

Redbridge College

General further education college

**Inspection dates**

8–11 December 2015

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	Requires improvement
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- The majority of teaching, learning and assessment is good, and enables learners to make good progress relative to their starting points.
- Leaders and managers have effectively tackled the most significant areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Adult learners and apprentices achieve well and very many progress to further studies or sustained employment.
- Leaders have maintained and further enhanced a harmonious, well-resourced, safe and welcoming learning environment.
- Teachers and managers have effectively experimented with innovative technology and teaching techniques to enthuse learners.
- Leaders have used strong links with employers to develop a curriculum that enables learners to develop good technical and work skills.

It is not yet an outstanding provider

- Very little teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- The provision for mathematics and English is not yet good enough to motivate learners to attend the lessons, to ensure they understand the relevance of these skills in their own vocational subject area and to enable all learners to achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders have yet to ensure that there is systematic sharing of good practice across different curriculum areas.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Redbridge College is a general further education college serving the populations of Redbridge and the neighbouring boroughs of Newham, and Barking and Dagenham. Most learners attend the main campus at Chadwell Heath, with others attending smaller campuses in Ilford or Ashford in Kent. The college offers courses in 12 of the 15 subject areas and has a large apprenticeship contract, about half of which is subcontracted.
- At the time of the inspection, approximately 3,600 learners were studying at the college; of these, 1,563 were studying full-time. Around 2,200 learners are adults, of whom approximately half are apprentices. The vast majority of the other adults are following courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The college recruits a substantial number of learners from Newham and Barking and Dagenham, and these boroughs have high levels of disadvantage, lower achievement at GCSE and higher numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) than found nationally.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Identify teachers and curriculum areas where teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good and ensure that good practice is rapidly spread and adopted across the college, so that more learners make good progress and achieve their qualifications.
- Ensure that staff development activities focus on teachers' ability and confidence to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills in vocational lessons, so that the learners understand the importance of these skills and are able to use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Rapidly improve students' attendance at mathematics and English lessons so that more achieve their qualification and are better prepared for their next steps.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders and governors have focused strongly on improving teaching learning and assessment, and outcomes for learners. The proportion of learners who successfully complete their qualifications has increased and is now close to other similar colleges, although leaders and governors are aware that outcomes still require improvement in a few curriculum areas. Managers have successfully improved apprentices' achievements in 2014–15, following a decline in the previous year. Younger learners on advanced level courses made better progress in 2014–15 than in the previous year and most now make good progress, often from relatively low starting points.
- Managers now use better and more thorough reviews of teachers' performance to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. Where managers have found teaching to be weak, these new arrangements have resulted in rapid improvement. Leaders have taken appropriate action when teachers have failed to respond appropriately to support and staff development. Managers set teachers targets that are clearly focused on raising learners' attendance and achievement.
- Leaders have ensured that they support teachers to experiment with new and innovative teaching techniques and also provide well-targeted professional development. Together, these strategies have helped to bring about improvements in teaching and learning, including some innovative use of e-learning. For example, in catering, learners routinely photograph their practical work on smart phones and upload the results to the college virtual learning environment (VLE), where teachers provide immediate feedback on their presentation. Learners enjoy being able to receive instant responses from their teachers and using their smart phones in this way.
- Leaders and managers carry out self-assessment effectively to identify overall strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment. However, not all managers' self-assessment reports of individual curriculum areas articulate clearly enough weaknesses in learners' achievements or which aspects of teaching and learning need further improvement. The draft quality improvement plan for 2014–15 identifies better the particular actions needed to improve teachers' skills, for example, in planning work to suit learners with different abilities, how to check learning and progress, and how to contextualise English and mathematics to learners' vocational studies. Managers have improved the arrangements for quality, assuring that the subcontracted provision, and outcomes for apprentices are now good.
- Curriculum managers make good use of data on learners' achievement to evaluate the provision, but not all make effective use of value-added data to measure the progress that learners make from their starting points. Actions to improve provision are appropriate, but are not always sufficiently precise about what needs to be done, and plans do not always include specific, measurable targets or clear timescales for completion.
- Senior leaders and governors work closely with local business representatives and employer networks to identify skill needs and to develop provision that meets any identified gaps. For example, the college has worked with a local network to develop a bespoke course for young disabled learners seeking work. The development of 'learning companies' in the college plays a key role in developing learners' skills for employment. For example, learners in graphic design work entirely on briefs set by external business clients, working in mixed level groups in the college studios and at employers' premises. This model has now been extended to performing arts and information and communications technology (ICT), to help ensure that the curriculum meets employers' needs and provides learners with experience of working in a professional business environment. Employers are complimentary about the professional behaviour and attitudes of learners when they meet them at external events and at the business network hosted by the college.
- While considerably more learners achieved functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics last year than previously, leaders acknowledge that achievement is still not good enough. Leaders and governors are aware that they need to monitor this area very closely to ensure that learners make good progress in achieving these important skills, particularly as many more learners are now taking GCSE examinations in these subjects.
- **The governance of the provider:**
 - The effectiveness of governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors are now taking a much more active role in monitoring learners' performance, the quality of teaching and the extent of improvements being made. They scrutinise reports on all aspects of college performance thoroughly and understand well where further improvements are required. They question senior leaders more effectively on the pace of improvement, and monitor the impact of training and development for teachers and the effectiveness of managing any staff underperformance.

- Governors continue to scrutinise college finances effectively and have been closely involved in developing plans for the proposed merger with another college in east London. Governors approved a significant investment to enhance teaching accommodation, with a new teaching block, which houses English and mathematics, and an excellent new theatre facility for the college and local community.

■ **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective:**

- Leaders place a strong emphasis on ensuring that learners are safe; there are effective systems to ensure the suitability of all staff to work with young people, and staff and governors receive regular training on safeguarding. Learners feel safe in college and have a good understanding of how to protect themselves from potential risks, including how to stay safe online.
- Leaders and managers work closely with the local authority and police partnerships to ensure that all staff and governors receive training on the college's new duties under the government's Prevent agenda. They understand possible risk factors which might make learners susceptible to extremism or radicalisation, and know how to report any concerns. The college has appropriate strategies to approve external speakers and use of college property by external groups.
- Learners are developing a good understanding of the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation; work has begun to enable staff and learners to explore and discuss fundamental British values and what this means for the college and wider community. This forms part of the college's approach to promoting equality and diversity and creating a well-integrated and harmonious college community, where learners can explore social and cultural differences whilst working together.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- In the vast majority of lessons, teachers effectively capture learners' interest and develop and reinforce their knowledge and skills. Teaching is good and learners develop their technical and practical skills well. For example, in an advanced level psychology lesson, learners recalled what they remembered of a well-known psychological experiment and accurately pieced together a cut-up version of a report on it. They subsequently demonstrated the good grasp they had acquired of reporting conventions and research methods by carrying out their own brief experiment and writing it up effectively. Sports learners develop their coaching skills well when leading physical education sessions for children at a local primary school.
- Support for learners with additional needs is extensive. Staff cater well for learners with complex needs and other specific needs such as hearing and/or visual impairment. Learning support staff know the learners they work with well, and adapt their approach to match individuals' needs effectively. However, support staff do not always work closely enough with teachers to maximise the impact of the help that they provide, particularly when supporting several learners in the same class.
- Teachers and managers use computer and paper-based systems well when setting targets for learners. Teachers on ESOL programmes use information about learners' initial skills very effectively when setting very clear, specific and helpful targets for achievement. Teachers' monitoring of adult learners' progress and subsequent feedback brings about rapid improvement in their learners' skills. On study programmes teachers give learners good feedback on their success in achieving targets set for attendance, punctuality, behaviour and attitudes. However, the targets that teachers set learners for academic work are not sufficiently specific to enable teachers to monitor learners' progress effectively.
- Teachers have good resources that enable them to support learning well. Classrooms in newer buildings are well furnished and provide a welcoming and conducive learning environment, which learners appreciate highly. Teachers make increasingly effective and innovative use of an impressive range of e-learning technology and software to motivate learners and develop their learning. Teachers also use simple everyday items well to illustrate their teaching. For example, in an entry level mathematics class learners enthusiastically carried out a range of calculations to determine their body mass index, getting the data they needed on fellow learners by using a variety of scales for measuring weight and height.
- Teachers provide learners with regular helpful feedback on their work. For the large majority of adult learners on ESOL programmes, teachers' marking and feedback clearly identify what they need to do to improve. The majority of marked work shows that teachers highlight errors in learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar. For apprentices, assessors provide good verbal feedback that is good, but their written feedback on assignments is not detailed or specific enough.
- The quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics GCSE and functional skills lessons has improved since the previous inspection, but is not yet good. Teachers include the development of learners' English and mathematics skills in many vocational sessions. In health and social care classes they ensure that learners are familiar with important technical terms and know how to spell them. Mathematics tutors often present learning in contexts relevant to learners' vocational area or personal lives. However, while the majority of English and mathematics teachers identify effectively where learners

have specific gaps in their skills, they do not always cater sufficiently well for the differing needs of individuals, especially where classes are large. As a result, the more-able learners find work too easy and do not receive sufficient challenge, while the least-able struggle. This impedes the progress of both groups.

- Teachers promote learners' understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity well in highly inclusive lessons.
- In a small minority of sessions teachers do not use assessment techniques such as questioning to ensure that all learners understand and are able to use new knowledge effectively. As a result, teachers do not identify those who need further practice and support to make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

- The great majority of learners behave well, arrive at lessons punctually and are ready to learn. They are respectful and courteous towards their teachers and each other, and work well together. Attendance in vocational lessons has improved since last year and is generally at or above the college's target. However, attendance in mathematics and English lessons, while slightly better than last year, remains low, particularly among learners aged 16 to 18, and requires improvement.
- Learners show increasing confidence in expressing themselves both individually and when working in small groups. The majority of learners working at intermediate level and above have high aspirations and a clear idea of what they need to achieve to progress to employment. Learners, particularly on advanced programmes, are proud of their work and enjoy opportunities to show what they have learned.
- Learners make effective use of impartial advice and guidance arranged by the college to plan their next steps and make informed choices about future career paths.
- Learners feel safe at the college. They have a good understanding of the risks associated with using social media and how to protect themselves. They are clear about how to respond should they experience bullying or harassment. In the vast majority of practical sessions, such as those in the hairdressing and beauty salons, the catering kitchens and in sports activities, they follow safe working practices. Learners' understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism is appropriate, but their understanding of fundamental British values is less well-developed.
- Most learners on study programmes benefit from the involvement of employers to help prepare them for their career, for example through the extensive use of assignments and projects particularly in graphics and performing arts, and through the creation of learning companies.
- In a small minority of lessons, low-level disruption from some learners interrupts teaching and does not help learners to develop the attitudes and behaviours they will need for their next steps.

Outcomes for learners are good

- Most learners successfully achieve their qualifications. Learners on advanced level study programmes make good progress in relation to their starting points, which are often lower than their peers in the borough. Young people who are, or were, looked after, and learners with high needs succeed in line with their peers. Current learners are making good progress in lessons and they enjoy their time in college.
- In catering, learners on advanced level courses develop valuable management skills through supervising intermediate level learners in the production kitchen. The standard of work produced by learners on ESOL programmes and access to higher education programmes is high and the courses prepare them well for moving into higher education, further studies or employment.
- Progression to further or higher education or into employment is good and improving for learners aged 16 to 18. High numbers of learners on advanced level courses successfully apply for courses in higher education. Progression for adult learners to employment and higher-level learning is satisfactory.
- The number of apprentices aged 24 and over has more than doubled in the last three years and they now make up over half the total number. The proportion of these apprentices who complete their qualification within the planned time is high and well above that of other providers. For younger apprentices, the proportions completing within the planned time improved in 2014–15 but still requires improvement. Current apprentices are making good progress. Apprentices take on extra responsibilities at work as their skills develop.
- In most curriculum areas, learners develop their maths and English skills well through the inclusion of exercises and tasks in vocational lessons. The number of learners progressing from functional skills in mathematics and English to the corresponding GCSE is increasing. However, although improving, achievements in functional skills in both mathematics and English require further improvement and not

enough learners on study programmes who work towards a GCSE in mathematics or English achieve an A* to C grade.

- Despite improvements, achievement in a small minority of individual subjects or levels requires improvement, and in a minority of cases differences still exist in the achievements of different groups of learners.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- At the time of the inspection 1,251 learners were on study programmes in 10 of the 15 subject areas. The largest curriculum areas are business, health and social care, science and computing.
- Although the proportion of learners who successfully complete their qualifications has improved since the last inspection, it remains below that of similar colleges, particularly at intermediate level. Learners' attendance and punctuality in lessons have improved since the last inspection, but they are not yet good enough, particularly in GCSE English and mathematics.
- In a small minority of subjects, teachers do not adequately plan to ensure that teaching supports and challenges both the most- and least-able learners, which leads to poor behaviour and low-level disruption, particularly on foundation and intermediate level courses. Teachers do not always ensure that learners fully understand topics and are able to use the skills or knowledge taught before moving onto the next stage of learning. On occasions, teachers allow learners to use lesson time to complete in-course assignments rather making more productive use of their time.
- In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to elicit understanding and monitor learners' progress. As a result, learners gain good subject knowledge and skills, make good progress in lessons, and produce work of the expected standard.
- Learners make interesting presentations using a variety of electronic resources, such as mobile phones, tablet computers, the college VLE and social media to capture their work, record their progress and receive feedback. They work well in pairs or small groups to raise their confidence, for example through peer teaching and peer feedback to improve their work.
- Most teachers include English and mathematics in their lessons to help learners develop these skills in the context of their vocational subject. Teachers correct learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar, but do not ensure that learners understand how to avoid repeating these errors in their work. In a minority of subjects, teachers do not return marked work quickly enough to help learners understand how well they are progressing and whether they are meeting their targets. Teachers and managers have developed strong links with employers which they use very well to help prepare learners for employment. In media and graphics, for example, all learners' assignments are real briefs from a relevant employer. Learners prepare curriculum vitae and job applications, and have practice interviews with employers in order to gain work placements. Despite these good links, not enough learners on foundation and intermediate level programmes have a structured period of work experience with an employer.

Adult learning programmes

are good

- There are 2,263 adult learners, of whom around 70% are studying part-time on ESOL programmes. Other adult provision offered by the college includes courses in access to higher education, hairdressing, beauty therapy, teacher training and health and social care.
- Teachers effectively plan and organise a good range of teaching, learning and assessment activities to engage learners of different abilities. They carefully check and assess learning, helping learners to analyse their work and improve their skills; for example, learners in an access to higher education lesson were challenged to explain their understanding of how light is used in X-rays.
- Learners attend well, demonstrate a good attitude to learning and develop a wide range of personal and professional skills. For example, learners in hairdressing develop a good range of haircutting techniques, while in beauty therapy learners develop specialist technical skills such as how to perform laser treatments on various parts of the body. Access to higher education learners planning to progress to higher education in science or medicine develop their specialist knowledge and understanding very well. For example, they understand the importance of the renal system and the significance of the sugar content in certain medical conditions, and are prepared well for various professions in the health sector.
- Teachers on ESOL programmes ensure that their learners benefit from very specific and clearly expressed learning targets, which help them improve their skills and prepare for assessment. Teachers set

challenging exercises such as discussing a specific topic for a specified time without hesitation, or using correct grammatical tenses to communicate more effectively in a range of social situations.

- Teachers actively promote learners' understanding of equality and diversity, racism, disability and learning differences in lessons, and through an effectively organised tutorial programme. As a result, learners confidently demonstrate a greater understanding of different religious beliefs and cultures. Learners in a sociology lesson learned how the notion of common sense differs from one culture to another; beauty therapy learners learned how to analyse different skin types so they can accurately perform treatments on their diverse client groups.
- Teachers do not provide learners on ESOL programmes or access to higher education courses with sufficient timely feedback and regular reviews to ensure that learners are clear about what they need to do to improve their skills and achieve their targets. Although hairdressing and beauty salons are often open during evenings and weekends, hairdressing and beauty therapy learners do not have enough clients during the college day to enable them to be assessed effectively.
- Learners develop English and mathematical skills that are highly relevant to their vocational training. For example, in hairdressing and beauty therapy, they learn how to communicate effectively with clients and estimate quantities of products required to carry out a range of treatments. However, teachers do not place sufficient attention on helping learners to develop strategies to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar and to avoid errors.

Apprenticeships

are good

- Most of the college's 1,050 apprentices are working towards an apprenticeship in business administration, health and social care, hair and beauty, or footwear and leather. Approximately half the apprentices are working directly with college assessors while the rest are placed with six subcontractors in London, Kent, Northamptonshire and the north east of England.
- Apprentices make good progress and the large majority complete their qualifications on time. They develop good technical and employability skills, which enable them to take on extra responsibilities in the workplace as they progress. Employers appreciate the value apprentices bring to their companies. Apprentices develop a good work ethic, learning, for example, the importance of being on time and of good communication with colleagues and customers. One hairdressing apprentice developed specialist skills in wig construction; another learned business skills, such as managing the sales terminal. Very many apprentices remain in sustained employment after they have completed their training. A good proportion are promoted or continue with their studies at a higher level.
- Apprentices receive clear, detailed and helpful information, advice and guidance on their courses before they start, and know how their course and chosen units will benefit them in their work. Pastoral support to help apprentices with personal and other problems is good.
- Assessors promote safe working practices effectively, both while in the training environment and at work. For example, an apprentice working in a primary school diligently followed working practices to keep herself and her pupils safe. Apprentices have a good understanding of diversity in the context of the work environment, for example while interacting with customers. Assessors are beginning to strengthen apprentices' understanding of fundamental British values.
- Assessors give clear oral feedback on assignments and assessment tasks. However, not all tutors use appropriate questioning techniques to check apprentices' understanding. While assessors carry out regular progress reviews, not all written feedback is sufficiently meaningful to be helpful. As a result, apprentices are not always clear about what they have done well and how they can improve further. The college has identified this aspect as an area for improvement.
- Provision for functional skills in English and mathematics requires improvement. Many tutors have a good understanding of the needs of their apprentices and use this knowledge well to plan relevant learning. However, this is not true across all the different apprenticeships. As a result, teachers do not always plan English and mathematics content that meets individual apprentices' needs sufficiently well. Nor are English and mathematics tasks always relevant to the apprentices' vocational or work context. Teachers do not always provide sufficient support for the minority of apprentices for whom English is an additional language to help them to develop their pronunciation, spelling and grammar effectively.

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	4,740
Principal/CEO	Mrs Theresa Drowley
Website address	www.Redbridge-college.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+
	270	549	371	238	589	404	14	75
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	135	504	41	466	0	0		
	Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total		
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<div><div></div>Alpha Care Agency</div> <div><div></div>Aspire to Learn Ltd</div> <div><div></div>Beautec Beauty Academy Ltd</div> <div><div></div>First for Training Ltd</div> <div><div></div>Halls of Ivy Beauty Academy Ltd</div> <div><div></div>J and K Training Ltd</div>							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

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Janet Mercer	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Philida Schellekens	Ofsted Inspector
Winsome Aldred	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the deputy 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 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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