

# Southampton City College

General further education college

## Inspection dates

28–31 March 2017

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not been successful in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that it is at least good.
- The proportion of students that achieve their qualifications is not yet good and too few apprentices complete their courses on time.
- Students' development of skills, and their achievement in English and mathematics require urgent improvement.
- Too few employers are adequately involved in planning the training of their apprentices.
- Too many teachers have insufficiently high expectations of their students in lessons, and do not ensure that students make the best possible progress.
- Students' attendance and punctuality remain too low, especially in English and mathematics.
- Too few students aged 16 to 18 years develop their skills through relevant, well-planned work experience linked to their study programme.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Since the start of this academic year, leaders and managers have taken decisive action and made good progress in halting the decline in students' and apprentices' achievements.
- Leaders and governors have halted the financial decline and stabilised the financial position of the college.
- Leaders and managers use accurate and reliable data effectively to monitor the quality of provision and to identify areas of poor performance.
- Leaders and managers have developed good partnership and subcontracting arrangements; as a result, students benefit from a broad range of courses that enhance their employability.
- Teachers make effective use of their current industry experience to ensure that vocational learning is relevant, develops students' practical skills well and prepares them effectively for work.
- Leaders and managers have successfully planned a curriculum that meets local needs and priorities.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Southampton City College is a small general further education college located on a main campus in central Southampton with an additional site specialising in marine skills. The college is well positioned to support the diverse population of Southampton that includes large areas of deprivation and smaller areas of prosperity. The number of pupils at schools in Southampton that achieve five GCSEs grades A\* to C including English and mathematics is below national rates. Unemployment in the Southampton area is higher than regional and national averages.
- The college provides a wide range of post-16 education and training including 16 to 19 study programmes in a variety of vocational areas, adult learning programmes and apprenticeships. At the time of the inspection, approximately 4,900 students and apprentices were enrolled at the college.

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

- Managers should immediately take effective steps to improve the poor attendance and punctuality of students, and increase their opportunities to make good progress.
- Leaders and managers should increase the proportion of students and apprentices who achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers should urgently strengthen the teaching of English and mathematics to ensure that students are able to improve their skills and achieve their qualifications.
- Managers should ensure that all students on study programmes develop their work-related skills through participation in meaningful external work experience.
- Managers should improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - teachers set stimulating and demanding targets for students and apprentices, paying particular attention to their starting points and closely monitoring the progress they are making
  - teachers' feedback enables all students and apprentices to know exactly what they need to do to improve, achieve and fulfil their potential.
- Managers need to ensure that development plans for teachers following observations of teaching and learning focus more closely on the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on students' progress.
- Managers should involve employers more fully in the planning of apprenticeship learning to ensure that all apprentices make good progress and achieve within the planned time.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the standards of teaching, learning and assessment and the proportion of students who achieve their qualifications have declined and both require improvement. After a significant period of financial decline, new governors and senior leaders have acted to stabilise the financial position of the college and have introduced many new systems and procedures to improve the quality of provision. A number of new initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact, including on apprentices' achievement rates.
- Leaders' actions to improve students' achievement and progress in English and mathematics have been too slow. Too few students make sufficient progress and achieve their qualifications in these essential subjects.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not taken enough consideration of attendance and of achievement when considering the quality of the lessons they observed. However, leaders now have a more accurate understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the college and a good grasp of the progress students are making.
- Leaders have developed a clear vision for the college's improvement, and have high expectations for students. They have developed stretching but realistic targets, which staff and students aspire to achieve, though a minority of teachers have yet to raise their expectations of students. Early signs of improvement are visible, for example in reducing the gaps in the achievements of different groups of students.
- Senior leaders and managers have implemented well-considered quality improvement strategies and performance-monitoring processes. Early indications show that these are starting to have a positive impact. For example, teachers and managers now use accurate and reliable data to monitor students' attendance, achievement and progress on a weekly basis. Senior leaders hold teachers and managers to account for the progress students are making through monthly quality review meetings.
- Managers use a comprehensive performance management process to set clearly defined targets that help staff improve. Annual appraisals of teachers are linked well to findings from observations and managers use these to set targets for improvement. Staff receive good support through individual, departmental and whole-college development activities.
- Leaders and managers maintain strong partnership arrangements that support students into work, developing programmes with local employers in high-priority areas, such as transport and logistics, engineering and the marine sector. Managers ensure that the large majority of apprenticeship provision aligns closely to local priority areas, such as construction, engineering and maritime. They manage subcontracting arrangements well so that students can take courses in areas such as veterinary nursing which the college does not have the resources or skills to deliver.

## The governance of the provider

- Governors did not act quickly enough to halt the decline in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and student outcomes since the previous inspection, nor did they deal sufficiently quickly with the college's weakening financial position.
- During the past three years, governors did not challenge leaders successfully enough to secure sufficient improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for students. Recently introduced performance improvement measures are, however, beginning to show some impact.
- Around a third of current governors are new to the college, recruited specifically for their strong financial and educational skills. Governors have supported senior leaders to thoroughly review and restructure the college and have been particularly effective in developing a financial plan to bring long-term security to the college. Governors now use their skills well to support senior leaders in the development of monitoring systems to scrutinise the progress students are making and hold leaders to account.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have been successful in ensuring that students have a safe and welcoming environment in which to study. Security arrangements at the college are good and visitors' access is managed well. Managers apply safer recruitment policies and procedures diligently.
- Managers maintain detailed records of safeguarding referrals and have established good working relationships with specialist external agencies to protect vulnerable and at risk students. Governors and senior leaders frequently scrutinise the reasons for safeguarding referrals to identify trends or patterns and take appropriate action to inform students of potential risks to their well-being.
- All staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding and know how to keep students safe from the risks of radicalisation and extremism and understand their obligations under the 'Prevent' duty. Staff use their knowledge well to ensure that they record and act on any referrals made. Students know who to contact if they have any safeguarding concerns. However, apprentices' understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the risks of radicalisation and extremism is rudimentary and requires further improvement.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Standards of teaching and learning declined since the previous inspection and, despite early improvements, still require improvement. In a minority of subject areas, staff shortages have affected the progress of students and achievement for students and apprentices. However, leaders and managers now have higher expectations of teachers and support them well through very closely targeted improvement activities. At the time of inspection, nearly half of the teaching staff were receiving one-to-one mentoring support to improve their performance and student outcomes.
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning in both English and mathematics requires improvement. Too much teaching fails to develop students' knowledge and skills. Only a minority of students pass their qualifications in these subjects. Assessors do not provide

enough guidance on how apprentices can improve their English, nor do they encourage apprentices to practise and develop their English skills in the workplace.

- Most teachers still fail to take full account of study programme students' starting points to plan challenging theory lessons that meet individual learning needs. As a result, the most able students often find learning activities too easy and the less able struggle to understand the tasks set and, as a result, make slow progress. A minority of teachers carefully tailor lessons to the varied needs of their groups and have high expectations. Managers are working to identify and share good practice in planning, and early signs show improvement in this area.
- Teachers and assessors too often set targets for students and apprentices that are too generic, lack challenge, and do not focus on the specific actions needed to develop knowledge or skills. Too many students have incomplete electronic individual learning plans with weak targets that do not help them to make rapid progress from their starting points. However, the majority of teachers mark study programme students' work precisely and provide feedback with sufficient detail for students to improve their work and reach their potential.
- Most teachers make good use of their up-to-date industry knowledge to plan interesting practical lessons that develop both students' skills and the industry terminology they need for work. For example, in hospitality classes, a student appointed as 'chef of the day' designs and costs the menu, directing and managing the kitchen while other students prepare and serve the food.
- Apprentices acquire useful skills by completing a good range of additional qualifications, such as manual handling, food hygiene and first aid, which enable them to make an enhanced contribution in their workplace.
- The majority of teachers use oral questioning well to check students' understanding and learning so that they can make good progress. In many lessons, teachers use a coaching approach, which enables students to work collaboratively and support each other to develop their skills through peer learning. For example, in a media and theatrical make-up lesson, students used each other as clients and then reported to each other on their experiences.
- The majority of students receive good help and support. Teachers are aware of students' needs and make effective adjustments. For example, students with dyslexia have large-print handouts and coloured overlays to assist them in reading and understanding printed learning resources. The small numbers of students with education, health and care plans have their support needs provided for very well and they make good progress at college.
- Most teachers develop students' understanding of life in a diverse society well in lessons to prepare students for the world of work. For example, in an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) lesson, the teacher supported students to challenge and discuss stereotypes of men and women, and attitudes to women's clothing. In another session, engineering students participated in a 'Brexit debate' and explored the impact leaving the European Union would have on their industry.
- Most assessors use a good range of learning and assessment activities to check apprentices' progress and knowledge, including discussions, videos and presentations. The varied range of assessment methods captures apprentices' interests and motivation well.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

- Students' attendance requires improvement. Managers have not yet improved attendance to meet the college target. In English and mathematics classes, attendance is particularly low. During inspection, attendance was low in the majority of subjects, and significant numbers of students arrived late to classes. Such poor punctuality disrupts learning and fails to prepare students well for employment. Too few teachers challenge poor attendance and punctuality. Managers are taking action to resolve this but the impact of such measures has yet to show full impact.
- Leaders, managers and teachers do not ensure that students develop good English and mathematics skills. Too many students are poorly prepared for the world of work or for future study because they have not been adequately supported to gain good skills in these key subjects.
- Managers do not place a high enough priority on securing external work experience placements for all students on study programmes. The majority of students benefit from work experience but this is not consistent in all subject areas. As a result, too few students improve their understanding of the world of work and develop useful skills for the workplace.
- Students and apprentices feel safe at college and work. Effective partnership working with the local police has improved relationships between the police and students with learning difficulties and disabilities, enabling them to overcome the fear of seeking help or support. Most students on 16 to 19 study programmes understand the risks associated with radicalisation and extremist activity and know what to do if they have any concerns. They know how to stay safe online. Managers and assessors have not developed apprentices' understanding of the 'Prevent' duty sufficiently, and this requires improvement.
- Students' and apprentices' behaviour at college and in the workplace is good. They are confident, respectful to their peers and teachers, and are proud of their achievements. The majority develop good practical skills that improve their prospects of progression into further study and employment. Employers value the enhanced contribution that the majority of apprentices make in the workplace.
- Managers and teachers provide students with good pastoral support through attending well-planned tutorial programmes. These develop and reinforce students' understanding of British values and of how to keep themselves healthy and safe.
- Students benefit from well-organised and impartial careers guidance to help them make informed decisions about employment and training, including apprenticeships and higher education. Managers and teachers add to this support by organising visiting industry guest speakers during 'industry week', who introduce students to careers they might not have considered previously. Support for students applying to higher education is good. However, the majority of apprentices do not receive good careers advice and guidance and this requires improvement.

## Outcomes for students

## Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not been successful in improving students' achievements. Despite recent improvements, there are still too many variations in achievements between different subjects, levels of study and age groups. Students working at levels 1 and 2 achieve less well than those studying at level 3, and too few advanced apprentices achieve within their planned time. Achievement rates for apprentices studying at higher level are poor. College data indicates that there has been a recent improvement for the majority of students on study programmes, particularly those studying retail and construction qualifications. However, students' achievement remains at a rate just below that of other similar providers nationally.
- Too many students on study programmes make slow progress in improving their theoretical understanding. However, the majority of students on study programmes develop the practical skills they need to progress into relevant employment, apprenticeships or further studies.
- Leaders and managers have tackled the causes of apprentices' poor achievements in 2015/16, and data shows that the proportion of apprentices who are making good progress towards their qualifications in the current year has increased. Many apprentices, for example those in early years education, and in construction, are developing good occupational skills.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that sufficient numbers of students who retake a GCSE in either mathematics or English achieve a grade C or above. The proportion of students, of all ages, who achieve their English and mathematics functional skills qualifications at levels 1 and 2 is below that of other providers nationally and declined between 2014/15 and 2015/16. Functional skills achievements for adult students have improved significantly during 2016/17 in comparison to the same point last year.
- Too few apprentices progress from an intermediate level of study to an advanced level. Leaders and managers do not routinely gather information about whether apprentices progress into job roles with higher levels of responsibility or gain promotion. However, the majority of students who complete a study programme successfully progress to their next steps in further or higher education, into an apprenticeship or employment.
- Students with high needs achieve well, and often make better progress than their peers. In addition, a high proportion progress to positive destinations in further education, training or employment. Students benefit from effective support in the classroom to assist their learning, increase their confidence and help them develop their independence ready for life at work or on a higher-level course of study.
- The majority of adult students are studying short courses and are achieving good outcomes. Adult learners on ESOL courses achieve well and successfully improve the skills and confidence they need for work and everyday life. The vast majority of adult students enrolled on access to higher education courses achieve their qualifications and progress to higher education at their first choice of university.
- College managers and leaders have been successful in reducing achievement gaps between different groups of students. Leaders and managers have recognised previous gaps and introduced strategies to address them; this has had a positive impact on students' progress. For example, an intense year of workshops and interventions to

improve the achievement rate for male students in programmes such as construction proved successful in 2015. As a result, the achievement gap between male and female students reduced in 2015/16.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### Requires improvement

- The college has approximately 1,250 students following vocational study programmes at entry level to level 3, with similar numbers at each level. The largest subject areas are motor vehicle, engineering, construction, media and early years education.
- The quality of provision on study programmes, while improving, is not yet good. The majority of students on study programmes fail to improve their skills in English relevant to their vocational areas. However, students' mathematics skills improve in the minority of vocational sessions. For example, in travel and tourism, students calculate passenger to crew ratios. Too few students achieve their English and mathematics qualifications. Leaders and managers know that students' achievement on study programmes needs to improve and have developed plans and systems to support this improvement. However, the impact of this is not yet evident in all subject areas.
- Attendance in the majority of sessions, particularly English and mathematics, is too low, which means that many students miss work that could help them achieve their qualifications and make good progress.
- Although improving, managers have not yet ensured sufficient arrangements for all students to complete meaningful external work experience as part of their study programmes. While the vast majority of students in care, tourism, hospitality, maritime, and hair and beauty therapies benefit from work experience, other sector areas do not have this opportunity.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across different subjects. In too many theory lessons, teachers do not plan activities well enough to make sure all students make the progress expected of them.
- Students' targets do not deal with all aspects of their development. Typically, they are set generic targets rather than useful targets focused on the skills they need to be successful in their courses, careers and further studies.
- In the current year, the majority of students studying vocational subjects develop good practical skills and knowledge and use industry-relevant language to prepare them for their future careers. They benefit from good-quality, impartial careers advice to help them plan their future careers and progression. As a result, the majority of students progress to positive destinations that include further and higher education, apprenticeships and employment.
- Teachers use their industry expertise well to make vocational learning interesting and relevant. For example, students working on shipwright joinery skills complete complex projects supported by experienced and highly qualified teachers to prepare them for employment.
- Most students display good behaviour and respect each other. They work well in groups, taking part in collaborative projects. For example, second year performing arts students



support the first year students' drama production, organising sound, lighting and stage management.

## Adult learning programmes

## Requires improvement

- The college has around 3,100 adult students on courses from entry level to level 3, with progression routes to higher education. Most students enrol on professional and vocational courses in health and social care, electrical installation, learning support, accounting, hairdressing and beauty therapy. Large numbers also study ESOL, English, and mathematics courses.
- While there is some good provision on adult programmes, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across all subject areas. Managers have identified areas for improvement and early indications show that actions are having a positive impact. For example, functional skills achievement rates have significantly improved when compared to a similar time last year. Many of the adult students are studying on short courses where they are achieving good outcomes.
- In the minority of lessons, teachers fail to meet individual students' needs and do not apply effective strategies to include those most and least able. These students often become bored or struggle to understand the topic before the teacher moves on to the next topic. The majority of teachers know their students well and use the information to devise learning activities to meet their needs and make sure they are progressing sufficiently well.
- Teachers do not routinely mark classroom work and homework and, as a result, students do not always know what they have to do to improve. Teachers set students targets that are frequently generic and focus on very broad activities, rather than on the skills, knowledge and understanding required to improve and prepare the students for work or progression.
- Managers work effectively with partners and employers to develop provision and relevant projects to give adult students opportunities to study and progress successfully into local employment.
- In many professional courses, students develop good communication and debating skills that prepare them well for their future career. For example, in a Trade Union Congress course, students used a work-based scenario to discuss topics with good consideration of policy and procedure matters to develop their skills.
- Students on the access to higher education programmes develop good research and critical thinking skills that they need to progress to higher education. Teachers have high expectations and, as a result, the vast majority who complete their course gain a place at a university.
- In vocational courses, students develop good practical skills at industry standards to help them secure meaningful employment. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, students benefit from well-resourced salons and work to current professional standards with their clients.
- Managers successfully recruit students from a wide range of disadvantaged geographical areas and diverse ethnic backgrounds. Teachers use initial assessment and interviews well to identify each student's starting point, previous experience and expectations. As a

result, most students enrol on the right level of course, especially those students on ESOL courses.

- The large majority of students demonstrate good standards of behaviour and develop high levels of confidence and enhanced skills in speaking and presentation. In ESOL and mathematics classes, teachers use group and pair work well to enhance students' social skills through teamwork. For example, students in a mathematics class undertook an activity involving estimating distances jumping from a standing start, measuring actual jumps and then charting this data and calculating averages.

## Apprenticeships

## Requires improvement

- The college provides apprenticeships primarily for the engineering, construction and maritime industries. At the time of inspection, around 800 apprentices were in training, nearly half of whom are on advanced apprenticeships, with the remainder studying at intermediate level and a small number on higher apprenticeships. A quarter of these apprentices study through subcontractors.
- Monitoring of apprentices' progress and target setting require improvement. Assessors set apprentices targets that are too vague, and focus insufficiently on the skills apprentices need to develop for the workplace. A small number of assessors do not monitor apprentices' progress accurately and report this to their employers and, as a result, progress for the minority of adult apprentices is slow. The minority of apprentices use their English and mathematics skills as part of their on-the-job training and their written work and mathematics skills are not good enough.
- The number of apprentices who leave their programme early is declining. Leaders' and managers' restructuring of the teaching and assessing team and improvements in accountability have been successful in improving progress for the majority of apprentices. As a result, the majority of apprentices are achieving within the expected time in the current year.
- Careers advice for apprentices is not yet good and, as a result, the number of apprentices who progress from intermediate to advanced level requires improvement. Progression into permanent employment for the vast majority is good. Apprentices benefit from additional qualifications and training beyond the requirement of the apprenticeship framework. For example, in motor vehicle, apprentices train in the latest manufacturers' diagnostic software, and in information technology they train in fault diagnosis. However, college managers do not monitor the long-term impact of the apprenticeship with regard to apprentices' subsequent increases in responsibility, pay or promotion.
- Leaders and managers use local employment information well to help reduce skills shortages and meet the needs of employers across the city and surrounding area. Leaders and managers meet all the requirements of the apprenticeship standards and frameworks and prepare the majority of apprentices well for future employment.
- Managers and assessors have not made sure all employers understand all the requirements of the apprentice framework so that they are able to support their apprentices to make good progress. However, the majority of employers ensure that apprentices work alongside other professionals in the workplace to maximise learning opportunities. Assessors are experienced practitioners with current occupational knowledge that they use well to coach apprentices, for example in embedding sustainable

building principles and practices in the construction sector.

- Apprentices behave well and demonstrate high standards of professional behaviour. Most are confident, integrate well into busy workplaces, and make a positive contribution to their businesses. A significant minority gain additional responsibility for projects that help improve company efficiency. For example, one advanced information technology apprentice developed software tutorials for staff to help reduce the numbers of calls to the company helpdesk. Apprentices with identified needs receive good support to achieve their qualifications. Several apprentices have been allocated additional time and a reader to support them during exams.
- Apprentices acquire a wide range of very good workplace skills that employers value, for example self-reliance, teamworking, problem solving and diagnostic skills. In service sectors, apprentices gain good skills in customer care and are polite, efficient and respectful and, as a result, the vast majority remain in employment on completion of their training.
- Most assessors plan training and assessments well to meet the different needs of apprentices based on their prior learning and experience. In hairdressing, apprentices have a clear plan for on-the-job training and skills to develop between assessor visits. However, in other sectors, a minority of assessors do not share plans for their site visits and, as a result, many apprentices and employers are unsure of the purpose of visits.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	130696
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of students	16–18, 19+
Approximate number of all students over the previous full contract year	5,520
Principal/CEO	Ms Sarah Stannard
Telephone number	02380 577201
Website	<a href="http://www.southampton-city.ac.uk">www.southampton-city.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	225	1272	493	889	268	646	0	296
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	139	150	126	260	0	78		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	1		1		2			
Number of students aged 14 to 16	29 school partnership links							
Number of students for which the provider receives high-needs funding	33							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency, Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Kiwi Education Limited (10045085) MYF Training Limited (10032126) Rosewood Free School The Construction Skills People Limited (10030802) The Costa Enterprise Academy Limited (10046679)							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the assistant principal, curriculum and quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

## Inspection team

Kate Hill, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Shane Langthorne	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jo-Ann Henderson	Ofsted Inspector
Jill Arnold	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Alun Maddocks	Ofsted Inspector
Lyn Bourne	Ofsted Inspector
Roland White	Ofsted Inspector

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