

Canterbury College

General further education college

Inspection dates

28 February–3 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Highly capable senior leaders, directed by an inspirational principal, have had a rapid and significantly positive impact on the culture of the college and on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders have developed and successfully communicated a clear strategy to provide high-quality, responsive provision for the Canterbury and East Kent region.
- Students benefit from a very good range of specialist support, which is thoughtfully and flexibly employed to ensure that each individual makes good progress.
- Staff, including teachers, have embraced improvement strategies and share a determination to improve students' opportunities and experiences.
- Students benefit from very effective skills development which helps to build their confidence and allows them to secure positive destinations, including employment and higher education.
- Despite significant improvements to the overall quality of provision, teaching, learning and assessment are not yet reliably good in all areas, and adult learning provision requires improvement.
- Attendance and punctuality in mathematics, English, and access to higher education classes require improvement. Punctuality in level 1 classes requires improvement.
- Arrangements to record work experience lack clarity, so staff and students do not always have a confident and widely shared understanding of what constitutes external work experience and how skills and employability may be enhanced.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Canterbury College is a large general further education college with a main campus in Canterbury and a smaller site for around 340 students on the Isle of Sheppey. The college serves the city of Canterbury, Swale and the regions of the East Kent coastal towns. Canterbury is a busy city and tourist hub, but many of the areas served by the college suffer high levels of economic deprivation, particularly Swale and the Isle of Sheppey.
- Since July 2016, when the college's previous principal retired, the principal of East Kent College has been chief executive and principal of both institutions. A joint executive team supports the principal across both colleges. The two colleges are planning to merge in August 2017.
- The number of pupils in Kent achieving five GCSEs, including English and mathematics, has declined since 2012/13, but remains well above the national average. However, many of the schools from which the college recruits students have low levels of attainment. Major employment sectors around Canterbury are public administration, education or health, business, retail and finance.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should continue their successful work with staff to raise standards and ensure good learning and employment opportunities for students. To do this, leaders should focus particularly on:
 - improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in those areas identified by recent self-assessment, and by inspectors, as requiring improvement
 - improving attendance and punctuality in mathematics, English, and access to higher education classes, and punctuality in level 1 classes so that all students are present to make good progress, develop their knowledge and learn new skills
 - promoting among students, teachers and managers a shared understanding of what constructive work experience involves, and the ways it can be used to develop skills and enhance employability.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- In July 2016, when the previous principal of Canterbury College retired, the principal of East Kent College became principal and chief executive of both colleges. In the autumn term of 2016, with the support of governors, the chief executive conducted a significant restructure of management roles and responsibilities, which included the establishment of a senior team with expertise from East Kent College as well as from Canterbury College.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for, and have high expectations of, students and staff, leading by example and creating a culture of respect and tolerance. Senior leaders and governors communicate very effectively a clear strategic view for the college, including plans for formal merger with East Kent College in August 2017. The clarity and openness of communication around the short- and medium-term plans for the college have had a significantly positive impact on the morale and energy of staff, to the benefit of students.
- Managers frequently review the curriculum to ensure that it meets local and national needs. They respond well to the needs of Jobcentre Plus through the development of a good range of bespoke short courses. Leaders attend well to the priorities of the local enterprise partnership (LEP) through the development of the new construction facility at Sheppey, and the offer of level 1 construction courses and apprenticeships. Leaders recognise that there is insufficient provision for vocational students in information and communications technology (ICT) which is an important area for the local economy.
- Senior leaders and managers have made good progress on most of the areas identified in the previous inspection as requiring improvement. Of particular note are improvements in the progress made by students at level 3 from their starting points, rising attendance across the college, improvements in achievement of A* to C grades in GCSE English and mathematics, and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in most subject areas.
- Not all provision is yet reliably good. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not adapt sufficiently to the different starting points of students, do not employ sufficiently challenging styles of questioning, or check students' learning frequently enough. Managers recognise a need to further improve attendance, and ensure more rapid and sustained progress and achievement in functional skills in English and mathematics and on a minority of level 1 courses for students and apprentices.
- Senior leaders have positive links with local employers, resulting in useful work-experience placements, productive work-related activity, and good opportunities for students to develop personal and employability skills.
- Students and staff on full-time vocational courses are not sufficiently clear about expectations for work experience and work-related activity. Though most students do undertake meaningful activity, senior managers have not yet produced a clear policy on study programmes that includes their expectations with regard to the recording and evaluation of these activities.
- Leaders and managers make highly effective use of college performance indicators, which are used well throughout the organisation and based on a single and accurate set of data.

Because of such thorough monitoring of performance against targets, leaders take actions that have a timely and positive impact on performance, for example in recognising poor attendance in English and mathematics and improving this rapidly.

- Leaders have made constructive changes to quality improvement across the college. As a result, staff feel they can be bolder and more imaginative in their teaching strategies, encouraging students to be likewise more imaginative in their approaches to learning. Senior managers conduct very effective performance reviews with subject managers and use a broad range of evidence to evaluate performance. Managers' judgements are then used to celebrate achievements, identify areas for sharing good practice and areas for improvement. This has led to improvements in underperforming areas and improvements in teaching and learning across the college.
- Senior managers have improved the effectiveness of the teaching and learning observation process. With pre-observation discussions around the focus of the assessment, and swift actions following, more teachers benefit from the process. In many cases, a highly motivated team of advanced practitioners support staff in their follow-up actions.
- Staff value highly the wide range of professional and personal development opportunities to which they now have access. These have a positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and on the management skills of staff in the new managerial roles. Leaders have been judicious in their application of performance management processes in cases where development activity has not brought about sufficient progress; as a result, a number of staff have left the college.
- Senior leaders value students' views and gather them successfully in a number of ways. Students are overwhelmingly positive about the college and managers use their views to effect change. For example, in response to comment from students, managers have agreed to improve the timetabling of mathematics and English lessons in 2017.

The governance of the provider

- Governors are now fully aware of the position of the college and demonstrate increased levels of understanding and control over the finances and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They work in an open and transparent way with the senior team and now challenge and question their actions in a constructive manner.
- In addition to the Canterbury College board, there is now a transition board which oversees the move towards merger with East Kent College. Members from both colleges are on the transition board with the majority drawn from East Kent College.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding team, led by the designated safeguarding officer, ensures that students understand the importance of safeguarding. Students and apprentices feel safe and undertake safe working practices. They know whom they should approach if they have concerns about their safety.
- Staff undertake effective reviews of students who are at risk; prompt support is provided and professionals and statutory bodies are involved as appropriate. Staff are trained to

understand a wide range of topics, including forced marriage, protecting children from sexual abuse, domestic abuse, and drug misuse, and mental health.

- The vast majority of students understand how to protect themselves from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Arrangements to promote British values are effective, with students taking part in a good range of discussions about the ways values shape and define communities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of students. They use good, targeted strategies to extend students' knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Most students improve their English and mathematics skills well in the context of their vocational subject area through well designed tasks that make good use of workplace examples and terminology.
- Teachers' strong vocational and occupational experiences and knowledge bring many topics to life during classroom and workshop sessions. Teachers ensure that students are aware of current industry working practices and the professional standards expected by employers. Senior leaders recently introduced 'back to the floor days', which give teachers a chance to update their industry knowledge and skills through a work placement process; this activity has enhanced teachers' skills and brought their knowledge up to date for their sectors.
- Teachers make good use of a wide variety of good-quality resources and activities and use these well to meet the differing learning needs of individual students. Students frequently work independently, or in small groups, on projects and assignments that take good account of their starting points to ensure they make good progress and develop good skills and knowledge. Staff carefully monitor such activities to stretch the most able and support those who need more help.
- Effective assessments of students' starting points ensure that they are placed on the most appropriate courses and that managers and tutors are fully aware of those who require additional support. Specialist support officers make sure that vocational tutors are aware of the most appropriate strategies to use with each student, although a small minority of teachers do not apply these strategies carefully enough. Support staff work effectively with teachers to ensure that nearly all students who need additional support make good progress.
- Students benefit from a very good range of specialist support which staff apply flexibly to ensure that individuals make good progress. Students with high needs are supported particularly well by a range of specialists. Tutors and support staff carefully monitor the impact that their interventions have and help students develop their own strategies to cope with difficulties such as dyslexia, challenging behaviour or specific medical problems. As a result, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities perform as well as their peers.
- Most students receive clear and detailed feedback on their work and know what they need to do to improve or achieve higher grades such as merit or distinction. Apprentices benefit from employers' feedback to improve their workplace skills. Adult students and apprentices value the discussions they have with their peers to learn about different working practices. Staff carry out thorough assessments and make careful use of the

education, health and care plans of students with high needs to ensure that they make good progress from their starting points.

- Teaching is not yet good enough in English and mathematics functional skills for apprenticeships, employability classes for unemployed adults and skills for independent living for students with high needs. A minority of study programme teachers do not adopt good teaching practices and teaching in plumbing, hairdressing, science and motor vehicle engineering is not yet good. Senior leaders recognise the need for improvement in these areas.
- Students make slower than expected progress in a minority of lessons. This usually happens when teachers move quickly onto a new topic without checking that students have fully understood what has been covered.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers do not encourage students to improve the standard of their work enough to achieve higher grades, or ensure they work to the professional standards expected in the sector.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- The majority of students are organised and ready to learn, and show impressive levels of application and enthusiasm for their programmes of study. This is particularly notable in mathematics and English resit classes. Apprentices demonstrate positive behaviours and attitudes throughout with good levels of mutual respect; they work effectively with colleagues and are aware of customer and client expectations.
- Students make good progress in developing their skills and confidence. They become more skilled and more willing to test themselves, particularly with their presentation skills. For example, students in a level 1 childcare lesson made very good progress by presenting nursery rhymes in Makaton, so they could communicate in the workplace with clients who had speech and language difficulties. Students on a public services course demonstrated good levels of confidence and skill in delivering a presentation on entry requirements for careers in the sector.
- The vast majority of students and apprentices behave professionally and take pride in their work. For example, level 1 students on a multi-trade construction course at the Sheppey campus produced very good quality brick and block work, and stayed in the construction workshop some minutes into their lunchtime, in order to tidy their workstation and clean their tools thoroughly. These students, as most others across the college, develop strong vocational and personal skills that serve them well for employment.
- Attendance has improved on nearly all courses during the past three years but is still below college targets and too low, with too much variation across provision types and subjects. Attendance at English and mathematics lessons has improved since the previous inspection, but still remains too low and requires improvement.
- Most students attend lessons on time. However, a small minority of students, particularly those on courses at level 1, do not attend all lessons punctually. Lateness for first lessons and after breaks has a detrimental impact on progress for those who are late and for the rest of the group.
- Around both campuses, students at all levels of study behave very well. They are

courteous to one another, respectful of staff, and helpful to visitors. Students contribute well to student union activities and to college community projects, and give their views freely and constructively to support leaders and managers in making improvements.

- The vast majority of students benefit from useful external work experience, or from involvement in social action projects. However, students and staff across subject areas have differing understanding of what properly constitutes work experience as part of a study programme. This leads to some uncertainty about whether students have properly fulfilled the principles of the programmes and, in a minority of cases, means students do not properly analyse the skills gains, and other benefits derived from work experience.
- Senior leaders and managers model behaviours of inclusion and tolerance, so staff and students reflect these in their behaviour. Teachers celebrate diversity in their teaching, and through college events such as social action days; staff and students learn to value the diversity of their college and in their communities.

Outcomes for students

Good

- The vast majority of students in all provision types make good progress and complete their courses. They achieve qualifications that enable a good proportion to progress to further or higher education, training or employment.
- Students aged 16 to 18 on applied general vocational programmes, who make up the bulk of provision, make better than expected progress from their starting points and achieve well, and above the rate for similar providers. Achievement is particularly good for 16- to 18-year-olds on AS-level and A-level courses, and diploma and certificate courses at levels 2 and 3. However, achievement on entry and level 1 courses, where numbers are much lower, requires improvement. A-level and AS-level courses will cease at the end of the current year.
- For adults on applied general vocational programmes and on employability programmes, who together make up around one quarter of the total cohort, achievement is lower, at around 5% below the rate for similar providers, and requires improvement. In the past three years, achievement for adult students at levels 1, 2 and 3 has been slightly in decline, while achievement for those at level 4 has been good. Adults on access to higher education courses achieve well, and a good proportion gain places in universities, often among the most prestigious.
- In all age groups, female students and students with high needs tend to achieve a little better than their peers. There are no significant numbers of students or trends in performance in any minority ethnic groups. Leaders and managers have reduced the previously significant achievement gaps for students who are looked after, care leavers, or those in receipt of free school meals.
- Students who come to the college without a GCSE at grade C or above in English or mathematics are supported well to take a course appropriate to their starting points. For those students aged 16 to 18 who take GCSE courses, achievement is around double the national rate for English, and around 8% above a low national rate for mathematics. However, achievements for students on English and mathematics courses at level 1 require improvement among all age groups.
- Achievement rates for apprentices are high and above the national rate. Most achieve

within the planned timescale, and this is well above the rate for similar providers. Achievements overall and within the expected timescales show good improvements across each of the past three years to significantly above national rates. Apprentices aged over 24 achieve better than younger apprentices. In 2015/16, advanced apprentices achieved less well than those on intermediate programmes.

- A small minority of apprentices do not yet achieve well enough. Apprentices in health and social care, engineering and retail and wholesaling perform less well than other occupational areas. Progression rates for intermediate apprentices to further learning are not yet good enough across all areas.
- Apprentices make good progress, which often leads to additional responsibilities in their workplaces and offers of permanent employment. They develop good vocational and technical skills, demonstrating good standards of work. Employers value highly the skills and enthusiasm that apprentices bring to their businesses.
- Students produce work of a high standard on the large majority of courses, and generally above the standard required for the level of their course. In vocational and practical work, students demonstrate good levels of skills and produce good-quality work and artefacts.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Around 3,500 students are following study programmes, the vast majority at levels 2 and 3 in applied vocational subjects. A small cohort is following academic study programmes with A levels as the core qualifications, but these courses will close at the end of 2016/17.
- Students benefit from a strong and pervasive focus on assessment requirements and employment-focused skills development. Achievement rates for English and mathematics courses have risen and the vast majority of teachers successfully reinforce the benefits of good English and mathematics skills and abilities.
- Teachers routinely boost students' confidence and progress with clear and personalised advice on how to improve performance. Teachers' feedback on written work is clear, focused and helps students to improve. Teachers also provide clear and constructive oral feedback to students during practical tasks and in class exercises. Students capably mark each other's work and frequently discuss in detail their errors and areas for improvement.
- Teachers very successfully improve students' awareness of the sorts of skills that they will need for employment in their vocational subject area. Teachers also relate these skills very clearly to the assessment criteria of courses so that students know what is expected of them and understand the standards to which they should aspire. In doing so, teachers are able to draw on a good range of personal and professional skills and experiences that they relay well to students. As a result, students in most subject areas gain a secure grasp of what examiners and employers are looking for, and understand the types of behaviours they will need to manifest to succeed in their chosen sector area.
- Excellent, probing questioning helps students to develop their understanding and extend their levels of analysis of topics. For example, in one travel and tourism class, students were challenged to analyse carefully and thoroughly the reasons why people choose particular holiday destinations. The teacher encouraged students to move beyond

assumptions and received opinions and to give examples drawn on careful analysis of course material before presenting their ideas. In a particularly vibrant English class exploring the use of analogies, the teacher skilfully initiated, then adeptly managed, a productive discussion as students considered in which ways teenagers were like snowflakes. In both these cases, as in the vast majority of lessons, teachers' management of learning, and their skilful questioning, ensured that students made good progress on the topic, gained confidence and took evident pride in their learning.

- Teachers plan the vast majority of lessons carefully, making good use of information about students' starting points to ensure that activities are suitably challenging and interesting. Courses are well structured and activities link clearly to assessment objectives. In a very small minority of lessons, the needs of individual students are not met. For example, students taking English for speakers of other languages courses sometimes struggle to understand the vocational language within their programmes.
- Teachers build skilfully and imaginatively on students' prior knowledge, understanding and skills, so they grow in confidence and attainment, often beyond their own expectations. Staff make imaginative efforts to broaden students' experiences and attainment by drawing on learning techniques from other, often very different, subject areas. For example, in a mathematics lesson a teacher moved students capably from a basic understanding of angles to competent use of algebra, by means of an amusing song and video. Dance and construction students benefited from work with the sport team to develop their flexibility and strength.
- In a significant minority of lessons, ineffective checking of learning and poor questioning techniques limit students' progress and understanding. In these lessons, teachers allow a small number of more confident students to dominate question and answer activities, with the rest of the class remaining passive and losing focus on the topic.
- A good range of work-related activities supports most students' vocational programmes and develops their employability skills well. For example, art students are working on an innovative project with Borough Market in London, and sports students benefit from a range of inspirational speakers and activities. Students also make significant gains in confidence from taking part in the broad range of work experience and work-related activity available. Such increased confidence helps them to raise their career aspirations and progress to the next level of learning or to employment. However, a minority of students do not benefit from external work-experience placements.
- A small minority of teachers and managers fail to promote adequately to students the benefits of developing English and mathematics skills. In a small number of subject areas this has resulted in too large a gap between the core aim attendance and attendance at English and mathematics lessons. Poor timetabling of English and mathematics lessons also causes dissatisfaction among students and consequently poor attendance, for example if students have to travel into college when they are timetabled for only a single mathematics or English lesson. Senior managers have recognised this problem and are improving timetabling for the future.
- Support for students is very strong. Comprehensive and well-used support services help students to achieve and progress. A specialist team and dedicated well-being centres at both Canterbury and Sheppey campuses protect and promote students' emotional well-being very effectively. Students spoke movingly of the impact these teams and facilities had on their confidence and their ability to successfully complete their courses.

- Students benefit from effective impartial careers guidance from highly trained staff who help them make clear and informed choices about their next steps. The careers advice area provides a welcoming and secure environment in which students can discuss difficulties or seek guidance. During the current year, managers have made successful efforts to involve parents and carers in supporting students more fully. Frequent updates, bulletins and parents' evenings provide good communication on progress and career options.
- Staff in the majority of subject areas identify and share good practice in teaching and learning on a frequent, often weekly, basis. In addition, almost all staff teams share experiences and examples of what techniques worked well with students informally. However, a minority of subject areas have yet to develop clear and reliable ways to identify and record, share and evaluate examples of good practice in teaching and learning.
- Students have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in college and outside. They benefit from good examples from teachers and support staff and adopt safe working practices in workshops and practical classes. The vast majority observe industry standards of safety and behaviour when engaged in practical tasks.
- Students are keenly alert to the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They take part in a good range of discussions about the need to be safe online. During induction, in lessons, tutorials and whole-college events, staff and managers deliver and reinforce messages to students about the ways to recognise and respond to the threat posed by those who would attempt to radicalise them or their peers.

Adult learning programmes

Requires improvement

- The 1,011 adults account for a quarter of the college's learners. The majority study on full-time access to higher education courses and vocational programmes. Smaller numbers take part-time community learning programmes, programmes for unemployed adults, and short vocational courses. Many students study for a mathematics or English qualification alongside their main course. Courses range from level 1 to level 3. The largest curriculum areas are animal studies and accountancy.
- While most adults make good progress on their courses, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not reliably good across the provision, particularly on part-time courses. The quality of provision is improving, but it is too soon yet to see the full impact of improvement plans.
- In a significant minority of lessons, teachers' checking of learning is ineffective. For example, they do not challenge the reluctance of some students to participate and sufficiently encourage them to maximise their understanding and learning. Too few teachers challenge students sufficiently well; they are quick to accept poorly developed answers from students, and do not challenge them with higher-level questions to improve their understanding of the topic.
- Targets for students are often too general and do not provide specific steps towards improvement to help them make good progress. Feedback following assessment is helpful in supporting students to make progress. Teachers accurately identify errors in students' work.

- Part-time students and unemployed adults do not have the opportunity to access good quality next steps advice and guidance. Students on access to higher education courses and full-time vocational courses, however, receive good information, advice and guidance on progression to work or higher education. These students receive good support with their university applications to help them move into positive destinations.
- Teachers do not all use the outcomes of diagnostic assessments sufficiently well during lessons and in their planning to ensure that learning activities meet whole group and individual students' needs. Some activities are too difficult or too easy for students and so they do not make enough progress. However, staff have created much-improved initial and diagnostic tasks to assess students' vocational, English and mathematics skills and to help clarify for students the demands of courses. Students' correct placement on English, mathematics and vocational courses has improved as a result.
- At the Eastchurch centre, managers have developed outstanding ICT and plumbing provision at level 3 for the local community and for prisoners from HMP Standford Hill. Provision is integrated into the community, but provides education and training for serving prisoners on licence. Students work with focus and purpose to achieve valuable qualifications and work experience with an end goal of sustained employment. Repeat re-offending among former students is very significantly lower than for other ex-offenders.
- In accountancy, veterinary nursing, and supporting teaching and counselling, teachers use their subject expertise and knowledge of their students well to plan and deliver very good learning. These teachers have high expectations of their students and ensure that they develop their skills and knowledge rapidly. For example, in a veterinary nursing lesson, students discussed the ethics of decisions about animal surgery and its impact on the lifespan of the animal. Students considered their views carefully and made decisions based on sound evidence.
- In most lessons, teachers ensure that lesson activities meet the career and personal interests of students well, and their feedback on students' performance and their questioning to extend students' understanding are good. For example, in a supporting teaching lesson, students planned activities for primary pupils to become independent learners and during feedback effectively role modelled ways to manage different accents in a classroom setting. In a GCSE English lesson, the teacher's close and careful questioning of students about a controversial text on parenting skills enabled them to develop strong, persuasive views based on both opinion and fact.
- The majority of adult students have a positive attitude to learning, attend regularly and are punctual to lessons. Students feel safe at the college and know how to report any concerns. However, the majority of part-time adult students do not have a good enough understanding of the dangers of extremism.

Apprenticeships

Good

- Of 400 students following apprenticeships, around two-thirds are at intermediate level, almost all others are at advanced level. Large numbers of apprentices study engineering and manufacturing technologies, retail and commercial enterprise, leisure, travel and tourism, business, administration and law, with lower numbers in construction, animal care and laboratory science. The vast majority of apprentices work around the Canterbury

area, with around 30 in Sheppey.

- Assessors involve the large majority of employers well in reviewing progress and setting meaningful job-related targets and tasks for apprentices. For example, apprentices on laboratory science programmes maintain equipment, take swabs, and test stool samples; engineers use complex computer numerical control plasma cutters to cut sheet metal. A small minority of employers feel poorly informed about what their apprentices do in college. For example, in motor vehicle engineering employers rely on apprentices keeping them informed about course content and their employees' learning at college.
- The vast majority of employers provide a good range of learning opportunities that help apprentices to develop good technical skills and a better understanding of industry practices. As a result, a majority of apprentices gain sustained employment and/or promotion. For example, apprentices in engineering benefit from opportunities to develop skills in the use of the latest computerised technologies; apprentices in business administration in higher education settings are given additional responsibilities such as organising student graduations; apprentices in plumbing work with minimal supervision to install bathrooms.
- Most apprentices produce work of high standards in their workplaces and in college. They are professional and confident, communicate well and work collaboratively. Staff also ensure that apprentices gain skills and knowledge alongside their main vocational areas. For example, apprentices in plumbing have good opportunities to gain experience in plastering, and working as an electrician, and apprentices in ICT have good opportunities to attend Parliament and participate in debates about e-democracy.
- Assessors plan assessments well and closely monitor the progress that apprentices make. The introduction of electronic portfolio systems enables apprentices and assessors to record assessment evidence during meetings, resulting in improved timely progress.
- A small minority of apprentices lack clear and effective written targets to help them improve and develop skills. In such cases, targets simply refer to unit and assignment completion; as a result, apprentices are less clear on how to continue developing their skills. However, in business administration, target-setting is specific and provides students with guidance on how to improve practice and develop their skills further.
- Apprentices benefit from helpful, developmental feedback on their progress. Teachers provide immediate oral feedback to inform improvement. For example, in a hairdressing lesson teachers reminded apprentices to always undertake a full probing consultation even if they know their client very well.
- Assessors work effectively to develop apprentices' mathematical skills in the workplace. They skilfully use their own experience to provide examples. For example, hairdressing apprentices learn how to use percentages to work out potential income; engineering apprentices are taught to use complex formulae to work out the material cone speeds to adjust the belt tension controlling a drill bit. Most assessors develop apprentices' English skills in the workplace; however, a minority do not correct spelling and grammatical errors in work or make clear to them the need for accurate written communications.
- Assessors plan learning carefully to reflect the demands of the apprenticeship and the needs of the businesses in which apprentices work. As a result, most apprentices increase in confidence and quickly develop aspirations to move to positions of increased responsibility. For example, apprentices in laboratory sciences gain permanent

employment and many progress to university; an intermediate engineering apprentice is progressing to university to learn aeronautical engineering, and an intermediate plumbing apprentice is progressing to advanced level so his company can provide gas-related services.

- Apprentices have a good understanding of how to stay safe at work. Assessors rigorously check apprentices' safe practice in the workplace and check that the apprentices feel safe and able to report concerns. Apprentices have a well-developed understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders and managers have successfully developed provision to meet the needs of local employers and to meet LEP priorities. The college now offers apprenticeship frameworks closely aligned to local and regional skills priorities with high and increasing numbers in engineering and manufacturing technologies, and business, administration and law.

Provision for students with high needs

Good

- There are 217 students with high needs; 139 in discrete supported learning classes, and the remaining 78 dispersed across the college on vocational programmes from level 1 to level 3. The college receives funding from seven local authorities to ensure that the education and training for young people with diverse needs are met locally where possible.
- Managers show clear leadership and are highly responsive to the challenging and changing needs of their diverse cohort. Provision ranges from a sensory curriculum for students with medical and health support needs, to level 3 vocational courses across the college. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that students have the best opportunities to progress and engage with the widest possible curriculum offer.
- Initial assessment is undertaken well for those students with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and provides a good starting point for their learning. These students progress well as a result. Staff record outcomes carefully to provide an 'at-a-glance' graphic account of progress over time.
- Good arrangements ensure that high needs students taking courses at levels 1 to 3 across the college enrol on suitably challenging courses. Staff undertake less thorough assessments of starting points for the cohort of entry-level students who are working towards their skills for independent living, and as a result this group make less good progress towards their goals. English and mathematics initial assessment outcomes are inaccessible to these students, because they are kept in teaching folders instead of being loaded onto the online system where students or their parents and carers can make use of them to practise tasks and improve progress.
- Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their own progress wherever possible and appropriate. For example, individual learning goals are readily available for students in construction on programmes at level 2 and level 3. The students are encouraged to set these themselves; as a result, they progress well, show confidence and are ambitious about their futures. For other students, as part of a tutorial there were good opportunities to practise the spoken and written skills needed to prepare for an interview with the work-experience officer. These students were well supported by staff to take control of this situation and manage the meeting with minimal support. In a functional skills English

lesson, the teacher set students a range of tasks that were stretching. They were encouraged to learn from their mistakes and their teacher challenged them directly to achieve more.

- Teachers provide good quality, individualised feedback for entry-level students; this includes careful spelling corrections. The feedback encourages students to improve, but has limited impact because teachers do not always follow up on students' subsequent actions to ensure that learning and improvements in skills have taken place as a result of the feedback given.
- Accommodation and resources to support learners are good; these include human resources and assistive technologies. The buildings and rooms are carefully set out to remove barriers to learning for people with mobility difficulties. Overhead tracking allows for safe transfer and staff use sensory resources, such as touch boards, effectively to support learning. Students on the sensory curriculum course have access to a good range of tactile resources that enable them, for example, to experience the feel and smell of animal bedding and different types of food.
- Managers work well together to achieve a smooth and effective transition for students from school to discrete courses and onto vocational courses across college. Students on courses at levels 1 to 3 progress well to their next level of learning. Entry level students enjoy their time at college and feel secure in their learning. However, staff have low expectations of a small minority of entry-level students who are working towards independent living skills.
- Managers and staff work together to find imaginative and personalised solutions to individual problems. For example, one student's low attendance was caused by anxiety about the health of his mother. Staff carried out an emergency review where the student was able to negotiate a reduced timetable in the short term. The timetable will concentrate on English and mathematics to keep him on track to achieve this summer.
- Individual preparation for, and access to, work experience is good for high needs students. Pre-vocational programmes, where applicable, prepare students well for their work placement. Students understand the importance of English and mathematics when looking for and keeping a job. All high needs students in the discrete area have the opportunity to access work experience in the college café. The 'job shop' is situated in the life skills block; students can be referred or make a self-referral to speak with a work coordinator. Students can access a range of work experience depending on where their interest lies. Supported internships for less-able students are not currently part of the curriculum offer, and managers recognise this as an area for development and improvement.
- Managers and teachers direct the activities of learning support practitioners (LSPs) very effectively for students' benefit. LSPs are routinely observed using the same system for teaching staff; as a result, any areas for improvement, for example tendencies to restrict students' progress towards independence through over-helpfulness, are quickly identified and LSPs are supported well to improve their practice.
- Staff provide high levels of support to ensure that students with high needs feel safe in college. Many recognise that and can articulate that it is the staff that make them feel safe. Students with very high support needs are confident to speak in front of their peers and staff members.

- Staff manage additional learning support funding well; this ensures that students gain access to therapies, specialist teaching and resources, including support for those with dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorder, emotional behavioural disorder and mental health difficulties. In addition, students benefit from specialist support from speech and language therapists, sign language interpretation, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Specialist support has a positive impact on learning, for example in the development of individual strategies for communication that have been initiated by speech and language therapy professionals. These strategies are an effective tool in helping to reduce challenging communication behaviour.
- Staff ensure that attendance at college has considerable beneficial impact for those students with very high support needs. These students interact in a more sociable manner over time and this has a positive impact at home and for other family members. Students are also more able, over time, to make clearer choices on a daily basis.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130730
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of students	16+
Approximate number of all students over the previous full contract year	6,305
Principal/CEO	Graham Razey
Telephone number	01227 811111
Website	www.canterburycollege.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	802	181	1,027	369	1,568	596	3	21
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	147	78	65	87	0	1		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of students aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of students for which the provider receives high-needs funding	217							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The deputy principal, as nominee, assisted the inspection team. 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.

Inspection team

Richard Beynon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Ward	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joy Montgomery	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kate Brennan	Ofsted Inspector
Ali Kent	Ofsted Inspector
Jill Arnold	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Monaghan	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Carville	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Tucker	Ofsted Inspector

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