

City College Coventry

General further education college

Inspection dates

23–27 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for learners	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Inadequate
Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Inadequate
Provision for learners with high needs	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate college

- Managers' actions to improve the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been ineffective; much teaching is inadequate, too few learners complete their qualification successfully and too few current learners make good progress in their learning.
- Performance management of managers and staff is weak and has not raised the quality of provision to good across much of the college's work.
- Managers continue to overgrade the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and do not use a wide enough range of measures to judge fully and reliably the quality of learning.
- Managers do not use data well enough to monitor learners' progress effectively, or take decisive action to bring about swift improvement.
- Managers have not ensured that all learners on 16 to 19 study programmes are prepared well for employment and their next steps in learning and life. Too few learners at levels 1 and 2 have sufficient opportunity to develop their skills for employment.
- The proportion of learners on 16 to 19 study programmes who develop good skills in English and mathematics remains too low.
- Not all teachers promote and reinforce the high professional standards employers and industry expect, or ensure that all learners attend regularly and promptly.
- Teachers do not ensure that all learners have challenging targets to help them to improve their skills and vocational knowledge.

The college has the following strengths

- Teachers and staff provide very good personal help for learners to enable them to overcome the challenges that they face in their everyday lives.
- Leaders have set a clear strategic direction for the college and secured successfully college finances; the revised curriculum offer reflects better the training needs of local learners and employers.

Full report

Information about the provider

- City College Coventry is a medium-sized general further education college located on a single site in Hillfields near the centre of Coventry. The college has provision within 14 of the 15 subject areas. Coventry has two further education colleges, a number of schools with sixth forms and two nearby universities.
- The college has significantly changed the provision it offers over the past two years and almost half of its provision is now at level 1 or below. Most learners are studying on 16 to 19 study programmes. Locally, the college is the largest provider of apprenticeship programmes in construction and motor vehicle. The proportion of pupils in Coventry who gain more than five high A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is below the national rate. The proportion of people in Coventry aged 16 and over with no formal qualifications is almost twice the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure governors and senior managers decide rapidly how best they can improve the quality of provision and put in place rigorous and appropriate actions to bring about and secure swift, measurable and sustainable improvement.
- Ensure that the management of learning at all levels improves rapidly and that all managers and staff are held accountable for learners making good progress.
- Ensure that all managers, teachers and assessors make good use of the accurate data available to them to judge more reliably the quality of learning and to identify when learners are making slow progress in their studies, and take urgent and effective action to secure improvement.
- For learners on 16 to 19 study programmes, meet all the requirements of the study programme fully by ensuring that each component is tailored to develop the skills, knowledge and qualifications learners need to progress into their next steps in learning and life.
- Rapidly increase the proportion of learners who benefit from work placement and work experience. Ensure that learners have ample opportunity to practise and develop further their skills for employment.
- Ensure that all managers and teachers have the highest expectation of the standard of work learners can achieve and that all teachers promote and maintain the high professional standards expected from employers and industry.
- Develop all teachers' and assessors' skills in planning and implementing interesting and stimulating learning to ensure that all learners make at least good progress.
- Develop all teachers' and assessors' skills in setting challenging targets that help learners to improve their skills and vocational knowledge in line with their potential.
- Ensure managers monitor closely and report on patterns of attendance and analyse reasons for poor attendance, taking rapid and effective action to raise learners' attendance.
- Rapidly improve the proportion of learners who achieve the qualifications they need in English and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - all learners receive an accurate assessment of their skills when they start
 - teachers plan to take account of what learners can and cannot already do
 - all learners with a GCSE grade A* to C are challenged to develop their skills further
 - all teachers and assessors are equipped with the skills they need to improve learners' mathematics and English.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Senior leaders have not acted with sufficient swiftness to rectify the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The proportion of learners who complete their qualifications successfully has declined further and is now inadequate. Attendance and punctuality remain low, too much teaching, learning and assessment are poor and too many current learners are making slow progress.
- Leadership and management of learning at all levels are weak. Managers and staff are not held sufficiently accountable for ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment are at least good and that all learners make good progress in their learning. Managers do not expect sufficiently high professional standards from teachers; too few teachers encourage learners to strive for the highest standards expected by employers and industry. Too few learners gain employment as a result of their studies and too many who remain at college do not continue onto higher-level programmes.
- Managers' evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of provision is inaccurate. Managers do not have an agreed plan to rectify the weaknesses their own analysis has identified through the self-assessment of performance. Managers do not use a broad enough range of measures to ensure that the quality of learning is good and are overoptimistic in their grading of learning. Managers do not give teachers sufficiently precise feedback on their performance to enable them to improve their skills as teachers, or monitor closely enough any subsequent improvement.
- Managers have still not ensured that the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme are met. For example, too few learners complete a work placement or have sufficient opportunity to develop and improve the valuable skills they will need to help them to find sustainable employment, such as communication and teamworking skills. Managers have failed to ensure that all teachers develop learners' English and mathematics skills sufficiently well. Too few learners achieve their English and/or mathematics qualification, and too many current learners are making slow progress in their studies.
- Most managers and teachers do not use the accurate and reliable data available to them to judge the quality of learning or to identify when individual learners make slower than expected progress. For example, managers have not identified the reasons why most apprentices gain their main qualification but do not complete their programme within the time planned. Managers do not use data well to monitor the quality of subcontracted learning or ensure that learners at subcontractors receive the same quality of learning as their peers.
- Leaders' and managers' extensive collaboration with a wide range of employers, business partners and the local authority ensures that the revised curriculum offer now better meets the needs of learners and the training requirements of employers. For example, they now provide a broader range of programmes to support young people not in education, employment or training.
- Leaders and governors have worked hard to set a clear strategic direction for the college and have reduced successfully the financial deficit. Financial management and decision-making are now prudent and well considered; college finances are now satisfactory.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - The recently refreshed governing body brings a broad range of appropriate skills and expertise from education, the financial sector and commerce. Managers provide governors with clear information about the performance of the college; however, the information provided regarding learners' progress and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inaccurate and overly optimistic.
 - Governors reacted swiftly to hold leaders and managers to account on learning how few learners completed their qualifications successfully in the previous academic year, but it is too soon to see the impact of recent actions taken.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Managers work closely to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are integrated effectively into the work and lives of learners and staff. They carry out comprehensive recruitment checks on staff and subcontractors and keep detailed and up-to-date records.
 - Learners' and staff's understanding of safeguarding leads to prompt identification of issues and to a swift resolution. Through a comprehensive programme of activities, trips and guest speakers, learners have a clear understanding of life in modern Britain.
 - Managers ensure that the college complies with the Prevent duty and has effective arrangements in place to identify any threats of radicalisation and to tackle these appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate; too few learners make good progress in their studies. Teaching, learning and assessment are better for adult learners and in a small minority of subjects, for example access to higher education, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and graphic design.
- In too many subject areas, teachers' expectations of what learners can achieve are too low. Subsequently, the standard of learners' work is not consistently of a high quality and too often is not of the standard expected by employers. For example, in construction, teachers have not taught all learners to work tidily, to use materials economically or how to use small hand tools safely.
- Many teachers do not use the information they have on learners' previous skills and knowledge to plan learning well. Too much learning is boring and dull. Teachers often set tasks and activities that are either too hard for less-able learners or too easy for others; this does not inspire many learners to attend regularly or on time. Assessors do not identify the skills apprentices may have before they commence their training, and they often do not plan learning and assessments to link closely enough to the training requirements of employers.
- Too few managers and teachers understand clearly whether learners are making good progress in their learning. Managers and teachers often make poor use of the data and information they have available to them to monitor and track the progress of individual learners. Not all teachers assess learners' progress sufficiently well during lessons, and too few check carefully enough that all learners have a good understanding of one topic before they move on to the next.
- Too few teachers provide good written feedback to learners when they mark their work. Many teachers do not provide sufficient information as to how learners can improve their work. Few learners are encouraged to correct their own work carefully before submitting it for marking and assessment.
- Managers and teachers have not ensured that all learners are well prepared for their next steps into education and employment. On 16 to 19 study programmes, too few learners on level 1 and 2 programmes receive work experience or have sufficient opportunity to prepare well for work and life beyond college. Adult learners and apprentices do not routinely benefit from ongoing careers advice and guidance and most have insufficient discussion regarding their future career opportunities.
- The teaching, learning and assessment of English and mathematics are improving but are not yet good. Managers do not ensure that all learners have a comprehensive assessment of their English and mathematics skills and knowledge at the start of their programme. Teachers do not ensure that those learners with a GCSE grade A* to C continue to extend their knowledge beyond their level on entry.
- Too few teachers and assessors ensure that all learners and apprentices are set challenging targets to improve their skills and knowledge. Set targets are mostly limited to the completion of work rather than the development of skills and knowledge.
- Support for learners who require extra help with their learning is highly effective and in-class help from specialist teachers is good. These learners' attendance is high, and most complete their programme of learning successfully.
- Teachers and staff provide very good personal help for learners and are approachable and kind. Learners know that they can always speak about sensitive issues to any member of staff who will always endeavour to help them to overcome personal challenges.
- Managers and teachers promote successfully a supportive and inclusive ethos in the college. Learners work well together and are respectful of each other, their teachers and assessors. However, assessors do not always pay sufficient attention to developing apprentices' understanding of working with a wide range of clients from diverse social and cultural groups.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

- At the previous inspection, many staff and assessors failed to challenge appropriately learners' poor attendance and punctuality. This remains the case. Attendance in lessons is too low and learners who arrive late frequently disrupt the learning of their peers. Employers are not routinely informed of the poor attendance and punctuality of their apprentices at off-the-job training.
- The proportion of learners who benefit from external work experience is too low. While most learners on level 3 courses have the opportunity to practise and develop their skills for employment, managers and staff have not yet ensured that all learners on level 1 and 2 programmes are prepared well enough for work.

- Managers and teachers have not ensured that all learners develop the good level of skills in English and mathematics that they require for sustainable employment and further study. Too few teachers and assessors have the confidence or skills to integrate English and mathematics successfully into everyday learning activities to demonstrate their value and relevance.
- Not all teachers promote and reinforce well enough the standards and expectations of employers and industry. Not all learners arrive to their lessons and assessments ready and prepared to learn, and staff do not routinely reinforce basic health and safety practice. For example, learners in construction do not always routinely use personal protective equipment.
- Managers have not ensured that all learners benefit from good, ongoing careers advice and guidance. While learners in a minority of areas, for example in travel, tourism and sport, have a sound understanding of how their learning links to their next steps into employment and a career in their chosen subject discipline, this is not consistently the case for many learners across much of the college provision.
- Most apprentices, when in the workplace, develop appropriate technical skills and sound vocational knowledge. Employers value the benefits learners bring to their businesses, for example improved customer service and productivity. However, learners on study programmes do not always develop good vocational skills and the work of a significant minority of current learners is weak.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of worthwhile and stimulating enrichment activities, trips and visiting speakers. These activities help learners to have a wider understanding of life beyond the college. For example, on public service programmes, guest speakers from the police counter-terrorism unit discuss how they work with the local community to report and investigate hate crimes.
- Learners enjoy their time at college and gain in self-confidence and self-esteem. Learners understand how to keep themselves and their peers safe when working online and using social media. Most learners have an appropriate understanding of the potential dangers of radicalisation.

Outcomes for learners

are inadequate

- The proportion of learners who complete their main qualification successfully has declined since the time of the previous inspection and is too low. Too few learners make good progress in their learning or continue into employment or the next level of training.
- Managers have not ensured that all learners achieve their qualification equally well. For example, while many learners studying in art and design, public services and foundation learning do well, too few learners on construction, engineering and business studies achieve their qualification successfully.
- Managers and teachers have not ensured that most learners on 16 to 19 study programmes develop good enough skills in English and mathematics. The proportion of learners who complete their functional skills English and mathematics qualifications is very low; those learners who need to improve their GCSE grades in English and/or mathematics do not make good progress. Recent management action has resulted in more current apprentices passing their qualification successfully than formerly.
- The standard of learners' work varies too much and too often demonstrates insufficient progress or improvement since the start of the course. In vocational lessons, learners do not always gain practical skills quickly enough.
- The proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship framework successfully has declined dramatically and is now too low. Too few learners at intermediate level complete their main qualification successfully; although learners working towards an advanced apprenticeship make better progress overall, numbers of learners who complete within the time planned remain too low.
- The progress and achievement rates of different groups of learners vary too much. For example, disabled learners achieve less well than their peers and male learners make slower progress than females.
- Young learners in the care of the local authority and learners who require extra study support to complete their qualification do well.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

are inadequate

- The college provides study programmes in 12 of the 15 subject areas. The largest areas include art, media and publishing; construction; and health, public services and care. There are currently 1,845

learners on 16 to 19 study programmes, the largest area of the college's provision.

- Managers have not implemented fully the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes to prepare all learners to move successfully into work and further learning. Learners on level 3 programmes benefit from valuable work experience that helps them to improve their skills for employment, but too few learners on level 1 and 2 programmes undertake work-related learning within the college, or have the opportunity to improve their work-readiness sufficiently through external work experience placements.
- Too few teachers use information about learners' starting points to plan precisely learning that is challenging and worthwhile for every learner. Many teachers often set individual learning targets that are cursory and do not take enough account of the skills learners already have or the skills and knowledge they need to develop.
- The teaching, learning and assessment of mathematics and English have improved, but are not yet good. Too few learners consistently apply the skills they learn to their work. For example, few teachers consistently ensure that learners' written work is sufficiently well presented or of a high enough standard, and too few learners are able to use mental calculations to check their work is accurate.
- Many managers' and teachers' expectations of learners' professional conduct in lessons and around the college are too low. Attendance is poor, and too many learners arrive late to their lessons. Low-level disruptive behaviour in a significant minority of lessons slows the progress many learners make.
- Too few teachers challenge learners to produce high-quality work; subsequently, many learners develop only superficial skills and knowledge and make slow progress. Teachers do not always consistently reinforce safe working practices in practical workshops. However, learners in a minority of subjects, including the arts and motor vehicle body repair, demonstrate good levels of skills and professional knowledge. For example, learners in vehicle accident repair workshops expertly shape, prepare and repaint vehicle doors to the standard expected of customers and employers.
- The pre-course guidance learners receive to help them to choose the most appropriate programme of study is insufficient. Many current learners have joined courses that do not meet their needs well enough, and too many have already left their programmes or are not attending regularly.
- Ongoing careers guidance varies too much. It is often better where individual teachers make this a priority for the learners in their own subject area. However, too few learners receive sufficient advice to help them to plan what they need to do to progress successfully into either employment or to courses at a higher level.
- Most learners benefit from high-quality information learning technology resources to enhance their learning and assessment. Many teachers make good use of online learning resources to extend and enhance learning, for example through setting homework activities.

Adult learning programmes

require improvement

- Adult learners make up around one third of learners at the college. The vast majority of these learners are on part-time courses, in particular English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English and mathematics, to help them to prepare for further training and employment. A minority of learners study on access to higher education courses.
- The proportion of learners achieving their qualification has remained low over the past three years and declined further since the previous inspection. However, recent management actions, particularly in the teaching of English and mathematics, have led to current learners making better progress in their studies than previously.
- The quality of many teachers' written feedback to learners is insufficient to enable all learners to improve their performance. Teachers do not always make clear to learners how they can improve their work to achieve a better grade, or challenge learners to aim higher. Verbal feedback is usually full, but learners are not always encouraged to make detailed notes to support their improvement.
- Too few teachers set useful, individual targets for learners that identify learners' current knowledge and challenge them to strive for excellence. Too often, targets are general and the same for all learners in a class.
- Many teachers, particularly in ESOL, model good spoken English and expect learners to pronounce new words with care and precision. Teachers use everyday activities well, for example health and safety signs in the workplace, to extend learners' understanding of work. However, not all teachers correct learners' written work as thoroughly or expect sufficiently high standards for written work submitted for assessment.

- Teachers check learners' understanding well in lessons. Discussions in class are lively, and most learners take an active part and contribute effectively.
- Managers and teachers make effective use of guest speakers and additional activities to widen learners' understanding of life in modern Britain. For example, learners gained a better understanding of disability in sport as a result of attending a presentation from the British Sports Foundation; many took an active part in recent electoral hustings and cast their vote for the first time.

Apprenticeships

are inadequate

- In five subject areas, the largest being business management, 529 learners are working towards an apprenticeship framework. The majority of these are working towards an intermediate apprenticeship qualification.
- Managers do not ensure that learners make good progress in their learning and too few complete their qualification within the time planned. Assessors and tutors do not plan and record the various elements of learning well enough. Too often learners repeat tasks and activities at college that they have already been assessed as being competent in when at work.
- Too much college-based learning fails to extend apprentices' existing knowledge or to develop further their technical skills. Teachers do not take sufficient account of the information available to them on learners' existing skills and knowledge when planning learning, or seek to improve learners' skills in English and mathematics.
- Attendance and punctuality at college are often poor. Assessors and teachers do not always challenge poor punctuality sufficiently or follow up poor attendance with employers. Too few current learners are making good or better progress.
- Target-setting and ongoing review of learners' progress are weak. While most assessors now set apprentices targets based on the subject knowledge and skills learners need to acquire, they do not adequately review whether learners have reached the standard expected at the next review.
- Managers have not put in place appropriate systems to identify all learners who require additional help to complete their qualification successfully. Too few learners who need extra help receive it when they need it or in an appropriate manner.
- Assessors and teachers do not prepare learners well enough for working with a wide and diverse range of clients and employers. Apprentices have a respectful attitude towards each other and work well together, but most do not have a broad understanding of clients' cultural preferences beyond their own experience, for example the need to remove outdoor shoes when entering a client's house.
- Most learners work for employers who are committed to providing good-quality training in the workplace. Apprentices develop good levels of technical skill, and work safely and efficiently. Most apprentices remain in work on completion of their qualification.

Provision for learners with high needs

is inadequate

- The college has 49 learners with high needs, on 16 to 19 study programmes. Learners are enrolled on a wide range of vocational subjects from foundation to advanced level. Subjects studied include public services, business studies, motor vehicle body repair and digital media.
- Managers' and teachers' understanding of how to plan good learning for learners with high needs is inadequate. Managers do not recognise that learners require a broad programme of learning in addition to gaining their vocational qualification. Consequently, too few learners understand what specific skills they should be working towards in addition to their vocational qualification, for example improving their self-confidence and making good eye contact when speaking to others.
- Teachers do not understand how to set sufficiently specific and incremental targets for individual learners or understand how to recognise and build upon their specific learning requirements. As a result, too few learners make good progress in improving their self-awareness, social skills and personal presentation skills.
- Teachers do not use the information they have on learners' starting points to plan wider learning effectively. Too few learning activities are specifically designed to develop and reinforce the essential personal and social skills many learners need to improve in addition to their vocational qualification. For example, teachers do not plan carefully graduated learning activities for individuals with low

concentration levels, or ensure that those who have difficulty in socialising with their peers have the opportunity to practise these skills and gradually improve.

- Managers have not ensured that learners, particularly on entry level, have good practical experience of work or develop the work-related skills they need to succeed in life. Additional activities planned to enhance learning are not always designed to develop learners' interest in the wider world or give them specific skills for everyday living, for example preparing learners to live independent lives or enabling learners to use and manage their own money well.
- Arrangements to help learners to make the move from school to college are thorough and well informed. Interviews with learners are conducted well, and include the views of parents and/or carers effectively. Teachers consider learners' choices well when guiding them to the most suitable qualification and ensure that any additional help learners require to assist them in completing their studies are in place promptly.
- Discrete in-class help for learners is well managed and ensures that learners make good progress in acquiring the vocational skills they set out to achieve. Teachers and staff who provide help work well together to ensure learning is well planned and purposeful. Learners improve their listening and speaking skills and gain confidence in expressing their own views while respecting those of others.

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	5,944
Principal	Steve Logan
Website address	www.covcollege.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+
	379	425	729	519	822	348	1	133
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	208	85	84	149	1	2		
	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
	38							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ Alexander Godfrey Learning Limited							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Jules Steele, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Zimmerman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Maxine Mayer	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fadia Clarke	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Scott	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Lancaster	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the acting vice-principal curriculum and quality, 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 students 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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