

# Wirral Metropolitan College

General further education college



2–9 December 2015

## Inspection dates

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements are insufficiently rigorous.
- Targets to improve the performance of teachers are not always specific enough and do not take sufficient account of the aspects of their practice that they need to improve.
- Teaching and learning do not always challenge and motivate learners sufficiently.
- Attendance is low on too many courses.
- On too many programmes, teachers do not monitor learners' progress rigorously enough; as a result, learners are not always sufficiently aware of what they have already learned and what they need to do to achieve their qualifications.
- Too many learners and apprentices leave their courses before completing their qualifications.
- The progress that apprentices and younger learners make towards achieving their qualifications is often too slow.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers work successfully with a wide range of local partners to provide a curriculum that helps to reduce skills gaps and to meet local needs and priorities.
- Younger learners carry out a wide range of relevant work experience and other work-related activity that prepares them well for future employment.
- Learners who need extra help receive very effective additional support that enables them to make good progress.
- Most adult learners, trainees and learners with high needs make good progress and achieve well.
- Most learners who complete their programmes successfully progress into an apprenticeship, other employment or the next level of study.

# Full report

## Information about the provider

- Wirral Metropolitan College is a general further education college serving the borough of Wirral. It has four sites, three of which are in Birkenhead and one in Bebington. The college provides a wide range of post-16 education and training including 16–19 study programmes in a wide range of vocational areas, adult learning programmes, apprenticeships and traineeships. At the time of the inspection, approximately 5,100 learners were enrolled at the college. Of these, around 1,800 were aged 16 to 19, 2,100 were adults, and 1,100 were apprentices. There were 109 trainees on the college's traineeship programme. The college works with two subcontractors.
- Wirral is a metropolitan borough in Merseyside with a population of 320,000. The borough has a broad demographic profile with some of the poorest wards in the country in the east and very affluent wards in the west. The unemployment rate in the borough is 7.1% compared with 6.4% across the North West region. Sectors experiencing economic growth in the Liverpool City region, which includes Wirral, include the knowledge and innovation economy, the visitor economy, low-carbon technologies, and logistics and transport.

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

- Significantly increase the proportion of learners and apprentices who stay to the end of their programmes and achieve their qualifications by:
  - ensuring that teaching and learning consistently challenge and motivate learners and apprentices, and meet their individual learning needs, particularly in weaker areas of the provision and including on English and mathematics courses
  - helping learners, particularly on study programmes, to develop a positive attitude towards improving their English and mathematical skills and to understand the importance of these skills for their future study and employment
  - quickly improving attendance on all programmes.
- Rapidly increase the progress that learners make from their starting points by:
  - setting challenging targets for learners based on an accurate assessment of their starting points
  - monitoring closely the progress that learners make towards achieving their targets so that learners know what they have already achieved and what they still need to do to achieve their qualifications.
- Improve the self-assessment process by:
  - ensuring that leaders and managers make effective use of data about learners' progress and achievement and evidence about the quality of provision to evaluate the quality of provision fully and accurately
  - identifying specific and challenging actions for improvement based on a more accurate self-assessment and monitor progress towards their achievement closely.
- Improve the accuracy of the process for evaluating the quality of provision by ensuring that lesson observations focus fully on the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on learners' progress.
- Set challenging targets for teaching staff to improve weaker aspects of their practice as identified through lesson observations and data about learners' progress and achievement.
- Monitor closely the performance of teaching staff and take action quickly to improve performance where necessary.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have high ambitions for the college, but these do not result in consistently good performance across all areas of provision. Too often, managers and other staff have insufficiently high expectations for what learners can achieve. As a result, many learners make progress that is too slow and, in many areas of the provision, too few learners achieve high grades.
- Leaders and managers identified underperforming subject areas accurately in 2014/15 and, supported by governors, placed these areas under close scrutiny. This has led to improvements in several areas in the proportion of learners achieving their qualifications, but success rates are still below those of similar providers. A minority of subject areas placed under scrutiny have not made sufficient improvement.
- Quality improvement arrangements are not rigorous enough. Self-assessment does not evaluate accurately the quality of provision and makes insufficient use of data and other evidence to support identified strengths. The process does not enable managers to identify with sufficient precision actions to improve the quality of provision. The college's lesson observation process does not always evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment accurately. Too often, observers take insufficient account of the quality of learners' experiences or their progress, and their evaluation is often too positive. As a result, managers receive inaccurate information about the quality of provision, and do not always identify aspects of teachers' practice that need to improve.
- Recent improvements to the management of data mean that managers now receive detailed reports about the performance of the courses for which they are responsible. However, managers are not yet using these well enough to identify weaknesses and to take action to improve the quality of provision and learners' achievements.
- Arrangements for managing staff performance are effective and, as a result, teachers whose performance is not at the expected standard either improve their performance quickly or leave the college. However, the college's staff appraisal process is insufficiently rigorous; appraisals do not always take account of the outcomes of lesson observations to identify actions to improve teachers' practice, and teachers' personal development targets are not specific enough.
- The college has a wide range of strong partnerships with the local enterprise partnership, the local chamber of commerce, the local authority, and with employers. Partnerships very effectively support leaders in shaping a curriculum to reduce skills gaps and meet local needs and priorities. Recent major developments include the creation of the Wirral Waters site in partnership with a large local employer which has resulted in good work experience opportunities for learners. The college maps its provision well to labour market information, and there is a close correlation between the profile of provision and the local employment market.
- Quality assurance arrangements for monitoring subcontracted provision are good. Subcontractors have clear and detailed targets that managers monitor closely during performance management meetings with them. As a result, learners on subcontracted provision make good progress and a high proportion successfully complete their programmes.
- Most learners receive good, impartial careers guidance as they reach the end of their programme, which enables them to make informed choices about their next steps. As a result, the large majority of learners progress to the next level of their studies or into apprenticeships, employment or higher education.
- The college provides an inclusive environment for all learners, who demonstrate high levels of respect. Learners develop a good understanding of core values such as democracy and tolerance which prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Financial management of the college is strong and leaders have rationalised college premises successfully to provide good value for money and enhance learners' experiences. Learners benefit from good accommodation including the new well-resourced campus at Wirral Waters.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - Governors have a wide range of relevant experience and expertise in education, social care, human resources and finance. They provide effective challenge to leaders and managers on the overall performance of the college, on financial matters, and on the estates strategy.
  - Reports to governors have improved recently, and governors now receive more detailed information about the achievement of learners and the college's overall performance. However, information about the quality of provision is not always accurate because of the insufficient rigour in self-assessment and quality improvement. As a result, governors do not always have sufficiently accurate information to challenge leaders and managers to improve quality.

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

- All managers and staff ensure the safety of learners and are very alert to potential safeguarding issues. Learners feel confident to raise any concerns about safeguarding issues.
- All staff and governors participate in relevant training on safeguarding, with an appropriate focus on how to reduce the risks of radicalisation and extremism. They have a good understanding of how to keep learners safe.
- Managers take appropriate actions to resolve safeguarding concerns or to refer them where necessary to appropriate agencies such as social care and the police. Records of actions that they take are comprehensive and detailed.
- Managers maintain a comprehensive and up-to-date record of disclosure and barring checks carried out to enable them to make safe recruitment decisions. During the inspection, managers rectified a few minor inaccuracies in recording whether staff require disclosure and barring checks.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement**

- Teaching, learning and assessment provide insufficient challenge to enable all learners to make the progress of which they are capable. Planning for learning on study programmes takes insufficient account of learners' starting points or their individual needs. Consequently, learners often fall behind with their work, and a significant proportion leave before the end of their course. Trainees and apprentices benefit from highly individualised programmes which successfully build on prior attainment and are relevant to their career aspirations.
- On the majority of programmes, teachers do not monitor rigorously enough the progress that learners and apprentices make. As a result, learners and apprentices are not always sufficiently aware of what they have already achieved and what they need to do to make good progress. The targets that teachers set for apprentices and younger learners are not always specific or challenging enough, and this means that too few learners achieve high grades, and apprentices often take longer than planned to complete their programmes. On adult learning programmes, most teachers monitor learners' progress well and ensure that learners know what they still need to do to achieve their targets and qualifications.
- The quality of English and mathematics provision on study programmes requires improvement. Too much teaching and learning in English and mathematics lessons fails to interest or motivate learners and, consequently, too many learners make insufficient progress in improving their skills and achieving their qualifications. In vocational lessons, the activities that teachers use to develop learners' English and mathematical skills have insufficient impact. On the majority of adult learning programmes and on the apprenticeship and traineeship programmes, teachers and trainers support learners well to improve their skills. Learners with high needs benefit from good support to improve their mathematical skills.
- Teachers successfully develop the personal and social skills that learners and apprentices need for work. They enable learners on study programmes to develop their skills through well-designed work-related activity and relevant work placements. In practical lessons, teachers provide good support to develop learners' occupational skills. Adult learners and trainees benefit from a good range of activities that improve the skills they need to secure jobs. Trainers successfully develop apprentices' understanding of how to stay safe at work.
- Most feedback on assessed written work is detailed and helpful, and enables learners to identify the specific aspects of their written work that they need to improve. On study programmes and on adult learning programmes, teachers pay good attention to correcting spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. However, too many errors in trainees' written work remain uncorrected.
- Teachers and specialist support staff provide extensive support for learners who fall behind or who have additional learning needs, particularly for the most vulnerable learners. This enables these groups of learners to make good progress. Specialist support for learners with high needs is exceptionally good.
- Learners on study programmes and trainees participate in helpful 'next step' activities that enable them to make informed decisions on what to do when they complete their programme. Trainers provide good support for apprentices to help them to plan their future careers.
- Teachers successfully promote high standards of behaviour and an ethos of mutual respect. Teaching staff successfully improve apprentices' and trainees' understanding of equality and diversity, and their importance in the workplace.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

### requires improvement

- Attendance is low on too much of the provision including study programmes and access to higher education courses. Managers recognise this, but actions to improve attendance have not yet had sufficient impact. In a few instances, younger learners arrive for lessons unprepared for study.
- Too many learners on study programmes make insufficient progress in developing their English and mathematical skills. Learners often have a negative attitude towards improving these skills and they do not always recognise their importance for their futures. Attendance in English and mathematics lessons is particularly low. Adult learners on vocational courses and the majority of apprentices and trainees make good progress in improving their English and mathematical skills. Younger learners in many practical workshop sessions successfully acquire the mathematical skills that they will need for employment.
- Learners on study programmes successfully develop their personal and social skills, and the skills that they need for work. They participate in relevant work-related activities, including a wide range of supportive work experience placements, which help to prepare them for future employment. Most adult learners make good progress in improving skills that they need in their jobs and in their personal lives. For example, on courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), learners who begin their courses with low levels of competence in spoken English quickly gain the confidence and skills to speak in a wide range of situations. Apprentices improve the personal skills and confidence that they need in their job roles and to progress into roles with higher levels of responsibility.
- Learners benefit from good information and guidance about options for progression when they complete their courses, including higher education pathways within the college and with other providers, and employment and apprenticeship opportunities. As a result, a high proportion of learners progress successfully, particularly from advanced level programmes.
- Standards of behaviour across all sites of the college are very high. Learners fully understand the college's expectations and standards about appropriate behaviour and they demonstrate a high level of respect for their peers and teachers.
- Learners feel safe and are fully aware of how to report any concerns that they may have about possible risks to themselves or to others. They receive helpful information and support about risks related to radicalisation, bullying and all forms of abuse. When learners raise concerns, managers investigate and deal with them appropriately and sensitively.

## Outcomes for learners

### require improvement

- Too many learners make insufficient progress towards achieving their targets and qualifications. The progress that learners make from their starting points is often too slow, and fewer than half of learners on vocational courses achieve high grades. The majority of learners on study programmes make good progress in developing their occupational skills in workshop sessions. However, the progress that learners make in improving their theoretical understanding is not always rapid enough.
- The proportion of learners on study programmes who achieve their qualifications fell in 2014/15 and in many curriculum areas was significantly below that of other providers. Not enough learners on study programmes stay on their programme until the end. The proportion of younger learners who successfully complete foundation and intermediate programmes is higher than for similar providers, but is too low on advanced-level programmes.
- Too many apprentices leave their programmes before completing their qualifications. The proportion of apprentices who completed their programmes successfully within the planned time fell in 2014/15, and was below the rate for similar providers. Managers have taken action recently to improve apprentices' success, including increased rigour in target-setting and monitoring, and this is beginning to increase the speed of apprentices' progress. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact on improving the proportion of apprentices who are successful.
- Not enough learners achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics, and the proportion of younger learners who achieve Level 2 qualifications is particularly low. The proportion of younger learners who achieve high grades in GCSE English and mathematics is low. A high proportion of adults on GCSE mathematics courses achieve high grades.
- Most adult learners make good progress, and the proportion who achieve their qualifications is in line with that of other providers. Adult learners on ESOL courses successfully improve the skills and confidence that they need for work and everyday life. Learners on vocational programmes quickly acquire the occupational skills that they need for work. Learners on courses that prepare them for higher education successfully acquire the skills that they need to study at a higher level. However, the proportion of

learners on the access to higher education programme who successfully completed their course fell in 2014/15 and is lower than for similar providers.

- The college provides a traineeship programme for younger learners and adults who are not yet ready to enrol on apprenticeships or vocational programmes. Trainees make good progress in developing the skills that they need for work, and achieve well. A high proportion successfully progress to apprenticeships and into further learning.
- As a result of very effective support, learners with high needs make very good progress and a very high proportion achieve their qualifications. Learners increase their independence and confidence, and almost all progress successfully to a higher level of study.
- Learners who receive additional support make good progress and achieve well. However, a lower proportion of adults with disabilities and adults with special educational needs, including those who are not in receipt of additional support, achieve their qualifications compared with their peers.
- Most learners who complete their programmes progress successfully into employment, apprenticeships or the next level of their learning. A high proportion of learners who complete advanced-level programmes secure jobs or places on higher education courses. Most learners on foundation programmes move successfully to the next level. However, a significant minority of learners who complete intermediate courses do not progress to advanced programmes.

## Types of provision

### 16–19 study programmes

### require improvement

- The college provides study programmes in a wide range of subject areas at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. There are currently 1,783 learners on study programmes, with significant numbers at all levels.
- The quality of teaching and learning on study programmes requires improvement. Teachers do not always plan learning well enough to meet the individual needs of learners. Too many lessons lack pace and challenge and, as a result, learners do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Attendance is low in too many lessons. In many practical workshop-based lessons, learners make good progress in developing their occupational skills.
- Too many learners make insufficient progress in improving their English and mathematical skills; the majority of learners do not achieve the qualifications that they need to progress. Most teachers plan to develop learners' English and mathematical skills in their vocational lessons, but too often this planning does not result in successful activities to improve learners' skills. Many learners develop their mathematical skills successfully in practical workshop lessons, and use their skills well in planning and carrying out practical projects such as painting a room and designing an electrical circuit board.
- The targets that teachers set for learners are often too vague and, as a result, learners are often unable to articulate what they need to do to make rapid progress. Teachers do not monitor learners' progress towards their targets rigorously enough. This means that learners are not always aware of what they have already achieved and what they still need to do to reach their targets and achieve their qualifications.
- The quality of written feedback on assessed work is good. Teachers provide clear and constructive feedback that provides helpful information for learners about what they have done well and how they can improve specific aspects of their written work. They routinely identify spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors in learners' written work, but do not always indicate clearly to learners how they can improve the accuracy of their writing.
- All learners benefit from relevant and purposeful external work placements that improve their vocational skills and their understanding of the demands of employment. Learners also participate in a wide range of additional activities to broaden their learning and help them to develop essential work-related skills such as working successfully as part of a team.
- The college provides extensive and effective additional support for learners who need extra help. As a result, learners receiving additional support overcome barriers to their learning and make at least the same progress as their peers. Teachers carry out innovative research to improve further the support for learners, including projects focusing on how assistive technology can be used most effectively to enhance learning.
- Staff provide good impartial careers advice and guidance, and this enables learners to develop clear and realistic plans for progression. As a result, the vast majority of learners progress to the next level of study or into employment or an apprenticeship. On intermediate-level programmes, a significant minority of



learners remain at the same level of study at the end of their course.

## **Adult learning programmes**

**are good**

- The college's adult learning provision includes vocational courses at all levels, an access to higher education programme and a community learning programme. There are currently 2,100 learners on adult learning programmes. The large majority of these are on vocational programmes.
- The college works closely with an extensive range of partners to develop adult learning provision, including local employers, community and voluntary groups, and higher education institutions. As a result, adult learning provision is very responsive to local needs and priorities and successfully meets the needs of learners aiming to gain employment or go to university.
- Most teachers use teaching and learning activities well to interest and motivate learners. This enables learners to improve their knowledge and skills and make the progress of which they are capable during lessons. For example, on an accountancy and finance course, learners develop the skills to classify costs according to whether they are direct or indirect, and whether they relate to labour, materials or other expenses.
- Teachers do not always take sufficient account of the individual needs of learners when planning lessons, and learners with a wide range of abilities often work on the same tasks. Consequently, a small minority of learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Learners benefit from constructive and helpful written feedback following assessment of their work. Most teachers routinely identify spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in learners' work. As a result, learners have a good understanding of the specific improvements they need to make to their written work and how to achieve a higher grade.
- Most teachers record learners' progress and achievements accurately. Consequently, learners know which elements of their qualifications they have met and which they still need to achieve.
- On vocational courses, learners successfully acquire a wide range of useful skills to improve their chances of gaining employment or to use in their current work roles. A high proportion of learners on vocational courses achieve their qualifications.
- Learners on the access to higher education programme successfully develop the skills and knowledge that they need to progress to higher education. The large majority of learners who complete their course gain a place at a higher education institution. Although attendance is often too low, the college provides good support for learners who miss lessons. This includes providing a wide range of learning resources on the virtual learning environment. As a result, the majority of learners who miss lessons still complete their course successfully. The proportion of learners who left their course early was too high in 2014/15, but is significantly lower this year compared with the same point last year.
- On English and mathematics courses and on community learning courses in British Sign Language (BSL) and ESOL, the large majority of learners complete their course successfully and achieve their qualifications. Learners on BSL courses quickly develop the skills to communicate more effectively with deaf people. Learners on ESOL courses improve their confidence and speaking skills well and, as a result, are able to communicate effectively in a wide range of situations, such as job interviews, medical appointments and when shopping.

## **Apprenticeships**

**require improvement**

- There are currently 822 apprentices following programmes at all levels. The majority are on programmes in health and social care, business administration, applied sciences, hairdressing, retail, construction, and engineering. Smaller numbers of apprentices are on programmes in hospitality and catering, public services, sport and media.
- The proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programme within the planned timescale declined significantly in 2014/15 to well below that of similar providers. Apprentices' performance in a few vocational areas is high, but is too low in many others. Leaders and managers have acted quickly to tackle many of the areas of underperformance, but it is too early to evaluate the impact of their interventions in improving success rates.
- Teaching and learning, both in the workplace and in off-the-job training, too often provide insufficient challenge and as a result, apprentices' progress is often too slow. Apprentices benefit from good support to help them to improve the English and mathematical skills that they need in their occupational roles.
- Trainers and assessors do not monitor the progress that apprentices make with sufficient rigour. Progress

reviews are often too infrequent and brief, and targets that trainers agree with apprentices during progress reviews are not always sufficiently specific. As a result, apprentices are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their skills and this contributes to the slow progress that they often make.

- Apprenticeship programmes are responsive to employers' needs. Employers participate actively in the design of programmes including the choice of optional units of study that are relevant to their business requirements.
- Apprentices benefit from well-designed programmes that meet their individual needs and enable them to build on their existing skills and knowledge. Assessment activities relate well to apprentices' job roles, and accurately assess the progress that apprentices make in improving their skills. Technology is used very effectively to support learning.
- Apprentices make good progress in improving the personal and social skills that they need for work. Their programmes enable them gain a good awareness of how to stay safe at work. Training has a strong focus on the importance of promoting equality and diversity in the workplace.
- Trainers successfully support apprentices to make clear and realistic career plans. As a result, a high proportion of apprentices retain their job roles on completion of their programme, and a few gain promotion.

## **Traineeships**

## **are good**

- The college currently has 54 trainees on its traineeship programme. Training is provided directly by the college and by one subcontractor. The traineeship programme is made up of a four-week employability programme in the college followed by an eight-week period of work experience. The programme concludes with a final week when trainees receive advice and guidance to help them choose their next steps. Throughout the programme, trainees benefit from lessons to improve their English and mathematics.
- The programme prepares trainees well for their future training and employment. Managers use their extensive links with employers to provide all trainees with relevant and high-quality work placements.
- The majority of trainees progress successfully to an apprenticeship or into employment with training. Many others progress to study programmes or vocational courses at intermediate and advanced level.
- Trainees develop good personal and social skills. They display good, active listening skills and high levels of respect. Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are good in lessons and outstanding on work experience placements.
- Trainees quickly develop the skills that they need to gain employment. Teachers provide good support to enable trainees to produce high-quality curricula vitae and to improve their interview skills. Most trainees make good progress in improving their English and mathematical skills.
- Teachers use their subject expertise well to plan lessons that motivate and challenge learners and to promote positive attitudes to learning. They link the content of lessons well to trainees' experience on their work placements.
- Trainees make good progress in developing their understanding of equality, diversity and life in a modern democratic society. For example, an English lesson developed trainees' understanding of homophones through a focus on the Hindu festival of Diwali. In another lesson, the teacher successfully used an ice-breaker activity to improve trainees' understanding of democracy.
- Teachers provide good support for trainees and, as a result, most trainees make good progress across all aspects of their traineeship. Trainees who fall behind benefit from good additional support. In a minority of lessons, the pace of teaching and learning is too slow and, in these lessons, the most-able learners are not fully challenged to achieve their potential.
- Advice and guidance about future opportunities are good. The final week of the programme when trainees receive advice and guidance about their next steps ensures that learners are able to make informed decisions about their future.
- Feedback on written work does not always provide enough information to help trainees know what they need to do to improve. Teachers do not always correct trainees' errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. The records of trainees' progress in acquiring work-related skills on their placements are often too brief, and as a result, trainees do not always know precisely what skills they need to improve further.



- The college currently has 77 learners in receipt of high-needs funding from two local authorities. The large majority of learners are on discrete entry-level courses, and the rest are on vocational courses across the college from entry level to advanced level. Learners with high needs make very good progress on their courses and almost all achieve their qualifications, including in English and mathematics. On completion of their programmes, almost all learners progress successfully to a foundation course at a higher level, or to mainstream vocational courses at an appropriate level.
- Initial assessment of learners' starting points is exceptionally thorough. Staff manage learners' transition from school to college very well. Their assessment of learners' abilities and support needs before they join the college draws on a wide range of sources, including interviews with learners and their parents or carers.
- Learners enjoy their studies and make considerable progress in increasing their self-esteem and their ability to work well in new situations. Highly effective support helps learners to overcome barriers to their learning and improve their skills quickly. Learners benefit from good opportunities to carry out meaningful work-related activities through, for example, preparing and serving food in the college snack shop. All learners carry out high-quality external work experience placements. They quickly develop very good work-related skills and gain the confidence to work as part of a team.
- Well-trained and enthusiastic teachers have a very good understanding of each learner's needs. They inspire learners to achieve their goals through creative teaching and highly effective use of a wide range of assistive technology. They work very well with support staff to plan lessons and set targets for learners to meet their specific individual needs. They make very good use of pictures, music and sensory activities to help learners to develop their communication and fine motor skills well, enabling learners to become much more independent.
- Teachers very skilfully manage discussions with learners who, at times, display challenging behaviour. Learners develop good listening and speaking skills, and contribute fully to discussions in lessons particularly in group tutorials. Learners demonstrate considerable respect for others in their discussions and interactions.
- Teachers develop learners' basic mathematical skills very well during lessons and practical sessions. Learners working on enterprise projects confidently calculate the cost of making products to sell at the college Christmas fair.
- Assessment of learners' progress is thorough and accurate. Written feedback is very detailed, and learners are clear about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Teachers provide learners with constructive verbal feedback during classroom activities.

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	General further education college
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	6,750
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Sue Higginson
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.wmc.ac.uk">www.wmc.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+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	430	376	698	967	655	304	11	120
	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	164	299	84	314	3	32		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	37		17		54			
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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ JM Education Ltd</li> <li>■ Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority</li> </ul>							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Steve Hailstone, Lead Inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bev Barlow	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bob Busby	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
Brenda Clayton	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Fobister	Ofsted Inspector
Jill Gray	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Smith	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 draft 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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