

Hackney Community College

General further education college

Inspection dates

29 September – 2 October 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	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Require improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Teaching and learning very strongly promote skills development; for example, self-confidence and self-esteem, understanding of the work environment and the importance of English and mathematics skills.
- Learners' achievements on the majority of courses are high; attendance and punctuality are very good.
- Learners eligible for high-needs funding make very good progress into work and lead productive lives in their own communities.
- Learners' behaviour at the college is exceptionally good and staff at all levels are skilful at managing and promoting good behaviour.
- Careers advice and guidance are highly effective; teachers plan learning well to meet the career aims and aspirations of learners.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have successfully focused on precise improvement actions and outcomes for learners and teaching, learning and assessment are now good.
- Leaders and managers have secured an excellent learning environment for learners.
- Learners benefit substantially from the college's outstanding partnerships and are well prepared for employment and their next steps in life.

This is not yet an outstanding provider

- Not all learners make good progress in their English and mathematics qualifications.
- Apprentices, while developing good skills for employment, make slow progress in completing their qualification.
- Not all reviews of apprentices' progress cover safeguarding in sufficient detail.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Hackney Community College is a large general further education college with one main site in the London Borough of Hackney. The college offers provision in 14 of the 15 subject areas of learning and has a substantial apprenticeship contract.
- Around 6,000 learners study at the college; of these 1,200 are full time aged 16 to 19, 3,982 are adult learners, mostly on part-time courses, and 1,080 are apprentices. The college also offers discrete study programme provision within the community for 198 Orthodox Jewish girls. Most learners come from the 10% most disadvantaged wards in the country and unemployment is above the London and national averages. Approximately half the learners aged 16 to 19 join the college without a GCSE grade C or above in English and mathematics.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen managers' and teachers' accountability for further improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Ensure that all teachers set sufficiently demanding work for learners and check learners' understanding well before moving to the next learning outcome.
- Use information on learners' starting points to plan all aspects of individual programmes of learning thoroughly; ensure that teachers and assessors provide ample opportunity for all learners to develop and improve their mathematics and English skills.
- Ensure that all apprentices know how to keep themselves safe in the workplace and when online.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- In the relatively short period since the previous inspection, managers have improved the quality of provision for learners and their outcomes, both of which are now good. At the same time they have ensured that the college's extensive and inclusive provision, with its excellent learning environment, can be maintained over time, in a period of significant budget reductions within the further education sector.
- The college's collaboration with a vast array of local partners, noted as outstanding at the previous inspection, continues. Managers and staff make full use of the partnerships, including those, for example, with employers and local voluntary organisations, to enrich the quality of learners' programmes and to introduce them to the world of work. The college is a key partner for the London Borough of Hackney, working at both strategic and operational levels to improve opportunities for learners and employers.
- Leaders and managers have responded well to the priorities for improvement set out at the previous inspection. They have continued to develop strong, quality improvement arrangements and have successfully improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers' accurate judgements on the quality of lessons, from the college's own observation scheme, have contributed to improvement. Rigorous tackling of poor performance, accompanied by very effective professional development, is helping less effective teachers improve.
- Managers' and staff's evaluation of the college's strengths and weaknesses has improved since the previous inspection. Action plans for improvement now relate proposed actions to the required impact on learners; this was a weakness at the previous inspection. Managers make increasingly good use of data to help sharpen judgements and to determine progress against targets.
- Leaders and managers ensure that all learners receive good, impartial careers guidance across the range of types of provision. Learners on study programmes have individual career plans and receive good careers education and individual guidance.
- Leaders and managers pay particularly good attention to matching the curriculum to the needs of learners and employers. Employers are closely involved in the college's work to help develop learners' skills for employment, including the provision of work experience. Leaders and managers ensure that their strategic priority – to help learners develop their English and mathematics skills – effectively shapes study programmes and other types of provision.
- Learners are very well prepared for life in modern Britain, including Hackney and their wider local environment. The development of learners' understanding of fundamental British values is skilfully integrated into their courses and wider life at college.
- The operational management of apprenticeship provision, although improving, is not consistently good. The success of learners within agreed timescales is low and aspects of weaker management of training lead to less effective reviews of apprentices' learning, slowing their overall progress.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Governors have a good understanding of what the college needs to do to improve and they work closely with college managers to secure improvement. Governors have heightened their challenge to senior managers, not only in respect of the quality of provision, but also in relation to the scope of the curriculum. For example, they have been pivotal in decisions to close underperforming programmes.
 - Governors have an excellent understanding of the needs of the local communities and ensure that their community college successfully provides for these and for regional and national priorities.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Managers work closely to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are seamlessly integrated into the work and lives of learners and staff.
 - Most learners, with the exception of a small minority of apprentices, understand well that college staff are all dedicated to keeping them safe. Learners' and staff's understanding of safeguarding, reinforced by frequent training, leads to prompt identification of issues and their swift resolution.
 - The college's security staff work particularly well to identify and report safeguarding concerns. Managers work extremely effectively with external agencies, making good use of their expertise and counsel to ensure the safety of learners.
 - The college carries out comprehensive recruitment checks on staff and keeps thorough and up-to-date records. Appropriate checks are carried out for the staff of subcontractors.
 - Leaders and managers ensure that the college complies with the Prevent duty. Particularly thorough arrangements are in place to identify any threats of radicalisation and to tackle these quickly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are now good across all provision types with the exception of apprenticeship learning. Teaching is very effective in performing arts, information and communication technology (ICT) and motor vehicle.
- Teachers and staff set high standards for learners. They demand high-quality work and respectful behaviour and expect learners to work collaboratively together to solve problems and evaluate their own and each other's learning. Learners respond purposefully to this approach and work hard to succeed in their learning. For example, in a business lesson, learners worked well together on a product brief from a local digital employer to develop a new phone application to help with exam revision. Learners worked initially on individual ideas in small groups under strict time constraints before coming together to present and critique each other's ideas. They then selected one idea to develop fully for the employer.
- Teachers are skilful at using everyday opportunities to develop learners' good understanding of the diverse communities in which they live and will work. They use the diversity of learners within classes to explore learners' perceptions and celebrate difference. For example, in a lesson on nutrition, the teacher expanded a discussion on the merits of soft cheese in the diet to explore the use and varieties of cheese found in the diets and cultures of the learners present.
- Teachers work closely with additional specialist staff to plan learning well and to ensure that learners are making good progress. A small minority of teachers do not use the available information on learners' starting points and their subsequent progress well enough to set sufficiently demanding targets for learning.
- Learners make good progress in their studies and most teachers carefully monitor learners' understanding and skills development. Effective verbal and written feedback ensures that learners understand what they need to do to improve further. However, a minority of teachers fail to adequately plan for learners to deepen and extend their learning and do not always establish what a learner can or cannot do before progressing to the next activity.
- Staff at all levels place a strong emphasis on the value of learners developing good-quality English and mathematics skills. The majority of staff are now skilled at planning learning to include English and mathematics in subject-learning and are able to make explicit to learners what skills they are developing and practising. For example, in a performing arts lesson, a word game was used to give learners a good understanding of the role of punctuation to convey feelings and emotions in a monologue. Learners then demonstrated their understanding using their own examples with their peers.
- Assessment of learners' skills in English and mathematics at the start of their programme of study is very thorough. However, for a few learners aged 16 to 19, delays in placing them on the correct level at the start of their programme have resulted in them making slow progress in commencing their studies.
- Most apprentices work with employers who are committed to providing good-quality training. Learners make good progress in developing good job-related skills while at work and the majority complete their apprenticeship programme. However, a minority of assessors do not always use the results of the assessment of learners' English, mathematics and vocational skills effectively at the start of their programme to plan learning. Reviews of learners' progress for a few learners do not cover safeguarding in sufficient detail.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

- Learners' attendance at college, their punctuality and readiness to learn – a weakness at the previous inspection – have improved dramatically; attendance is very high and punctuality is good. Teachers monitor attendance well and challenge any lateness appropriately.
- Learners' behaviour at the college is exceptionally good. Staff at all levels are highly skilled in modelling and managing good behaviour and, as a result, learners demonstrate high levels of respect for staff and peers. The exceedingly effective 'restorative justice' approach to conflict resolution complements the college disciplinary process well. As a result, learners develop very good strategies for managing and dealing with conflict; they adopt and share these strategies within their own families and communities.
- Learners have a positive attitude to learning. Much discussion by learners in class and around the college focuses on learning and improving the standard of their own and each other's work. Peer-to-peer mentoring and learners helping each other to succeed in their studies are strong features of life at

Hackney Community College.

- Learners have a good understanding and knowledge of how to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Sporting facilities at the college are excellent and well used by large numbers of learners, including those with high needs, alongside the general public. Learners make good use of the many recreational spaces available to them to relax and socialise.
- Careers advice and guidance is highly effective. Teachers plan learning with a clear line of sight to developing individual learners' career goals and aspirations, promoting and reinforcing well the expectations and standards of employers. Learners have a good understanding of how their learning links to their next steps into employment and a career in their chosen subject discipline.
- Learners develop high levels of confidence and good skills for employment through well-planned enrichment activities. Managers and staff work closely with employers to offer taster days and visits to employers, seminars and guest speakers, which promote learners' understanding of enterprise and develop their employment skills in team-working, presentation skills and problem-solving well.
- Most learners know how to keep themselves and each other safe and are able to demonstrate a good understanding of online safety when using social media and working online. Learners, with the exception of a few apprentices, articulate well the potential dangers of internet grooming, cyberbullying and radicalisation.

Outcomes for learners

are good

- The majority of learners achieve their programme of learning successfully and many achieve above the level of learners at similar providers. Many more learners now gain their qualifications at levels 1 and 2, a significant weakness at the previous inspection. However, learners in a small proportion of subjects continue to underperform, notably at A level and in level 1 English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).
- Teachers have established a strong ethos of learning for work and they prepare learners well for their next steps in learning and employment. Learners enjoy their studies, particularly the time spent on practical activities and problem-solving. On completing their programme, most progress to further learning or education. A significant minority apply to, and achieve, a place at university.
- Learners make good progress in their studies, often from a very low starting point or with a limited formal education prior to starting at the college. Care leavers, learners in the care of local authorities and those learners previously not in education or training do very well; most progress to further training or an apprenticeship.
- The very high proportion of learners in receipt of high-needs funding achieve their qualification aims successfully. As a result of their studies, learners make very good progress towards completing challenging learning goals, gaining paid employment and/or living independent lives within their community.
- The college partnership with Jobcentre Plus is particularly fruitful in ensuring that local long-term unemployed adults are prepared well for sustainable work; a very high number of learners find and remain in work on completing their programme.
- Many more learners now work towards completing a qualification in functional English and mathematics; however, managers and teachers have not yet been successful in ensuring that all learners make good progress in achieving their intended qualifications within the planned timescale. The proportion of learners achieving a pass grade A* to C in GCSE English and mathematics remains high, although young learners continue to outperform their adult peers.
- Apprentices' success rates have varied too much over the past three years and too few achieve their qualification within the time planned. Although the progress of current learners remains slow, a significant minority are making good progress.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The college provides one-year study programmes in 14 of the 15 subject areas. The largest areas are preparation for life and work, business administration, construction, and information and communication technology (ICT). Currently 1,200 learners are on 16 to 19 study programmes.

- Teachers provide good opportunities for learners to apply their mathematics and English skills to their vocational learning. For example, in plumbing, learners calculated the price of the tools and materials they require for each job they are going to work on, calculating the 20% tax, while building a 10% wastage allowance into their final estimate for a customer. In a sports lesson, learners made good progress in developing their narrative skills by analysing sports footage from the Olympic Games and identifying key aspects of effective sports commentary.
- Learners receive good careers education and individual guidance to help them plan their next steps into further training, employment or university. The majority of learners now complete their programme of study successfully and most make good progress to higher levels of study or employment. A small but increasing number are successful in gaining places at prestigious universities.
- Teachers from a wide range of subjects use their subject knowledge and experience of employment very well to make learning interesting and relevant. However, in a small minority of classes, teachers do not set work that is sufficiently demanding for all learners; as a consequence, a minority are bored.
- Managers have successfully implemented the study programme requirements to ensure that most learners receive a balanced programme. However, a minority of learners on level 1 and level 2 programmes do not benefit from sufficient opportunities for structured work experience.

Adult learning programmes

are good

- Adult learners account for 69% of the total number of learners; most are studying part-time programmes across all subject areas. Approximately 600 learners a year are referred by Jobcentre Plus to attend short employment programmes.
- Managers use their wide-ranging links with employers and very good up-to-date labour market information to ensure that the programmes offered provide learners with relevant qualifications to improve their employment prospects. Teachers focus effectively on developing good English language skills, for example through correcting pronunciation, spelling and grammar and clearly explaining specialist vocational language.
- Learners develop good practical skills that prepare them well for employment and their chosen career. Excellent workshop facilities, for example an automated vehicle testing centre and training restaurant, both open to the public, and specialist roofing equipment for asphalt flat roofing, enable learners to practise and hone their skills to a very high standard. Motor vehicle learners correctly diagnose and correct vehicle engine faults; learners working towards asphalt mastic qualifications produce their own good-quality specialist tools to trim and apply asphalt to flat roofs.
- Learners work well together; they progress particularly effectively when supporting and evaluating each other's work. In many practical workshops, staff carefully coach and help more-advanced learners to act as subject mentors for those less experienced. This improves the confidence of advanced learners in their management and supervisory skills and helps less-experienced learners to make good progress in their skills development.
- Learners achieve well; most gain their qualification and progress to further study, employment or volunteering opportunities in the local community. The proportion of adult learners who successfully achieve GCSE A* to C grade is very high. Learners who take short courses to help them gain the employment skills to make them work-ready, for example in customer service, digital skills and preparing to work in adult social care, are highly successful in gaining employment.

Apprenticeships

require improvement

- In 10 subject areas, including health and social care, business administration and construction, 1,080 apprentices are working towards completing an apprenticeship framework. Of these, 405 are advanced apprentices.
- Most employers provide helpful guidance to learners while in the workplace, and vocationally skilled college assessors coach learners effectively to develop and improve their job-related skills. However, not all assessors plan learning or review ongoing learning well enough to ensure that all learners make good progress in completing all elements of their apprenticeship within the planned timescale.
- All learners feel, and are, safe while in learning. However, the ongoing reviews of learners' progress for a few learners do not cover safeguarding in sufficient detail; not all assessors routinely check learners'

understanding of key issues such as personal and online safety at progress reviews.

- Assessors do not always enable all learners to make good progress in developing their English and mathematics skills. They do not plan to further develop the skills of those learners who already possess a GCSE grade A* to C or help those learners working towards their qualification to work on specific tasks that focus on improving their weaker skills areas.
- Managers and staff use the knowledge gained from their very broad range of partnerships to plan effectively good-quality apprenticeships that meet local business needs particularly well; for example, programmes for craft brewing and digital media. Managers have built on the legacy of the Olympic Games well by providing apprenticeships in crowd management and large-event security.
- Learners make good progress in developing good work-related skills, such as providing good customer service, using a wide range of software efficiently and handling and dispensing medication kindly to elderly patients. They develop good interpersonal skills, and become more confident in their ability to do their job well.

Provision for learners with high needs

is good

- The college has significantly increased its provision for high-needs learners and currently has 90 learners from seven local authorities on discrete programmes. A further 30 learners in receipt of high-needs funding with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and/or medical conditions are on mainstream programmes across the college.
- Managers' high expectations for learners ensure that they participate well in a rich and varied learning experience. For example, learners on a Hackney Junior Citizenship Scheme gain skills, confidence and a greater sense of self-worth by working as a team on basic first aid, identifying fire risks at home and travelling independently on buses and trains. Other learners recently took part in a collaborative art project with the Barbican Centre, which has published learners' photographs and thoughts about art photography in a glossy 'coffee table'-style book.
- Assessment for learners is good; an integrated team of specialist speech and language therapists, teachers and staff develop high-quality, individual programmes focused effectively on learners' greatest needs.
- Managers have developed very good links with local employers and voluntary organisations who provide good opportunities for supported work experience. Learners benefit from well-qualified job coaches who ensure that they are able to sustain their job placements successfully and improve their work skills, standards of behaviour and confidence.
- Staff manage the learners' transition from school to college and on to further learning and employment very well. Learners make good progress in completing their programmes of learning; most progress to vocational training, apprenticeships or employment and become active members of their own communities and interest groups. Teachers integrate English and mathematical skills effectively into all learning activities.
- Learners develop good speaking, listening and number skills which they practise through varied activities, such as shopping in the local community, preparing meals or in responding to sensory music and drama experiences. However, staff do not always focus well enough on developing learners' writing and reading skills, resulting in too few learners gaining formal qualifications in English and too many learners over-relying on support from staff to read and write for them.

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	6,198
Principal/CEO	Ian Ashman
Website address	www.hackney.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+
	414	1,593	422	1,356	612	356	19	1
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	339	369	70	246	0	14		
	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
	0							
Number of learners aged 14–16	0							
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>Jtag</div> <div><div></div>Knights Training</div> <div><div></div>Beats</div> <div><div></div>Quest</div> <div><div></div>NTS</div> <div><div></div>Inspire</div> <div><div></div>Yesodeh Hatorah</div>							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Julie Steele, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Heather Barnett	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sarbdip Noonan	Ofsted Inspector
Kanwaljit Dhillon	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Adkins	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Barrett-Mold	Ofsted Inspector
Margaret Garai	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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