

Stanmore College

General further education college

Inspection dates

22–25 September 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate college

- Governors and the Principal did not take swift and decisive action following the previous inspection and consequently the quality of provision has declined further.
- Managers do not use data and information well enough to identify weaknesses and to intervene to bring about rapid improvement.
- Managers have an unrealistic view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment because their evaluation of teaching focuses on what teachers do in lessons rather than on the progress that learners make.
- Leaders have not yet implemented fully the principles of study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19.
- Too few learners achieve their qualifications, and most make insufficient progress from their starting points.
- The proportion of learners who achieve the qualifications that they need in English and mathematics is unacceptably low.
- The majority of teachers do not challenge learners to make the progress of which they are capable; too many lessons are dull and therefore do not capture learners' imagination.
- Teachers do not ensure that learners understand how important it is to attend regularly and on time; as a result, learners miss lessons or arrive late too often.
- Teachers do not ensure that all learners have challenging targets that help them to improve or develop their skills.

The college has the following strengths

- Learners benefit from very good welfare support that helps them to overcome the personal difficulties that they face in their everyday lives.

Full report

Information about the college

- Stanmore College is a small general further education college in north-west London. Most of the provision takes place on the college site although some of the adult learning takes place at a learning centre in the local community. The very small amount of subcontracted provision is placed with one provider and focuses on vocational courses in beauty therapy and sport.
- At the time of the inspection, around 2,000 learners study at the college. Of these, just under 1,300 are full-time learners aged 16 to 19. Most of the remainder are adult learners, mainly on part-time courses. Only nine apprentices are currently training with the college. In 2015/16 over 500 learners enrolled without a GCSE at grade C or above in English and/or mathematics. Most learners live in the London borough of Harrow where unemployment is slightly below the London and national rates. However, around 20% of learners live in the neighbouring borough of Brent where unemployment is much higher.

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that governors, the Principal and senior leaders decide very quickly how they are going to improve the quality of provision and put in place actions to secure rapid progress.
- Ensure that governors have sufficient expertise and experience to hold senior leaders to account for the improvements that are required.
- Ensure that managers at all levels receive accurate and timely performance data, and develop their skills to interpret the information so they can intervene swiftly when improvements are required.
- Enable managers to make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by focusing on what learners are doing and how much progress they are making, both in lessons and over time.
- Increase the numbers of learners who benefit from work placements; ensure that learners reflect on what they have learned while at work and that managers evaluate the impact of work experience more carefully.
- For learners aged 16 to 19, ensure that each component of their study programme is tailored both to develop the skills they need and to achieve the qualifications they require to progress.
- Ensure all teachers have high expectations of what learners can achieve; teachers must set ambitious and challenging targets for learners and then carefully monitor their progress towards these.
- Develop teachers' skills in planning and implementing interesting and stimulating learning activities so that all learners make at least good progress.
- Implement effective actions to improve attendance and punctuality; closely monitor the attendance patterns of different groups of learners and analyse reasons for poor attendance.
- Rapidly improve the numbers of learners who achieve the qualifications they need in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring all learners take a course appropriate to their starting point
 - ensuring teachers plan learning that takes account of what learners can and cannot already do
 - equipping all vocational teachers with the skills and confidence to improve learners' English and mathematics in their lessons.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

is inadequate

- Governors and the Principal have not acted swiftly enough to improve the quality of provision so that all learners can make good progress and be successful. As a result, the proportion of learners who achieved their qualifications remained too low in 2014/15. Most of the key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection remain unresolved.
- Senior leaders have only recently restructured the management of the college. The staff appointed to new roles are starting to implement strategies to improve the quality of provision. Performance management arrangements have been effective. The majority of poorly performing teachers and managers have left the college. However, leaders introduced these structural changes too slowly and there is therefore no discernible improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers have not ensured that the principles of the study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19 are met. For example, too few learners on vocational courses complete a work placement, and the quality of teaching and learning in both English and mathematics is inadequate.
- Senior leaders and managers do not make good use of data and information to improve the quality and effectiveness of provision. Their self-assessment of the provision is inaccurate and overly optimistic. Judgements on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment focus too heavily on what the teacher does and not on the impact this has on learners' progress.
- Managers do not analyse learners' progression when they leave college to evaluate the effectiveness of what they do to support learners into sustainable employment, further education or university. The college's curriculum offer only meets local and regional employment priorities in a minority of subject areas. In these cases subject leaders have established good links with local employers to help inform the courses offered; for example, in early years provision. Managers have increased the volume of courses in subjects including finance, accounting and creative media, which are priorities for the London Local Enterprise Partnership. However, the quality of provision on most of these courses is low.
- The very small quantity of subcontracted provision is managed well. College and subcontractor staff meet frequently to share good practice and monitor how much progress learners are making.
- **The governance of the college**
 - Governors have not been swift or effective enough in their interventions to improve the performance of the college. Managers provide governors with clear information about the performance of the college but governors have failed to hold senior leaders to account for the slow pace of improvement or to stem the decline in learners' progress and achievements.
 - Since the previous inspection, governors have established an additional scrutiny committee to monitor the implementation of the post-inspection action plan. Through this committee, they now have a better awareness of what needs to improve, but they have yet to challenge senior leaders to bring about the necessary improvements.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding**
 - Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Managers and teachers are aware of their responsibilities and they work closely together, and with external agencies, when they identify learners who may need help or who might be at risk of harm.
 - Managers keep thorough records of recruitment processes, during which they check that staff are eligible to work in this country, that they are appropriate people to work with learners, and that any gaps in employment history are checked.
 - Most learners know how to keep themselves safe in lessons, around the college and online. They are respectful of each other and of the different cultural backgrounds that they come from. Managers have successfully raised the awareness of staff and younger learners to the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. However, they have been too slow to do this for adult learners.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is inadequate

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate and this is reflected in the poor progress made by most learners.
- Leaders have made very recent changes to the management of teaching, learning and assessment, for example revising the quality assurance and management of study programmes, but these have yet to lead to improvement. Teachers do not challenge most learners to make sufficiently rapid progress towards their learning goals. There is better teaching, learning and assessment for adult learners and in a small minority of study programme lessons in subjects such as health and social care, early years,

science, sport, and information and communications technology.

- Teachers set learners very few useful or specific learning targets. There are too few examples of short- and medium-term learning targets being set in a timely manner to help learners focus on the things they need to do to improve. For example, there are almost no targets for developing learners' English, mathematical or work-related skills. As a result, learners make slow progress and teachers are unable to monitor their progress effectively.
- Too many lessons are uninspiring and lack sufficient pace or challenge to motivate learners to attend, work hard and make good progress. Most teachers do not use the information they have about learners' prior skills and knowledge effectively in lessons. As a result, they set tasks which are too easy for the most-able learners but which can be too difficult for those less able to understand and achieve. Conversely, learning support assistants help the very small number of learners with high needs very effectively and they achieve well.
- Learners receive detailed and constructive oral and written feedback about marked work. Work is now marked regularly and teachers routinely correct spelling and grammatical mistakes and provide feedback to help learners to improve their written English. Learners also benefit from good information, advice and guidance during their courses that helps them to make decisions about their next steps. Learner services' staff provide very good welfare support to learners to help them overcome some of the difficulties that they face in their local communities.
- Teachers do not assess learners' progress sufficiently well during lessons. Too few teachers check carefully that all learners have a good enough understanding of one topic before moving on to the next.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is inadequate

- Attendance at lessons by learners aged 16 to 19 remains far too low and they are too often late. Learners maintain these poor attitudes to learning because teachers do not challenge them well enough. Learners who do attend on time have their learning disrupted by the late arrival or absence of other learners.
- Learners do not develop quickly enough the English and mathematics skills that they require for employment or higher levels of study. Too frequently, either teachers do not ensure that learners understand how important these skills are, or the quality of teaching is poor.
- The number of learners on vocational courses who benefit from work placements is too low, particularly for those studying at level 2 and below. Those learners who do complete work placements do not have sufficient opportunity to reflect upon the value of their experience, how it improved their understanding of the world of work, or how they might develop their readiness for employment.
- The behaviour of learners around the campus and in their social and work areas is good. They demonstrate high levels of respect for their peers and teachers.
- Although learners aged 16 to 19 attend lessons where they work on their own, aimed at improving their study skills, they do not understand well enough why they are doing these activities and therefore the impact and benefit are limited. Learners do not reflect on how well they develop their ability to work and learn without help from their teachers, or on what they can do to improve these skills.
- Learners aged 16 to 19 have a good awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and know how to stay safe, both in their communities and online. However, adult learners do not have sufficient awareness of these matters and this requires rapid improvement.
- Learners aged 16 to 19 benefit from a wide range of stimulating and worthwhile work-related, tutorial and enrichment activities. These help them, for example, to prepare well for their next steps, to develop a wider interest in the world around them and to understand how to lead a safe and healthy life.

Outcomes for learners

are inadequate

- The proportion of learners who successfully complete their main qualifications has declined since the previous inspection and is low. The large majority of learners do not make enough progress. As a result, the proportion of learners continuing to a higher level of study at the college is also low.
- For learners who need to improve their skills in English and/or mathematics, options for progression into work or further study are severely limited because far too many of them do not achieve qualifications in these subjects.
- The overall achievement rate for level 3 learners has improved, but it remains below the national rate. Of those who do achieve, too few gain the higher grades that they should based upon their starting points. Although in previous years adult learners did not achieve well enough, in the current year they are making better progress.

- The standard of learners' work too frequently demonstrates insufficient progress since the start of their courses. They do not gain skills quickly enough in their vocational lessons.
- Both the progress and achievement rates of different groups of learners vary too much. For example, male learners make less progress than female learners and disabled learners, and those with learning difficulties achieve less well than their peers.
- The achievement rate of learners on level 2 courses remains too low, and is well below that for learners on level 3 courses. Learners taking courses in a small minority of subjects achieve well; for example in sport, social sciences and humanities. However, in the majority of subject areas, achievement rates require rapid improvement.
- Too few of the very small number of apprentices complete their training. In the previous year, none achieved by their planned end date, frequently because they did not pass their functional skills qualifications.
- Most learners who do achieve go on to further study or employment. The large majority of learners successfully completing level 3 courses secure a university place. A high proportion of the rest gain employment or continue with further education or training at other colleges.

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 are business studies, science, health and social care, early years and sport. There are currently around 1,250 learners on 16 to 19 study programmes.
- Managers and teachers do not take enough responsibility for ensuring that learners benefit from all components of their study programmes. As a result, learners do not receive a tailored programme adapted to their particular needs and starting points, and the majority make inadequate progress.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment overall is inadequate. In too many lessons, teachers do not plan well enough to ensure that learners of all abilities are challenged appropriately with inspiring subject content. In sport and care sessions, teaching is better. In these subjects, teachers use questioning well to check learning, engender debate and build on learners' prior knowledge.
- Too few learners benefit from work placements, particularly at level 2 and below where preparation for work should be a central component of study programmes. Learners lack experience of the workplace in their chosen field and do not have a good enough understanding of employers' expectations in respect of their attitudes to work.
- Too few learners improve their English and mathematics quickly enough. The large majority do not achieve the qualifications that they need to progress, and most teachers are not skilled at helping learners develop the essential English and mathematics skills relevant to their subjects.
- Target setting is weak. Learners do not benefit from challenging targets in each of the key components of their study programmes. As a result, the progress that most learners make from their starting point is slow and they do not know how to improve.
- Staff provide impartial careers advice and guidance to learners so that the majority have clear and realistic plans for further education, university or employment, but these plans are not always ambitious enough. Too few learners progress to higher levels of study at the college. Teachers provide a wide range of enrichment activities that help to develop the skills that learners require for their next steps.

Adult learning programmes

require improvement

- At the time of inspection, adult learners make up around one third of the total number of learners; most take part-time courses, in particular in English and mathematics, to help them prepare for, and gain, employment. Jobcentre Plus refers many of these learners to the college. A small minority of learners take full-time courses; for example, access to higher education, or A-level and vocational qualifications, alongside learners aged 16 to 19.
- The proportion of learners achieving their qualifications has remained too low across the past three years. However, because of recent improvements in the management and quality of teaching, learning and assessment in this area, learners are now making better progress towards achieving their qualifications.
- Most learners display high levels of commitment and motivation. Teachers set high standards and challenge poor attendance and punctuality; as a result, the large majority of learners attend regularly and punctually. Learners behave well and treat others with respect.

- A minority of teachers do not plan and implement sufficiently challenging learning activities because they do not make good use of the information they have about learners' existing knowledge and skills. This results in learners not making enough progress.
- Teachers provide detailed and constructive written feedback on learners' work, which enables learners to improve next time. However, teachers do not routinely set and monitor targets that will help learners to achieve their qualifications and develop the specific skills they need.
- Learners who successfully complete their qualifications progress well into employment or to higher levels of education. Teachers give learners good advice and guidance to support them in planning their next steps. Learners benefit from opportunities to share and learn from each other. This helps them to, for example, become better prepared for interviews or to have a better understanding of the requirements of the workplace. Teachers help learners to develop their personal and social skills well.

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	3,575
Principal/CEO	Jacqui Mace
Website address	www.stanmore.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)	101	278	223	277	868	187	0	76
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	0	0	0	9	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let Me Play 							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Stewart Jackson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Pemble	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Shackleton	Her Majesty's Inspector
Asfa Sohail	Ofsted Inspector
David Baber	Ofsted Inspector
Kanwaljit Dhillon	Ofsted Inspector
Sarbdip Noonan	Ofsted Inspector

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

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