

City of Bristol College

General further education college



26–29 January 2016

Inspection dates

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

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

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

- Senior leaders, including governors, have been slow to tackle the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.
- The proportion of learners who successfully complete their course is low and has fallen since the previous inspection.
- Learners' attendance and punctuality at lessons is low and leaders have not taken sufficient effective action to tackle this long-standing weakness.
- Teachers and managers do not monitor learners' progress closely enough and do not provide the challenge or support learners require to make sufficient progress.
- A very low proportion of learners complete their apprenticeships within the expected timescale.
- Leaders and managers have not improved the standards of training in apprenticeships quickly enough.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is not good enough, with a very low proportion of learners successfully achieving qualifications in these subjects.
- Learners' progression into further education and employment is not monitored closely enough for leaders and managers to evaluate fully the impact of learning and training on learners' destinations.

The provider has the following strengths

- The college receives strong support, and much goodwill, from its stakeholders; it nurtures these partnerships well to ensure the range and breadth of the curriculum is focused on the employment and training needs of the city.
- Provision for learners with high needs is good.
- Personal and in-class support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disability is effective, enabling them to make good progress from their starting points.

Full report

Information about the provider

- City of Bristol College is a large college with four main campuses: one in the city centre, one in the south and two in the north of Bristol. Approximately 3,100 full-time learners aged 16 to 18 are on study programmes and 5,500 learners are adults on full-time and part-time courses. The college has approximately 1,450 apprentices. A small number of learners are enrolled with subcontractors; most of these attend employability, English and mathematics courses in the south of the city. The college has a small number of 14- to 16-year-old learners on courses provided in partnership with schools (this provision is not covered in this report). The college also provides a wide range of courses in smaller centres, most of which are in the less affluent areas of the city.
- A very high proportion of learners at the college live in Bristol, a city with a population of nearly 450,000. A larger proportion of people in Bristol have higher-level qualifications than in the rest of the South West. Bristol is one of the least deprived of the English Core Cities but still has small areas that are among the most deprived in England. The proportion of the population living in deprived areas is rising, with clusters in the south and centre of the city. The unemployment rate for females is similar to the rest of the South West but it is significantly higher for males. The proportion of school leavers who achieve five A* to C grades at GCSE is below the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders' actions are strongly focused on tackling the weaknesses identified through self-assessment, performance management and inspection, and that leaders closely monitor the impact of these actions on improving learners' outcomes.
- Provide governors with simple and regular reports that show progress against agreed performance indicators so that they better understand the financial and academic performance of the college.
- Devise simple approaches for managers to develop a more accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their area of responsibility.
- Introduce effective strategies to improve attendance and punctuality, including setting high expectations for learners and reducing the disruption to lessons and assessments caused by the high turnover of staff.
- Closely monitor the progress made by each learner on their course. Use this monitoring to quickly identify learners who are falling behind with their work and to put in place the support they need to help them catch up.
- Ensure all teachers have high expectations of their learners and set them challenging and stretching targets.
- Plan and deliver lessons in which learners consistently develop new skills and knowledge. Assess learners regularly to ensure that they are developing these skills at the highest level possible and meeting their targets.
- Urgently provide strong leadership for apprenticeships to ensure the outcomes and the quality of provision meet the training and skills needs of local employers.
- Devise and implement a strategy across the college that tackles the weaknesses in the teaching of English and mathematics so that learners develop high standards of skills in these subjects.
- Introduce more effective monitoring of learners' progression into further education, training and employment.
- Effectively harness the goodwill and support of local partners to ensure improvements to the college meet the needs and aspirations of employers and stakeholders in Bristol.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders have not made sufficient improvements to teaching, learning and assessment, and learners' outcomes since the previous inspection. Too many of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have yet to be fully resolved. The proportion of learners successfully completing their courses has fallen since the previous inspection and leaders' actions to improve and monitor learners' outcomes are yet to have sufficient positive impact.
- Leaders and managers have identified many of the weaknesses identified by this inspection. However, they have not taken sufficiently decisive and effective action to tackle these weaknesses and generate improvements, especially in the quality of teaching, learners' progress and the quality of apprenticeships.
- The standard of teaching, learning and assessment continues to require improvement, as it has done since the inspection in 2010. Leaders have recently introduced an appropriate system of performance management. Teachers value the guidance and support provided by the recently appointed teaching and learning coaches and the professional development provided by the college. However, too much variation remains in the quality of teaching across many courses. Contributing to this has been the high turnover of teachers and assessors and the ensuing disruption to teaching and training.
- English and mathematics provision remain, as at the previous inspection, an area for improvement. Results have not improved sufficiently; too many learners are absent from lessons and the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Quality assurance procedures are not used fully to monitor the quality and standards in subcontracted provision. As a result, an up-to-date picture of the quality and standards of this work is not readily available to leaders.
- Since the previous inspection, awarding bodies have been concerned about some of the college's assessment practice and introduced restrictions on the college's powers to award qualifications in a significant number of subjects. Managers and staff have worked hard, and with integrity, to support learners and rectify this position. They have been largely successful; only a very small number of sanctions remain in place. This serious and avoidable position has taken a great deal of leaders' time to resolve.
- Governors have appointed a new leadership team, including a new Principal in January 2016, and an interim finance director. This team has the support of staff and is making rapid progress in tackling the long-standing weaknesses in leadership that have been a barrier to delivering a financially sound and achievable strategic plan. The recent management restructure has resulted in faster decision making, better communication and more accountability for learners and their progress.
- Community groups, the local authority, employers and the local enterprise partnership (LEP) express their support for the college and work effectively with it. They identify the overwhelming need for a strong college that reflects the rich cultural and social mix of the city and supports its economic development. They welcome the new, simpler strategic plan that refocuses the college on supplying high-quality education and training for local people. They support college leaders in their determination to deliver high-quality provision and they are keen to work with managers and staff to achieve this.
- The college is a welcoming, inclusive and harmonious community. Staff provide a sensible focus on fundamental British values and learners are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The new online learning packages for learners that introduce them to these values have been well used and have led to valuable discussions and reflection.
- The college's accommodation is clean and well maintained. There is a good range of specialist laboratories and workshops and the general classrooms are suitably equipped to enable teachers to use information and communication technology effectively as a learning aid.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Governors recognise that they have not improved provision and have been frustrated that senior leaders have not been effective in improving the college's finances and performance. Governors have recently appointed new senior managers and have set appropriately high expectations so that effective strategies for improvement can be speedily implemented.
 - Recently appointed governors bring a good range of skills to the board. Governors have recently agreed a new and simpler strategic plan. They are strengthening their financial expertise and are reviewing the way committees operate in order to improve the scrutiny of performance data.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - The college provides a safe environment for learners. There are good records and processes in place to ensure learners are safe. Links with specialist agencies to protect vulnerable learners are strong.
 - Sound policies are in place to recruit suitable staff and appropriate checks are made on all staff including volunteers, contractors and governors. Records of checks on staff are comprehensive and up

- to date and queries raised by these checks are followed up quickly and effectively.
- All staff are appropriately trained to ensure they fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. Managers have ensured that staff and learners have received good training in the 'Prevent' duty and already have a good record of identifying learners who are at risk of radicalisation or extremism and of liaising with other agencies to take appropriate actions.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies considerably across courses. On study programmes, successful teaching for learners who speak English as an additional language results in rapid improvement in their speaking and listening skills. By contrast, on too many study programmes for 16- to 19-year-olds, such as sport and animal care, teaching is much less effective and leads to learners making slow progress in lessons, and over time. Teachers do not stretch the most able sufficiently across much of the provision.
- The teaching of English is not good enough. Teachers assess learners' English skills at the start of programmes but they do not use this information well enough when planning learning activities. GCSE classes cover syllabus content effectively but activities do not cater adequately for differences in individuals' abilities and consequently slow their progress. This also contributes to the standards of writing in classes for adults being too low. Too often across the college, teachers' correction of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in learners' written work in English and other subjects is cursory.
- Mathematics teaching is not consistently effective for adults or learners on 16 to 19 study programmes. Lessons focus too narrowly on learners practising abstract calculations without helping them to see how they apply these to their work or personal lives. Teaching is often stronger for apprentices in technical areas such as engineering.
- Tracking and monitoring of learners' progress have improved in 2015/16, compared to previous years, following the introduction of computer-based recording systems. Progress records inform the majority of 16- to 19-year-old learners of the standards of work they have achieved and what work needs to be completed for each qualification. However learners' progress in the study programme as a whole is not tracked effectively. Records of apprentices' progress do not identify effectively when an individual's slow progress needs intervention.
- Professional development and coaching for teachers and assessors have helped them improve their practice since the previous inspection, but have not led to consistently effective teaching, learning and assessment.
- In the majority of lessons, learners work with concentration and engagement and make at least the progress expected of them. They often receive good coaching and individual attention which contribute effectively to their progress.
- Teaching is most effective in practical lessons. Many teachers of vocational subjects have good industry expertise which they employ effectively to motivate and inform learners. In these lessons, learners make good progress in developing occupational skills.
- Additional support for learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability is good across the college. Consequently, these learners make good progress from their starting points. Identification of the support learners require is timely and staff frequently ensure that it is provided from the outset of programmes.
- Learners in need of high levels of support receive excellent support from tutors and other professionals with high levels of specialist expertise. The range of help available to all learners to meet their general welfare and pastoral needs, as well as to overcome potential barriers to learning such as dyslexia or behavioural, social and emotional needs, is wide ranging and good.
- Learners use the high-quality resources available to them effectively. Learners following vocational programmes at all levels develop their skills in environments which closely replicate the commercial world, such as the college's hairdressing salons and training restaurant. Adult learners studying on college sites make good use of the virtual learning environment for independent study outside class time. Most classroom facilities are good, although the quality and availability of computers for learners is not always sufficient.
- Learners receive good oral feedback on the work they complete in class, which motivates them effectively. However, the feedback learners receive on written work is not sufficiently specific to indicate what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers celebrate the diversity of their learners' backgrounds well and successfully encourage learners to study together harmoniously and take responsibility for treating each other fairly and with respect.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

- Learners' attendance at lessons is low and has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection; attendance at mathematics and English lessons is particularly low. The exception is the high levels of attendance of apprentices on vocational lessons at college. Learners who attend on time regularly have their learning disrupted by the late arrival of other learners.
- Managers have not taken the appropriate actions to ensure each learner's attendance is tracked and actions taken quickly to improve it when necessary. Managers set aspirational targets for attendance in 2015/16 but have not put in place the support for learners, or successfully instilled the attitudes and behaviours in learners, that would ensure attendance targets are met.
- Attendance of 16- to 18-year-olds is a particular concern. At three of the four main centres, only three quarters of the learners are present in lessons. In 2015/16, compared to the previous year, their attendance has increased on vocational and academic programmes but has decreased on English and mathematics courses.
- Learners do not develop quickly enough the English and mathematics skills they require for employment or higher levels of study. The development of learners' writing skills in GCSE English is slower than expected. Vocational teachers of adults do not focus sufficiently on the development of learners' written English skills, with too many examples of poor spelling and punctuation in learners' written work.
- The vast majority of learners develop a good level of respect for their peers and staff. They conduct themselves well at college and work together effectively. Apprentices in the workplace are confident, articulate, courteous and polite. Learners develop positive attitudes to learning, particularly in practical lessons where they take pride in their work.
- Learners with complex additional needs are supported well to gain greater self-confidence and develop skills in how to learn effectively. They improve their ability to work with others and manage their own anxieties well.
- Learners mostly develop the skills they need for employment through practical activities and work experience. For example, hairdressing learners demonstrate excellent customer service and communication skills when washing, treating and blow drying clients' hair to a commercial standard. In floristry, learners create floral arrangements of a high standard that they sell to the general public. Childcare learners create resources of a high quality to inspire the early stages of creative play in young children. Engineering apprentices have developed skills in pneumatics that they apply to modelling bridges and barriers. Many learners are successful in national and international skills competitions.
- Learners benefit from good, impartial careers guidance and are able to make informed choices about their future work and study options. When recruiting learners, staff skilfully ensure that learners understand the careers a course will prepare them for and learners are enrolled on an appropriate course. Increasing numbers of learners are being provided with high-quality guides that help them decide about their progression to employment and higher-level courses. Staff support learners effectively when they apply to higher education.
- Learners demonstrate a good awareness of safety and say they feel safe at college and at work. Learners know who to contact should they have any concerns about their safety. Learners have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.
- Learners are developing a good understanding of fundamental British values and respect the views of their peers. Staff have been trained on the dangers of radicalisation and are beginning to develop learners' understanding of these risks.
- The college's 'Sports Maker' programme provides positive encouragement for a small number of learners to undertake exercise and embark on a variety of sports. For example, construction learners benefit from the piloting of a 'fit for work' programme that develops their capacity for physical work.

Outcomes for learners are inadequate

- Since the previous inspection in 2014, the proportion of learners who successfully achieve their qualifications has fallen to a very low level. Nearly a third of all 16- to 18-year-old learners, and a quarter of adult learners, leave without passing their qualification.
- In 2013/14, there was a particularly significant fall in learners' success compared to the previous year. While there have been modest improvements in 2014/15, for example in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses for 16- to 18-year-old learners and some level 1 and 3 courses for adults, these have not been sufficient to ensure enough learners are successful.
- The proportion of full-time learners who successfully complete their courses on full level 2 and 3 courses has fallen over the last three years to well below the national rate; it is particularly low for 16- to 18-year-olds. While teachers are monitoring current learners' progress more closely than in previous years, learners' progress still needs to improve considerably if more are to complete their qualifications.

- Qualification outcomes for English and mathematics functional skills are well below the national rate despite having increased in 2015. Too many learners do not develop sufficient written and number skills, and are not able to progress to the next level of training or education. Most adult learners who took a GCSE in English or mathematics in 2015 achieved a grade C or above – a significant improvement on the previous year. However, only a very small proportion of 16- to 18-year-old learners successfully improve their grade D to a grade C or above in English and mathematics.
- At A level and AS level, the proportion of learners achieving their expected grade has risen since 2014. In 2015, learners mostly achieved the grades expected of them when taking their prior attainment into account, particularly on English language and religious studies courses. Learners on A-level computing and AS-level chemistry do not make such good progress.
- Outcomes for apprenticeships are inadequate. The proportion of apprentices completing their apprenticeships has fallen since the previous inspection and is low. Of those on intermediate apprenticeships, only just over half achieve. At advanced level, 16- to 23-year-old apprentices do as well as apprentices in other providers but under half of apprentices aged 24 and over achieve their apprenticeship. Only a third of apprentices complete their apprenticeships within the expected timescale.
- Learners mostly develop the skills needed by their employers. Information technology (IT) apprentices confidently apply complex diagnostic skills to overcome customers' problems with their computers and many business apprentices develop the confidence to work on a wide range of jobs for their employer. Learners on study programmes mostly develop practical skills well but do not develop skills in time management to ensure they are punctual and attend lessons regularly. Learners with high needs develop skills in self-management as a result of their teachers' good understanding of their potential.
- A high proportion of learners who apply for university are offered a place and a large majority achieve the qualifications that enable them to take up their places. A majority of learners stay at the college to study a further course but only a very small number progress on to an apprenticeship. A quarter progress into full- or part-time employment. Managers do not analyse the information they collect about learners' progression and therefore do not understand the extent to which provision is meeting learners' aspirations. Managers do not collect information to identify the impact of apprenticeships on apprentices' careers.
- There are very few significant differences in achievement between different groups of learners. Adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make better progress than other learners.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- The college provides an extensive range of study programmes. There are currently 3,100 learners on 16 to 19 study programmes. The largest subject areas are preparation for life and work; health, public services and care; arts, media and publishing; and retail and commercial enterprise, with smaller numbers in business administration and law; information and communication technology; science and mathematics and construction planning and the built environment.
- In 2014/15, learners did not make the progress expected of them. The majority of current learners are making at least expected progress, and in the more effectively taught subjects, teachers prepare learners well for their next steps. However, in too many lessons the pace of learning is slow and strategies to check and consolidate learning do not ensure all learners are making sufficient progress, particularly the most-able learners. In these lessons, the standards of written work are low.
- Learners' attendance and punctuality are low in most lessons, particularly in mathematics and English. This has a negative effect on those who attend on time, as a minority of lessons start late and are regularly disrupted.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is weak and, in a minority of lessons, teachers do not develop the English and mathematics skills of learners well. Learners in the majority of lessons are increasing their range of vocabulary, but often teachers do not correct spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriately.
- Most teachers know the progress being made by individual learners that they teach and their monitoring of learners' progress has improved since the previous year. However, teachers and managers do not have an accurate overview of learners' progress over the whole study programme; they rely instead on monitoring their progress on individual components of the programme.
- In most lessons, teachers give learners positive encouragement which gives them the confidence to tackle more complex tasks. Teachers' verbal feedback is detailed and constructive, enabling learners who attend frequently to progress well with tasks within the classroom and workshops. However, a minority of teachers do not provide written feedback on learners' work that provides learners with sufficient information on how they can improve, or timescales for the completion of their targets.
- Most teachers assess the individual needs of the learners well and work hard to encourage learners to

develop new skills and knowledge and to raise their aspirations. Teachers readily provide support during lessons to those who find work difficult and help learners experiencing problems in their personal lives. Learners appreciate the friendly and approachable staff and know they can share their concerns with them.

- Teachers use their industry experience well to ensure that most learners develop the practical skills they need for employment or progression to further studies, particularly in hairdressing and beauty therapy, construction, hospitality and childcare. In these subjects, learners work hard to reach high standards. In media, learners develop high-level skills in filming and video editing. In social care, learners develop a good understanding of how to meet the specific care needs of clients and catering learners develop strong customer service skills in the college restaurants. However, in subjects such as sport, history and physics the lack of specialist staff has disrupted learning and slowed learners' progress.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of work-related activities that develop their knowledge of different industries, motivate them and inform their career choices. These activities include work experience placements, visits to employers and volunteering.
- Learners receive good careers advice and guidance that prepares them well for their next steps. The large majority of learners progress to a further course at the college, with a high proportion of advanced-level learners progressing to university. Provision for learners whose first language is not English is highly effective in securing rapid language development and successful integration into life in the United Kingdom.

Adult learning programmes

require improvement

- There are approximately 5,500 adult learners on full-time and part-time courses in most subject areas at college sites and in community-based venues. These include short employment programmes delivered by subcontractors.
- The quality of teaching and learning across the adult provision varies considerably. The proportion of learners attending lessons is low and, while most learners are punctual, particularly those on community courses, a minority attending courses at college sites turn up late. As a result, the rate of progress that learners are making varies too much between different subjects and different types of adult learning. For example, learners on the employability short courses and on access programmes are making good progress, in contrast to learners in mathematics where progress is too slow.
- A minority of teachers do not plan learning activities that allow the most-able learners to make sufficient progress. In a minority of lessons, teachers' expectations of learners are too low and they do not set work that stretches all their learners or enables them to fulfil their potential.
- A small number of teachers are not sufficiently skilled at checking whether learners understand what they have been taught; this is particularly prevalent in classes where learners have a wide range of levels of ability. In these, teachers move on without being sure that all learners have fully understood.
- The development of learners' speaking and listening skills in English is good, which ensures they become more confident when making presentations and expressing their ideas. However, the quality of learners' writing skills is not of a high enough standard and vocational teachers do not focus sufficiently on developing learners' written English skills. Learners studying GCSE English are not developing skills quickly enough.
- The adult learning provision meets local and national priorities well. Centres are well located in the city to serve communities where deprivation and lack of educational achievement are prevalent. Staff have good partnership arrangements with organisations supporting these communities and work collaboratively and effectively with subcontracted partners in the best interests of learners and employers.
- Most learners benefit from a wide range of activities and well-produced learning resources that they find interesting and enjoyable. These include technology which enhances learning in lessons and the college's virtual learning environment, which allows learners to study in their own time. Adults learning how to support teaching and learning in schools learn to use interactive technology well. This enables them to help children use the computers at the school where they work.
- Most learners who attend develop skills, both practical and behavioural, that they need in order to gain employment. Vocational teachers have good industry experience which they use skilfully to widen learners' knowledge and understanding and to develop their practical skills. For example, learners on carpentry courses learn how to use a range of industry-standard machinery and develop the skills to make doors, window frames and garden gates to a high standard. On the short employability courses, learners develop the customer service skills and knowledge of health and safety that will help them when seeking employment in the hospitality industry.
- Learners benefit from the good individual coaching and support and constructive verbal feedback from their teachers, which helps them to evaluate their progress. The quality of written feedback on learners' work is not always consistently clear or helpful and does not always identify what learners have done well

and what they need to do to improve further.

- Many adult learners are well motivated and enjoy their learning, especially those with high attendance. They demonstrate respect for their teachers and their peers and have a good understanding of fundamental British values. Staff are developing a good understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, although learners' understanding is still underdeveloped. Learners feel safe at the college sites and in the community venues. They have a good understanding of the further training and employment available to them at the end of their course and how these opportunities could support their future career plans.

Apprenticeships

are inadequate

- Across nine vocational areas, including engineering, manufacturing, hairdressing, professional cookery and business administration, 1,450 apprentices work towards completing an apprenticeship. Of these, just over half study at intermediate level and just under half at advanced level or higher; about a third of apprentices are aged 16 to 18 and the remainder are aged 19 and over.
- The leadership and management of apprenticeships are inadequate. Recent management changes have not yet had sufficient impact on the progress, retention and completion rates of apprentices. Managers do not plan or deliver apprenticeship programmes effectively. Current managers and staff, many of whom are new, know what the shortcomings are and are working hard at improving the systems necessary to bring about improvements in quality. Managers do not monitor apprentices' progress closely enough; they do not yet have a sufficiently thorough understanding of which apprentices are on track to succeed and those who need extra support.
- Staff do not provide sufficient, timely information and guidance about the options available to apprentices once they complete their apprenticeship. As a consequence, apprentices and their employers are unable to make decisions about what to do once apprentices have completed their qualifications. Many apprentices have high aspirations and want to do well. However, too few intermediate apprentices go on to take a higher level of study and it is unclear how many advanced level apprentices do so. Employers report that they frequently offer full-time employment to successful apprentices and others support apprentices through higher-level qualifications.
- Managers do not know enough about the benefits their apprenticeships bring to employers or whether apprenticeships improve the careers of their apprentices because they do not collect or use information and data on apprentices' achievements or destinations well enough. For example, they do not know the overall proportion of apprentices who move on to higher-level qualifications or who gain permanent employment.
- Too many apprentices have not made sufficient progress in completing the English and mathematics qualifications for their apprenticeships, and the teaching of these functional skills is poor. Many apprentices do not attend the lessons regularly enough to learn. However, engineering and automotive apprentices develop good mathematical skills as part of their technical courses.
- Too few apprentices make timely progress through their qualifications. This long-standing weakness is being tackled currently, but too many apprentices either fail to complete their programme, or still do not complete it within a suitable timeframe.
- Despite the slow rates of completion, most apprentices develop appropriate skills and knowledge for their chosen career. Teachers and assessors have good industry expertise. The majority of off-the-job training is well planned; apprentices value the chance to practise their skills at college before applying them at work. For example, intermediate automotive apprentices understand Ohm's law and apply this to understanding faults in electrical circuits in vehicles.
- Many apprentices contribute positively to the business where they work. Most employers value their enthusiasm, work ethic and willingness to learn new roles at work. For example, in public sector organisations, business apprentices analyse CCTV footage and IT apprentices use a range of diagnostic tools to identify faults in computer systems.
- Most apprenticeship staff liaise effectively with employers to ensure that apprentices develop the right skills for the organisation. For example, IT apprentices who understand application packages well, train other colleagues to use them. The majority of employers value the service that college staff provide, and are loyal in return; many large and small companies use the college annually to train their new apprentices.
- Apprentices are confident and articulate, courteous and polite as a result of their experiences at work and at college; employers report that younger apprentices particularly gain confidence at work. Apprentices work well with others and independently; they show respect to one another and to colleagues. For example, as part of their day release, advanced professional cookery apprentices work with full-time front of house learners to prepare and host gourmet evenings for the paying public. Apprentices feel safe at work and at college and know how to report concerns should they arise.

Provision for learners with high needs is good

- The college provides education and training for 234 learners with high needs, 110 of whom attend mainstream courses. Learners attend discrete courses at two main centres and mainstream programmes throughout the college.
- Leaders and managers work in strong partnership with local authorities to share good practice, set up work experience placements, make the best use of the funding for learners with high needs and engage in joint continuous professional development.
- The provision caters well for a wide range of needs and develops learners' communication skills, money management, independent living and travel skills. For example, courses in gardening, creative arts, movement, music and Spanish help younger learners to develop new interests and prepare them for adult life. The college makes adjustments to mainstream courses well to ensure that they are accessible to learners with high needs. As a result, almost half the learners with high needs follow mainstream courses, with good individual, in-class support.
- Learners make good progress from their individual starting points. Learners with the highest levels of need extend their communication skills in speech, signing or eye pointing. They develop their ability to make choices and express likes and dislikes. Learners with high levels of anxiety develop techniques to manage stressful situations. Learners improve their social skills and belief in their own abilities and potential.
- Personal support for learners with high needs is exceptionally effective in helping learners with high levels of need on mainstream courses to stay in college, engage in learning and progress to higher levels. Staff are highly qualified and skilled, and learners benefit from a wide range of specialist therapeutic support. Support from learning coaches, who meet learners outside course times, is particularly helpful in keeping learners at college and is much valued by learners. As they near the end of their course, learners receive good advice and guidance on their next steps in education, training and employment.
- Teachers are well qualified and skilled. They create opportunities to develop learners' spoken or signed language well and ensure that learners recognise and use technical vocabulary. Staff ensure learners make good use of IT to lead sections of a lesson or to present their ideas and research. For example, in one gardening lesson, a learner took responsibility for finding and projecting on screen the weather forecast for New York, which was expected to lead to severe weather in Bristol, to help plan outside tasks for the following day.
- Teachers make good use of learners' education, health and care plans to plan lessons for each individual learner, which contain suitably varied targets, levels of feedback, challenge and support. Teachers record learners' progress against individual targets regularly and monitor their achievements carefully.
- Leaders and managers do not analyse data effectively enough to get a full picture of what learners move on to when they complete their programmes in order to help with curriculum planning and to evaluate fully the effectiveness of the provision.
- A small number of learners do not achieve the qualifications in English and mathematics that they need in order to succeed on higher-level courses or to secure employment.
- While the number of work experience opportunities is increasing rapidly, a small number of learners are not yet provided with enough opportunities to gain the necessary confidence and skills in a real work environment.

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	14,178
Principal/CEO	Lee Probert
Website address	www.cityofbristol.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)	1099	2938	1030	2141	1271	411	2	13
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	328	462	153	476	0	30		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16	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"> ■ Hartcliffe and Withywood Ventures ■ N-Gaged Training and Recruitment ■ Single Parent Action Network ■ The City Academy Bristol (One World Learning Trust) ■ Ashley Community and Housing Trust 							

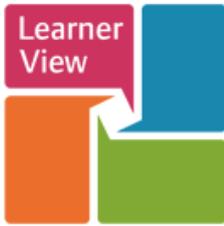
Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Steven Tucker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alastair Pearson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Wilf Hudson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kathleen Tyler	Ofsted Inspector
Penny Mathers	Ofsted Inspector
Roger Pilgrim	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Flint	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Lacey	Ofsted Inspector
Tony Day	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Fobister	Ofsted Inspector
Pippa Wainwright	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Battersby	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the deputy Principal as nominee. 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 lessons, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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