community and employer organisations. They use these well to develop opportunities for learners of all abilities while ensuring that the curriculum accords with local and national employment needs.
- Managers now keep the curriculum under continuous review. They have carefully mapped routes for learners to progress between courses and levels within and outside the college. Highly effective, impartial and comprehensive careers advice and guidance helps ensure almost all learners' progress to appropriate higher-level courses, apprenticeships or employment.
- Managers and staff provide very effective support for learners. Teachers and support staff are particularly successful in supporting vulnerable young people and adults who face personal and financial challenges in their daily lives, and in engaging with young people who do not readily participate in education or training. Unemployed adults are helped well to improve their English, mathematics and computing skills and to find jobs.
- Managers use quality improvement strategies well to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Staff now complete mid-term reviews of each subject, which include analyses of both academic and financial performance. These measures are effective in holding managers to account, driving improvement and in helping ensure that the college achieves its financial and academic targets.
- Leaders and managers use the outcomes of formal lesson observations well to manage the performance of teachers. They identify areas for improvement and support staff well through training and opportunities to share good practice. In completing their annual self-assessment, however, managers overestimated the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They rely too much on annual lesson observations and do not give sufficient consideration to the quality of teaching and learning over time and contributing factors such as the effectiveness of additional learning support and the quality of assessment in apprenticeships.
- Learners are very well prepared for life in modern Britain, both within the local community and beyond. Staff promote cross-college themes and regular events, which help learners understand and appreciate equality and diversity. Staff promote learners' understanding of fundamental British values well through tutorials.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Following a thorough review of the skills of existing governors and recruitment of new members with expertise in finance, business and audit, the board now have the necessary skills required to take the college forward and oversee further improvement.
 - Governors are now provided with clear information about the performance of the college. They scrutinise the financial and academic performance carefully and have a thorough grasp of the college's strengths and areas for improvement.
 - Governors are ambitious for the college and use their knowledge and understanding of the local community and employment well to develop the curriculum. For example, each curriculum area now benefits from the expertise of an individual governor.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Managers have effectively integrated arrangements for safeguarding with college support services. Staff are appropriately trained, highly vigilant and identify and report concerns about learners promptly. Managers' work well with external agencies and any concerns are resolved swiftly.

- Learners are well informed of risks such as those associated with use of the internet and social media. Harassment or bullying is not tolerated. Learners report that they feel safe and well supported at college.
- Managers ensure that the college discharges its 'Prevent' duties and that risks have been assessed. Staff training and learner awareness raising is ongoing and managers have good links with local agencies who keep them informed of new developments or concerns.
- Managers carry out comprehensive recruitment checks on staff and volunteers and keep accurate records. They undertake health and safety assessments and audits systematically and review them regularly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Most teachers provide lessons and activities that enthuse learners. In classroom-based lessons they use a wide range of techniques to support learners who are finding the work difficult, by for example helping them devise mnemonics to remember important technical terms. Teachers draw on their extensive industrial experience to devise activities that help learners develop the skills they need to gain employment or progress to higher-level training.
- Most learners make good use of their time in lessons. They work purposefully and test each other's understanding of topics through discussions. Teachers provide more difficult tasks or additional work for more-able learners. This enables them to complete work that is worthy of the high grades they achieve. In a small number of level 3 lessons, learners working independently do not have the necessary research skills and become distracted. Some make basic errors such as using unreliable websites to find information.
- Teachers provide very good induction programmes during which they assess learners' skills both in their vocational subject and in English and mathematics. Learners receive feedback on their skills early in their course, which enables them to negotiate targets for improvement. Targets are closely monitored by teachers, who provide learners with useful guidance on how to improve their work.
- Teachers provide those learners with complex learning disabilities with very well planned individual programmes of study. They focus closely on the small steps needed to help them develop useful skills and knowledge. Teachers and support workers ensure that learners complete tasks as independently as possible and offer encouragement, praise and challenge as appropriate.
- Learners and staff treat each other with care and respect. Learners who face barriers to learning are supported extremely well through highly effective partnership working with other agencies and through careful planning of support. Staff are very attentive to learners' well-being and provide support and guidance promptly when it is required.
- Overall, staff provide good support for those learners who require additional help. Staff understand the difficulties individual learners face, ensuring that most make good progress during lessons. In a minority of lessons, however, teachers and support workers do not plan activities sufficiently well to allow learners to complete tasks independently. Managers do not monitor the quality of the support provided closely enough.
- Teachers assess learners' work regularly, providing prompt verbal and written feedback which learners use well to improve their work. Most teachers use assessments well to plan further work. For example, support workers for learners with complex learning difficulties record what each learner achieves in every session. They use this information well to plan the next lesson.
- Teachers help learners to develop good English skills, particularly in verbal communication. They devise activities that build on learners' previous knowledge and help develop English skills associated with their subject or vocational area. Learners learn to apply their mathematics skills well to their subject, but teachers do not always encourage them to develop and extend their skills sufficiently.
- Teachers on foundation English and mathematics courses and programmes for unemployed adults understand well their learners' anxieties and barriers to learning. They plan high-quality activities to help overcome them. As a result, learners become more confident in their use of English and mathematics and many progress to higher levels of study or into employment.
- Staff promote understanding of diversity well. They make effective use of presentations, handouts and videos on topical issues such as mental health and obesity. Teachers keep learners well informed about equality matters through monthly, themed resources and activities. Learners recognise the importance the college places on promoting equality and understanding diversity and understand their responsibilities in this respect.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

- Learners enjoy college life and are happy. Their behaviour in lessons and communal areas is respectful and friendly. The vast majority are confident, enthusiastic and hard-working in lessons. Learners are proud of the work they produce and adopt a professional attitude to working in real work environments such as the college shop, salon and restaurant. Most learners attend college regularly and are on time for lessons. Their attendance at English and mathematics lessons, however, is too low.
- Learners are safe and they feel safe. They comply appropriately with health and safety requirements such as wearing protective clothing in workshops, and they have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media. Learners are less knowledgeable about the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation, but all know how to seek help if they are concerned for themselves or others. They are aware that the topic will be covered further in tutorial sessions.
- Learners become more confident, resilient and persist with their studies as a result of the support they receive. Support for learners who are vulnerable due to their personal circumstances is particularly effective in this respect. Highly effective collaboration between college welfare officers and other agencies, including social services, ensures a smooth transition to and from the college. Welfare officers work closely with teachers and support workers. This has helped improve the behaviour and progress of learners significantly.
- Careers advice and guidance is very effective in ensuring that learners are placed on the right programme with clear goals for progression when they complete their course. Prior to joining the college they receive high-quality impartial advice and guidance from a range of sources including employers, universities and current learners through the Careers College initiative. Learners studying arts subjects benefit from guest speakers with professional expertise in these areas. Learners receive strong and effective support when applying for higher education and most successfully gain places on their chosen course.
- The majority of learners develop well the skills required by employers. For example, learners working in the college restaurant and hairdressing salons demonstrate good customer service skills, and media studies learners develop good teamworking skills. Most learners are articulate and engage in confident and coherent group discussions during lessons where they use and explain relevant technical terms accurately. Learners studying engineering, automotive, construction and media apply their mathematics skills appropriately during vocational lessons but teachers do not provide enough opportunities for them to develop these skills further or gain new mathematics skills.
- Learners improve their job prospects and understanding of employment by undertaking additional qualifications and work-related activities. They benefit from good work placements with local employers. Unemployed adults successfully gain mathematics, English and information technology qualifications to make them more employable as well as improving their job search skills at the college job club.
- Learners understand how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Many make use of the college's extensive sports facilities for exercise and relaxation.

Outcomes for learners are good

- By far the majority of learners following classroom-based courses complete their courses successfully. Success rates of learners on vocational courses are high across most subject areas, but too low for beauty therapy and business and administration. More learners now complete their A- and AS-level courses successfully and success rates are in line with the national averages for similar colleges.
- Learners progress well on their main vocational or academic courses, often from low starting points, and irrespective of their locality or any learning difficulties or disabilities they might have. Most learners on A-level courses now make good or better progress with half those following A-level courses achieving high grades. Learners on A level English literature, mathematics, media and psychology courses, however, made insufficient progress in 2014/15.
- Care leavers are particularly well supported and almost all complete their courses successfully. Likewise, learners whose personal circumstances are challenging make good and sometimes excellent progress as a result of the support they receive.
- Apprentices now make good progress. Success rates are good overall and are high in engineering.
- The numbers of learners aged 16–18 following functional skills or GCSE courses in English and mathematics increased significantly in 2014/15. Success rates for functional skills and A* to C grades in GCSE examinations were low.
- Learners enjoy their studies and their time at college. Few leave the college without finishing their courses. Learners are prepared well for their next steps in learning or employment. Managers are very

effective at tracking learners' destinations on leaving college and almost all learners progress to education, training or employment. Staff are very effective in re-engaging those who are unemployed or not continuing their learning.

- Almost all learners on level 3 courses progress to higher education, apprenticeships or employment, with the majority progressing to higher education. Almost all who apply for university are offered a place and the very large majority accept.
- The college only recently reintroduced provision for learners with high needs. Learners are supported well and make good progress. Young people gain independent living skills and those following the college's Futures programme develop good employment related skills.
- Unemployed adults benefit from work experience through college job clubs and gain in confidence. Those who take advantage of opportunities to develop their English, mathematics and IT skills do well and the large majority achieve functional skills qualifications. Adults following access to higher education courses make good progress. The very large majority complete successfully and over three quarters take up higher education places.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The college provides study programmes in 13 of the 15 subject areas. The largest areas are arts, media and publishing, healthcare and public services, and engineering and manufacturing. There are currently 1,169 learners on study programmes.
- Managers and teachers have designed study programmes well to meet the needs and goals of individual learners. A wide range of additional activities including external guest speakers, educational visits, events and competitions helps stimulate learners' interest and enthusiasm for working in their chosen field. Learners are attentive and focus well on their work in lessons.
- Learners have good opportunities for relevant work experience. Sport learners, for example, work in local schools teaching sporting activities, and film and television learners have opportunities to shadow a professional film producer. Learners on vocational programmes benefit from gaining relevant additional skills, which enhance their progression opportunities. Level 3 engineering learners, for example, gain good milling and turning skills and hospitality and catering learners gain appropriate additional skills such as barista skills.
- Teachers make good use of their industrial and professional expertise to plan interesting lessons and work-related assignments, which motivate learners. Teachers use demonstrations and one-to-one coaching well to help learners develop practical skills. The standard of learners' work in most lessons is high.
- Teachers plan most lessons well, and learners of all abilities make at least good progress relative to their starting point. Learners working on games animation, for example, improved their teamworking skills by creating a 3D environment through a collaborative project where each learner worked on a different aspect. In a small minority of lessons teachers do not assess the progress made by individual learners sufficiently, which means they fall behind more-able learners.
- Learners improve their communication skills and confidence and develop the skills and attitude required for employment during lessons. Stonemasonry learners, for example, develop high-level skills in using hand tools and the ability to work to high tolerances. Level 3 hospitality and catering learners develop good supervisory skills while operating in a realistic commercial environment.
- Learners receive good, impartial careers advice and guidance and they are helped well to establish achievable goals and to prepare for their next steps. The majority of learners complete their programme successfully and almost all make good progress to further training, higher education or employment.

Apprenticeships

are good

- The college has 386 apprentices in seven subject areas, including construction, engineering, retail and commercial enterprise and business administration. Of these, 171 are intermediate and 148 are advanced apprentices. The majority, 196 apprentices, are aged 16–18.
- Managers have established effective working relationships with local employers, who are increasingly involved in designing and planning good-quality apprenticeship programmes that meet the needs of the area. Jointly, they ensure that learners add value to employers' business and benefit fully from their time

in the workplace. Staff provide good off-the-job training which enhances the skills and knowledge of learners. Managers do not, however, ensure that all learners take functional skills tests at the most appropriate stage of their programme.

- Staff have wide-ranging industry expertise which they use well to ensure that learners gain the skills and knowledge they need for the workplace. In hospitality and catering, for example, an aspiring pastry chef completed additional units, which enabled her to produce a wider range of dishes for her employer.
- Assessors arrange their visits to the workplace carefully. They make good use of their time with learners and observe them carrying out tasks without disrupting employers' businesses. Assessors provide effective support for learners in the workplace, enabling the large majority to complete their qualifications successfully and to improve their English and mathematics. A minority of assessors, however, do not check learners' progress and understanding in sufficient detail to help plan further learning. During reviews of learners' progress, not all assessors possess the necessary knowledge to explore and check learners' understanding of equality and diversity.
- Apprentices develop good work-related skills and use information technology confidently. They communicate well, behave professionally and take full advantage of opportunities to enhance their career prospects through acquiring additional skills. Learners value the opportunities to practise and perfect skills at college, which they then apply effectively at work. Learners stripped down and repaired car engines confidently, for example, and catering apprentices prepared and served high-quality restaurant dishes in a commercial environment.
- Many learners who complete their apprenticeships, particularly in engineering, progress to higher levels of study and sustainable employment. Learners on classroom-based sports courses who are interested in nautical activities progress to apprenticeships with the National Sailing Academy, taking full advantage of the excellent legacy opportunities provided by the 2012 Olympics. Learners gain additional qualifications, such as sailing instructor awards, enabling them to work abroad and in more senior roles in the United Kingdom.

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2632
Principal/CEO	Nigel Evans
Website address	www.weymouth.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	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	109	11	352	24	704	154	0	0
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	149	62	74	86	2	2		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
Number of learners aged 14-16	0							
Funding received from At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							

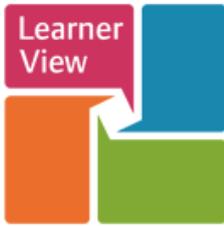
Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Kenneth Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Tucker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Attfield	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Lacy	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Deane	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the assistant principal, as nominee, and carried out the inspection at short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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