

# Worthing College

General further education college

## Inspection dates

22–25 February 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Managers maintain strong links with partners and collaborate effectively to ensure that students benefit from a broad curriculum with clear routes to progress further.
- Curriculum management is effective in most subject areas.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good.
- AS- and A-level students develop good independent study skills.
- Apprenticeship achievement rates are high.
- Success rates on 16 to 19 study programmes have significantly improved and are now high.
- The large majority of students make good progress in comparison with their starting points.
- Students enjoy college life; they work hard, are respectful and behave well.
- Students at risk of early withdrawal or of not making the progress expected of them are supported very well and most achieve.

### It is not yet an outstanding provider

- Governors and senior leaders have yet to communicate fully a clear college vision that is understood, shared and realised by all staff.
- A minority of A-level students do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Not enough students on mathematics GCSE courses achieve grade C or above.

# Full report

## Information about the provider

- Worthing College is a designated general further education college in Worthing, West Sussex, but has many of the characteristics of a sixth form college. Worthing has five schools for 11–16-year-olds, from which Worthing College recruits most of its students. The vast majority of students are on 16 to 19 study programmes at level 3, and a few students are on apprenticeship programmes.
- The proportion of pupils from Worthing schools attaining five GCSEs at grade A\* to C, including mathematics and English, is below the regional and national rates. The unemployment rate in Worthing is similar to that of south east England and below the rate nationally.

## What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Governors and senior leaders need to establish and communicate effectively a shared vision that motivates all staff to join in creating a consistently high-achieving culture that benefits students.
- Managers should ensure that the improved focus on developing students' English and mathematics skills results in more students achieving well in their GCSE mathematics examinations.
- Managers and teachers should ensure that all A-level students make the progress, and achieve the highest qualification grades, of which they are capable.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Following three consecutive inspections at which the college was judged to be less than good, leaders and managers have shown determination to bring about improvement, and a shift towards a culture of high expectations is discernible. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved sufficiently to ensure that the vast majority of students achieve their qualifications, and a large majority make good progress from their starting points. Although senior leaders and governors are clear about their vision for the college, they have been less successful in communicating this to staff.
- Managers at all levels have taken effective action to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are now consistently good. Poorly performing teachers have either improved or left the college. Managers' expectations of what constitutes effective teaching are now widely shared with staff and implemented. For example, the introduction of clear guidelines to ensure that academic students carry out significant independent study has had a positive impact, as have significant improvements in the rigour of assessment and feedback.
- Performance management of teachers and managers is rigorous and comprehensive and takes into account students' results and progress. Leaders and managers evaluate the quality of provision carefully, and set out clear areas for improvement. Managers' assessments of the quality of teaching are broadly accurate, but do not always focus on the progress that students make during lessons. Arrangements for supporting teachers to improve their teaching are good.
- In most subject areas, curriculum managers promote high standards of teaching and learning and their day-to-day management is effective. Team work is very strong in a significant minority of areas. A minority of curriculum managers are less adept at using data and other sources of information to identify what, and how, improvements are to be made. Apprenticeship provision is managed well.
- Managers have implemented most aspects of 16 to 19 study programmes well. For example, a strong focus on improving students' mathematics and English skills, combined with an emphasis on developing good study and work habits, is preparing them well for their futures.
- The development of the college's curriculum, and partnership and collaborative work, remain strengths. Managers respond to a range of local and regional priorities to ensure that students and apprentices take vocational courses that have clear progression routes in to work or further training. The range of academic and vocational courses is wide. Planned growth in apprenticeship provision is designed to improve links with employers and takes good account of the local labour market.
- The culture of the college is inclusive; leaders, managers and staff promote equality of opportunity well. Pastoral support for vulnerable students is good. Displays around the college promote British values well, although discussions with students around such issues tend to feature more in humanities, English and

social sciences than in other subjects.

#### ■ **The governance of the provider**

- Governors have a diverse range of specialisms, and many are relatively recent in post. The rejuvenation of the corporation is beginning to give governors a sharper focus on what really matters, although not all governors have an astute understanding of the strategic issues facing the college. Minutes of meetings reflect thoughtful consideration of several key matters.
- Governors have a good understanding of the main features of the college's educational and financial performance. In a few key respects, however, they have been less effective in holding leaders to account. For example, they have not ensured that leaders' vision for the college is clearly articulated and shared.

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

- Safeguarding arrangements are well established and effective. Managers responsible for overseeing the college's statutory duty for safeguarding keep detailed records and monitor these thoroughly. Students are particularly well supported throughout any personal difficulties and referrals and communications with specialist agencies are managed well. Staff pay particularly good attention to students in care. Throughout the college, students benefit from the effective promotion of healthy living and staying safe. However, the reporting to governors of the impact of safeguarding for those students in receipt of support does not include how many achieve their qualifications, the reasons for those who are unsuccessful or where these students progress to.
- Leaders and managers have taken their responsibility to respond to the 'Prevent' duty seriously, and comprehensive training for staff and governors has been effective in raising awareness of the issues. Most students have a clear understanding of the risks posed by those who seek to promote extremist views.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has steadily improved over time and is now good. A range of effective strategies implemented at the time of the last inspection have led to even more students making good progress and achieving their qualifications. Most students enjoy their lessons and are actively engaged in developing the skills required to succeed.
- In the large majority of subjects, enthusiastic teachers use their specialist vocational experience and good industry links very well to teach interesting lessons. The majority of students are well motivated and develop their subject knowledge beyond that required by the qualification. Most teachers successfully create and select stimulating learning resources and activities to engage and challenge their students. For example, in A-level English language and literature students participated well with a domino wheel activity which developed their technical understanding of linguistic terms and definitions.
- Teachers on academic programmes have successfully developed and introduced independent study packs to extend student learning beyond the classroom. Students value the opportunities to complete the study packs and they further develop their independent learning skills through a useful range of planned activities, including extra reading, website links to relevant videos, and reading and writing exercises.
- In a minority of subjects, teachers do not adequately plan to ensure that teaching supports and challenges both the most- and least-able students or, when assessing learning in lessons, teachers too often accept perfunctory student responses that fail to sufficiently confirm or extend learning.
- Since the previous inspection the rigour of assessment and constructive feedback to students have improved and are key features of the increase in student achievements. Teachers and assessors track student progress thoroughly. Students on 16 to 19 study programmes have a clear understanding of what they need to do to achieve higher grades than those initially predicated at the start of their course. Teachers have a comprehensive overview of student progress and use this knowledge effectively to plan examination revision. Apprentices receive good verbal feedback from employers on their progress at work and assessors ensure that apprentices know what course work and assessments need to be completed next.
- Teachers of 16 to 19 study programmes communicate frequently and effectively with parents. Parents events are well attended and staff provide constructive advice on ways students can improve grades and plan for their next steps.
- Support for students at risk of not making the progress expected of them or those displaying signs of early withdrawal is good. Tutors monitor improvements closely and liaise well with teachers to minimise barriers to student achievement. Support arrangements for students not at risk are less formal and access to support relies on student self-referral.

- Most 16 to 19 study programme teachers use mathematics and English activities to develop their students' skills further. For example, in an A-level history class students' numerical skills were developed through plotting a line graph to establish the link between unemployment and voting patterns in Nazi Germany. In the same lesson, teachers extended students' vocabulary through the use of key words of the day. However, this approach is not as well developed for apprentices. Too many teachers and assessors fail to use the assessment results of mathematics and English carried out at the start of an apprentice's programme to fully recognise their starting points and effectively plan learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**are good**

- Students enjoy college life. Most are confident, self-assured, hardworking and well behaved in, and out, of lessons. Since the previous inspection, attendance has continued to improve with the vast majority of students attending regularly. Punctuality to lessons is good and students are fully prepared for learning and respond well to teacher instructions and new classroom activities. Students take pride in their work and endeavour to make the best progress of which they are capable.
- Students are safe and feel safe. Teachers and staff promote a harmonious learning environment in which students thrive. The development of students' personal and social skills is enhanced through the careful and considerate promotion by staff of mutual respect throughout the college. Managers quickly and effectively resolve the very few reported episodes of bullying.
- Learning and pastoral support from teachers and tutors are effective and ensure that most students become more confident, stay on programme and further improve on their own learning capabilities. Students develop a productive work ethic to achieve grades higher than those expected related to their starting points. Since the previous inspection, the development of students' mathematics and English skills has much improved. However, this has not yet translated into consistently high success rates.
- All students on 16 to 19 study programmes improve their employability skills through the use of a broad range of in-class and external activities. Vocational students further develop their understanding of the world of work through well-planned work experience.
- Apprentices quickly acquire the necessary technical skills required to work effectively. They develop the confidence to work independently, or as a member of the workforce, and use their initiative and communication skills well in varied client situations. Progression rates into employment and further education are high.
- The majority of students considering higher education as part of their next step effectively use the helpful advice and guidance from college staff and external sources, with most receiving an offer of a place from their first choice. The majority of students looking to progress into employment benefit from a wide range of events that help them make informed choices. However, individual careers interviews do not always take place at a suitable time in order to give students sufficient opportunity to plan their next step.

## **Outcomes for learners**

**are good**

- The proportion of students who complete and achieve their qualifications improved significantly in 2014/15 and is now above the high rate for sixth form colleges nationally. Most students take courses at level 3, with many taking a mixture of vocational and academic qualifications. Student success on AS-level courses, a significant weakness at the previous inspection, has improved significantly and is now good. On A-level courses, and level 3 vocational courses, high success rates have been sustained. The much smaller number of students taking vocational courses at level 2 achieve well. Success rates for apprentices are high.
- Most students now make good progress given their starting points, although in 2014/15 not enough students achieved the grades that they were capable of on full A-level courses. Current students are making good progress.
- Although students on most courses achieve well and make good progress, in a small minority of subjects, including English language, geography, health and social care, and physics, students' progress has been weak for a number of years. By contrast, students in subjects such as sports studies and law achieve particularly well. Current students are making good progress in most subjects. No significant gaps in achievement exist between students from different social, gender or ethnic groups.
- Results in English GCSE are good, with most students who arrive at college with a grade D achieving at least a grade C. However, in mathematics students are less successful. For the relatively small number of

students taking functional skills qualifications, results are not good enough. A strong focus on helping current students to improve their English and mathematics through work in their main vocational or academic course is having a positive impact. For example, many students are improving their calculation skills and taking more care to write and speak using accurate English.

- The standard of most students' work is good. In some instances, for example in economics and law, students work at a particularly high level and discuss sophisticated ideas and concepts. In a minority of subjects, however, teachers settle for the minimum expectations of the subject specification and do not encourage students to develop high-level skills and understanding. As a consequence, although these students achieve their qualifications they do not fulfil their potential.
- Most students are prepared well for their next steps, and a high proportion of those who complete their studies progress to higher education, further training or employment. An increasing proportion of students succeed in moving to university courses of their choice.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### are good

- The college has approximately 1,600 students on study programmes in 12 subject areas. The largest subject areas are science and mathematics; arts, media and publishing; and business, administration and law. Most students study at level 3 and follow programmes that are either academic, vocational or a combination of both.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers set high expectations and students make good progress. Teachers provide interesting and challenging work both in, and out, of lessons. Independent study packs for academic students effectively support the development of students' subject knowledge and independent research skills. Teachers encourage students to explore ideas in depth, assess each student's progress carefully, and set high expectations for the standard of their work. Teachers promote a supportive and caring environment and sensitively manage student support needs in the classroom. Students recognise and value the support they receive.
- Students develop very good practical skills, particularly in art, sport and science. Students work well together in pairs and small groups to raise their understanding. They progress particularly well when supporting and evaluating each other's work. In many practical workshops, such as electronics, staff carefully coach and help most-able students to act as subject mentors for those less experienced. This improves the understanding of advanced students in their management and supervisory skills and helps less experienced students to make better progress in their skills development.
- The majority of teachers use information and communications technology (ICT) very effectively to support teaching, learning and assessment. Students make interesting presentations using a range of electronic resources, such as mobile phones, tablet computers and social media to capture their work, record their progress and receive feedback.
- The majority of teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check that students fully understand topics and are able to use the skills or knowledge gained before moving onto the next stage of learning. In too many vocational sessions, teachers allow students to use lesson time to complete course assignments or exam preparation. When setting targets, teachers have a tendency to focus on the course requirements and generally fail to identify students' knowledge and skills development.
- Staff provide a comprehensive programme of additional activities that supports the development of students' personal, social and employability skills well. Students benefit from a good range of events in the form of clubs, societies, external specialists and work-related activities relevant to their next steps. For example, sport students develop their employability skills through voluntary activities providing sports coaching in schools and art and design students complete commissions such as the production of videos to raise awareness of social issues.
- Support and intervention strategies for students at risk of early withdrawal or not making the progress expected of them are effective. These students are able to access additional support workshops which enable them to catch up on missed work or to improve their exam results. However, the tutorial system does not provide sufficient support for students not identified as being at risk.
- Students behave well and respect one another. Their understanding of effective working relationships and safe working practices are good. Students feel safe at college and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe at college, online and in their daily lives.

- There are currently 71 apprentices enrolled on a range of vocational apprenticeship pathways. The largest apprenticeship programme is sport and leisure, with smaller numbers in business administration and supporting teaching and learning. Two thirds of apprentices are 16 to 18 years of age. The college works with one subcontractor who currently has seven apprentices on programme.
- Apprenticeship success rates are high; the vast majority of apprentices gain full time employment on completing their apprenticeship or continue their education further. Apprentices make good progress in developing their vocational and personal skills. They perform well in their job roles, taking on additional tasks and responsibilities. Employers speak very highly of their apprentices who demonstrate a professional attitude to their job roles and become valued employees. For example, one apprentice has been given specific responsibility for a project to support disadvantaged people in the community and another has progressed to a duty manager role while working towards higher-level qualifications.
- Workplace staff and managers provide very effective on-the-job training. Apprentices receive good coaching, mentoring and support to develop job-related skills such as reception, customer service and the setting-up of events. Employers also provide apprentices with job-related additional qualifications, such as first aid and lifeguarding. College staff ensure that apprentices receive good initial induction and job-related training. For example, apprentices learning to support teaching and learning receive very effective training in classroom behaviour management. Apprentices receive effective information, advice and guidance to support their progression to employment or further learning.
- Apprentices enjoy their programme, are well motivated and are committed to progress and achieve. Assessors support apprentices' learning well through effective signposting to relevant learning resources and websites during their frequent visits to the workplace. Apprentices have a clear understanding of what work they need to complete next as a result of the feedback they receive from assessors.
- Apprentices feel safe, understand safe working practices well and demonstrate a good understanding of equality and diversity and how it impacts in their workplace. For example, an apprentice working at a leisure centre demonstrates a good understanding of the needs of deaf customers by writing down information, where necessary, rather than giving it verbally.
- Although college staff and employers plan well to ensure that apprentices' programmes are suitably tailored to meet their needs, a few aspects of planning apprentices' learning require improvement. For example, a few apprentices recently failed their ICT functional skills examination because they did not have sufficient understanding of spreadsheets. When reviewing apprentices' progress, assessors do not always take sufficient account of how apprentices can further develop their understanding and skills beyond the requirements of their qualification.



## 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	1,627
Principal/CEO	Mr P Corrigan
Website address	<a href="http://www.worthing.ac.uk">www.worthing.ac.uk</a>

## 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+
	22	6	125	24	1,414	36	0	0
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	15	13	31	12	0	0		
	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
	0							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractor:	<div>■ Albion in the Community</div>							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Richard Beaumont, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alan Hinchliffe	Her Majesty's Inspector
Cheryl Pennington	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Adkins	Ofsted Inspector
Carolyn Brownsea	Ofsted Inspector
Jo-Ann Henderson	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Smith	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the assistant 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 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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