

The Isle of Wight College

General further education college

Inspection dates 23–26 May 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	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good	Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Outstanding

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Adult learning programmes and the provision for students in receipt of high-needs funding are outstanding. Students achieve their qualifications and develop a very good range of skills that prepare them well for employment.
- Apprentices make good progress from their starting points; the vast majority achieve their qualifications and contribute positively in their workplace. Most apprentices are given additional responsibilities, get promoted and gain permanent employment.
- Students develop good, industry-standard skills, attitudes and knowledge. As a result, the vast majority progress to employment or further study on completion of their programmes.
- Staff have created an environment where students feel valued. Behaviour is good, students enjoy their studies and they are respectful of each other.
- Senior managers and governors have an unremitting focus on the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning, which leads to sustained improvements in students' progress.

- Leaders, managers and governors are highly responsive to the needs of employers and the community, which they meet exceptionally well. As a result, they have designed a comprehensive curriculum and students have access to high-quality, industry-specialist facilities and resources.
- Students benefit from a very effective range of support services, which are implemented to enable all students to make good progress despite barriers to learning they may have.
- Too few students achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics, and not enough achieve a grade A* to C in GCSE English.
- Students benefit from effective target-setting, which ensures that they complete work and achieve their qualifications in a timely manner. However, teachers rarely set specific actions that support students to improve the standard of their work or focus on the development of their wider personal skills.



Full report

Information about the provider

- The Isle of Wight College is a general further education college situated on the outskirts of Newport and with a broad curriculum. The college offers further education programmes in 15 sector subject areas. It delivers apprenticeships, 16 to 19 study programmes, adult learning programmes and provision for students in receipt of highneeds funding.
- The Isle of Wight College is the island's major provider of further education. Although it is part of the South East region in geographical terms, the island is physically and economically separated from the mainland. The community has a large ageing population and unemployment rates are higher than those in the South East.
- The number of young people leaving school with a grade A* to C in GCSE mathematics and English is significantly below the national average and many students attending the college arrive with very low grades.
- The island has a significant number of home-educated young people and the college works with a number of them, giving them access to courses to enable them to study further.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of 16- to 18-year-old students who achieve their mathematics and English qualifications or improve their GCSE grade, by:
 - ensuring that teachers promote the benefits to students of achieving these qualifications and improve attendance in lessons
 - continuing to implement and review the well-planned strategies already in place to improve the teaching, learning and assessment of mathematics and English.
- Improve the quality of targets set by staff for students by ensuring that:
 - assessors set targets to support apprentices in improving their written skills
 - teachers set and review clear and precise targets for all students that not only support them to achieve their qualifications, but focus on the development of their wider skills development and areas for improvement.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the college and have set a clear and simple mission of 'students first', which is fully understood by every member of staff and as a result, expectations for students are very high.
- Leaders and governors have secured extensive funding, which they have invested in state-of-the-art capital projects and resources. Students benefit from high-quality learning environments and industry-standard equipment and facilities in a number of key vocational areas. For example, they have created a new centre for composites, advanced manufacturing and marine to meet expanding industry demand for high-skilled employees.
- Leaders and managers recognise the decline in overall achievement rates on 16 to 19 study programmes due to poor English and mathematics results. They have taken decisive action to improve the progress students make in developing these skills and in achieving qualifications, which is now improving.
- Leaders and managers evaluate the provision thoroughly and have an accurate picture of the college's performance; they know its key strengths and weaknesses very well. They use this information well to implement improvement plans across the college and with subcontractors, who they manage highly effectively.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and quickly pinpoint the areas that require further development. They make excellent use of staff development and training opportunities to develop the skills of their workforce and secure improvements, which are valued by staff. Managers implement performance management processes well to tackle underperformance.
- Leaders and managers meet the needs of employers, the local community and the local authority exceptionally well. Through well-managed and informed curriculum planning, students benefit from a comprehensive range of provision which meets local and regional priorities. For example, the Pathways provision, for students with complex and multiple learning difficulties, meets the needs very well of the local authority as the only post-19 provider of this provision on the island.
- Partnership working is excellent and extensive. Leaders and managers are highly responsive to the needs of employers, very often developing bespoke training and apprenticeship programmes to meet the specific needs of local companies. The college contributes to the economic development and future workforce development of the island community, playing a key strategic role. As a result, it makes a significant contribution to meeting the skills shortage areas identified by the local enterprise partnership.
- Leaders, managers and staff ensure that there is a culture of tolerance, respect and safety for all students. Students contribute to the college community through well-managed democratic processes, including the appointment to the board of three student governors.



The governance of the provider

- Governors have a highly relevant set of skills, knowledge and experience which they use to good effect in order to challenge senior leaders and managers robustly, to maintain high standards. They have a good understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses. They are very clear about the actions and interventions put in place to mitigate any detrimental impact on students. They monitor and pursue these rigorously and unremittingly and as a result underperforming courses have improved.
- Governors contribute to and support excellent partnership-working with local businesses, the community and the local enterprise partnership. As a result, leaders have been able to secure significant capital investment into exceptional specialist facilities and resources, meeting the needs of students, employers and the community.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, managers and staff successfully manage safeguarding and apply appropriate policies, including safer recruitment, and procedures very well. Effective structures exist to refer safeguarding concerns both internally and to external support agencies, with whom the safeguarding team have excellent working relationships.
- Students and apprentices feel safe and have a very clear understanding of how to be safe in college and online. They know how to protect themselves and their peers from potential threats, including the risk of radicalisation and extremist views, and how to report safeguarding concerns to staff and assessors.
- Leaders and managers have implemented the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty well. Training for staff and students has been widespread and effective in ensuring a good understanding across the college community and for those on distance-learning programmes. The designated safeguarding lead works effectively with the local authority to ensure referrals to the Channel programme are made appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of students. They use teaching, learning and assessment methods which are effective in helping students to achieve and make progress. As a result, students enjoy their learning and are motivated to achieve.
- Teachers and assessors are well qualified, have very good industry knowledge and experience and use the specialist resources well to develop students' practical skills. For example, information and communication technology (ICT) apprentices use their design skills well by designing high-profile environmental projects, such as plastics recycling. Students completing sports qualifications with UK Sailing Academy develop additional skills in paddle boarding and windsurfing.
- The vast majority of teachers accurately assess students' progress and provide regular, clear feedback on how to improve. Teachers make effective use of a new monitoring system to discuss progress with students, and students reflect well on the tasks they have achieved. However, targets that teachers set for students focus too often on unit and qualification achievement and do not relate closely enough to the feedback given on how



to improve their standards of work or develop their wider personal skills.

- Additional learning support staff carefully identify students' different needs and any additional help that they may require to be successful on their course. Staff put in place suitable support quickly and, as a result, students stay on their programme and achieve their qualifications. Students on traineeships receive specialist one-to-one support to help them gain confidence and prepare them for work placements.
- Teachers and support staff have developed high-quality online learning resources. Students in the majority of curriculum areas use these materials regularly and effectively in and outside the classroom to revise and extend their learning. Students enjoy working in the dedicated independent learning areas where they develop further their ICT skills.
- Teachers assess effectively the skills and abilities that students have when they start their course. They use this information well to ensure that students are on the appropriate programme and at the right level, including in mathematics and English. As a result, very few students withdraw from their programme of study.
- Teachers and assessors develop students' mathematics and English skills well. Robust tracking and monitoring of each student ensures that early interventions are put in place for those who need support. Students know how to apply mathematics skills appropriately in their vocational sessions. Teachers of study programmes develop students' vocational terminology well.
- Teachers raise students' understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity through well-designed tasks and activities that give students the confidence to discuss and explore relevant aspects. For example, beauty therapy students explore the differences in skin tone between males, females and ethnic groups, and graphic design students produce well-thought-out campaigns on racism and loneliness in old age.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- The large majority of students and apprentices demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They are positive about their courses and are keen to achieve their qualifications and move onto the next level of study or into employment. Students and apprentices are self-reliant and confident.
- Students' behaviour is very good in lessons and around the college. Students are polite, courteous and highly respectful to staff and visitors. The majority of students are punctual and ready to learn. Teachers have high expectations and classroom management is good. Teachers develop good strategies to help students with learning difficulties and disabilities manage challenging situations and remain in lessons.
- Students take pride in their work, which is of a good standard. They develop good vocational and employability skills which are relevant to their subject of study. For example, in art and design students proudly display their work developing a two- to three-dimensional concept using a 3D printer. Apprentices make a valuable contribution to employers' businesses.
- Teachers work closely with students on the college introductory Insights programme to ensure that they develop the relevant life skills to move into other full-time education, training or employment. These students often lack confidence and have not had a positive experience in education. As a result, students on these programmes progress well and



develop the appropriate attitudes to learning.

- A high proportion of students participate in a range of activities outside their lessons, such as community work, charity activities and work-related projects, including work experience. They develop valuable skills for future employment, such as team building and working to tight deadlines. In many curriculum areas, teachers work with employers to set assignment briefs that give students a valuable insight into their chosen area of work. In the college restaurant and the hairdressing salon, students develop good customer service skills.
- Students' attendance on the vast majority of programmes is good. Managers monitor attendance closely. While this has resulted in improved attendance on most programmes, in GCSE English and mathematics lessons for 16- to 19-year-olds it remains low, as is attendance on functional skills English and mathematics courses.
- Students benefit from highly effective advice before they start their course and during their time at college to support them make decisions about their future. The experienced careers adviser, supported by the student progress advisers, has developed excellent links in the local area and works closely with students and curriculum staff to ensure that students are aware of opportunities for progression. As a result, the vast majority of students are prepared well for their next steps and move on to further levels of study or employment.
- Students feel safe, know how to raise concerns and have a good understanding of personal safety, including online safety. They feel safe from bullying and many identify how their confidence has grown since attending the college. Staff take the opportunity to discuss recent national events and the majority of students understand the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation.
- Senior managers and staff have developed an inclusive learning environment where students are tolerant and understanding towards others, in and outside the college. Students demonstrate their understanding of life in modern Britain through discussions about the right to vote and freedom of speech.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The vast majority of students on all provision types complete their courses and achieve their qualifications. They make good progress, which enables them to move on to further or higher education, training or employment.
- On 16 to 19 study programmes, which accounts for the largest number of students, the proportion who achieve their main qualification is high. Students develop good practical and vocational skills which reflect industry standards and support them to progress to the next level of study.
- Students who come to the college without a grade C or higher in English and mathematics GCSE are supported well to take appropriate courses to develop these skills. Current students make expected progress from very low starting points. However, the proportion of students aged 16 to 18 who achieve a grade C or higher in English is too low. Adult students who take the GCSE achieve a grade C or higher at a higher rate. Overall achievement of English and mathematics qualifications requires improvement.
- The proportion of adults who achieve their qualification is very high. Achievement rates



are particularly high for the range of level 2 qualifications taught through distance learning, which is the majority of courses. Students describe how the knowledge they acquire helps them in their day-to-day work. Adults on access to higher education courses have outstanding achievement and most are successful in gaining places at prestigious universities.

- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications within agreed timescales is very good, as is the proportion who achieve overall. This is particularly the case for advanced-level apprentices. Apprentices make good progress at work which leads to them taking on additional responsibilities, promotion and permanent employment. Employers value highly the contribution they make to their business. The majority of apprentices achieve their functional skills qualifications at the first attempt.
- Students' practical work and skills development is of a good standard. In a few cases students' written work is not of the required standard expected within industry or to support them to progress to higher levels of study, particularly for advanced-level apprentices.
- The cohort of traineeships is very small and students make good progress in the development of personal and work-related skills and the majority move into employment or further education.
- Students for whom the college receives high-needs funding and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress and achieve well. Those who undertake supported internships develop good skills that prepare them for future employment. Most other students develop their independence skills well and progress to higher levels of study.
- Managers closely monitor the performance of different groups of students. Where they identify differences, effective strategies have been implemented to address them. As a result, there are no significant or consistent achievement gaps between groups of students.
- The small number of children looked after and care leavers make good progress.

 Managers have clearly identified where there was a dip in achievement rates last year and have worked hard to address this. As a result, the proportion of students who have stayed on courses this year has improved.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The College has 1,363 students aged 16 to 19 on study programmes across 15 subject areas, from entry level through to level 3. The largest groups of students are on engineering and construction courses.
- Leaders and managers plan individual study programmes effectively with a wide range of additional qualifications and activities outside lessons. For example, in catering students complete additional food safety qualifications and in beauty therapy students develop their skills in nail art and attend competitions.
- Teachers use their vocational subject knowledge and extensive industry experience very well to make learning interesting and relevant. As a result, students develop their



practical skills and apply theoretical concepts effectively. For example, painting and decorating students secured the first prize in the regional heats of WorldSkills competitions through skilful coaching by staff, and in catering students prepared a variety of dishes for a private party of 50 people, within challenging deadlines.

- Teachers plan effectively a range of activities in lessons, which students enjoy, and the majority of students make good progress and achieve their qualifications. However, in the minority of theory lessons, where students work independently on assignments, students are not sufficiently challenged and all work at the same pace until the end of the lesson. As a result, a minority of students do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers develop students' mathematics and English skills effectively to use technical vocabulary and in problem-solving. For example, in engineering students are able to name processes required for industry and relate practical activities to theoretical knowledge in terms of material properties, and solve technical and complex problems. In art and design, students were able to calculate and cost commissions accurately, discussing hourly wages, time allocations and the cost of resources.
- Teachers plan a structured programme of work-related learning and activities well, including external work experience. Students develop confidence and work-related skills. For example, performing arts students create a professional performance piece of work from an assignment set by the event organisers, in order to participate in the community Mardis Gras. Students on sports courses teach physical education at local primary schools. However, external work experience is not as well established in all subject areas.
- Students feel safe and use safe working practices, as a result of which they have a good awareness of industry-related risks. For example, level 3 engineering students complete risk assessments in an industrial setting, and are able to justify clearly their ranking of assessments.
- Staff provide additional support services which are comprehensive and easily accessible to students. Attendance by students has been good at workshops on anxiety management, delivered prior to examinations, and staff successfully promoted and hosted a public health event. Students know how to keep themselves healthy both physically and emotionally.
- Students' behaviour is good. They are considerate and respectful of each other and the environment. Teachers promote awareness of current world issues and students are very aware of radicalisation and its relevance to their personal lives. They discuss confidently the measures they can take to stay safe and identify behaviours indicative of high risk.

Adult learning programmes

Outstanding

- At the time of inspection, the college had around 1,700 students aged 19 and over. The large majority, over 1,200, were on part-time distance-learning level 2 programmes. Substantial numbers of adults also study mathematics, English and access to higher education programmes, with smaller numbers being taught alongside 16 to 19 study programme students in a variety of curriculum areas.
- Leaders, managers and teachers plan and design the adult curriculum carefully and exceptionally well to ensure that it meets the needs of the community and local employers. The suite of very bespoke and highly professional distance learning



programmes has been designed specifically to equip adults with the appropriate skills to secure permanent and long-lasting careers. Employers value highly the flexibility these courses offer them and their employees.

- Students on distance learning programmes receive highly effective advice and guidance to ensure that they are aware of the nature, scope and commitment required to be successful in their chosen qualification. Staff use a thorough interview and selection process to assess students for their suitability for the course and agree a bespoke individual learning plan.
- Adult students benefit from individualised learning programmes, supported by carefully planned tasks, both in class and online. For example, in GCSE mathematics and English sessions students work on topics that become increasingly complex and they are regularly challenged to attempt much more complex questions. In hair and beauty, students identify areas of skills development in which they are less confident. Teachers support and provide additional time and professional guidance to make the necessary improvements. As a result, students make excellent progress and achieve their qualifications.
- Teachers give students regular, detailed feedback which clearly identifies areas for development and how they can make improvements. In level 3 electrical installation and GCSE mathematics and English, students are confident that the focused feedback highlighting areas for development has enhanced their progress, enabling them to improve swiftly and develop confidence in their examination preparation. Students have very high expectations of themselves and what they want to achieve.
- Leaders and managers ensure that all adult students have access to the wide range of college support services. As a result, students feel exceptionally well supported and are fully integrated into college life. Students' attendance is excellent, they are punctual and ready to learn. Individuals flourish in the nurturing environment and gain the confidence they require to achieve both academically and personally.
- Students develop mathematics and English skills very well and use these skills effectively in their job roles and vocational studies. However, the achievement rates in 2015/16 for the small minority that took functional skills were too low. Current students are now making very good progress.
- Students develop very effective independent learning and research skills. They take responsibility for their learning and development. They are able to plan effectively and create reflective logs to evaluate their progress.

Apprenticeships

Good

- The college has 539 apprentices, of whom 288 are on intermediate, 233 on advanced and 13 on higher apprenticeships. The majority of apprentices follow frameworks in engineering and manufacturing, health and social care, and business administration. Smaller numbers complete apprenticeships in retail and warehousing, information technologies, hairdressing, hospitality and catering, horticulture and animal care.
- Senior leaders and managers work very closely with local employers and the community to ensure that the apprenticeships meet employers' needs very well. As a result, apprenticeship numbers have increased and staff have maintained high achievement



rates. Current apprentices are making very good progress and developing the skills to do their jobs well.

- Assessors ensure that employers are closely involved in the delivery of apprenticeship programmes. Employers value the frequency of visits and regular reviews to monitor apprentices' progress, and they work closely with assessors to coordinate the on- and off-the-job training. As a result, apprentices develop the right skills and knowledge which enable them to make good progress from their starting points.
- Assessors embed mathematics and digital skills well. Apprentices use these newly acquired skills very well in the workplace. In engineering, apprentices routinely work in both imperial and metric measurements and interpret test data to diagnose faults and solve problems. Employers value apprentices' digital skills and often use their expertise to update existing staff in the use of specialist software.
- The large majority of apprentices achieve their English and mathematics qualifications, develop good communication and listening skills and become more confident verbally. However, they are not routinely encouraged to practise their writing skills in the workplace or proofread their work. As a result, too much of their written work includes spelling mistakes and grammatical errors, or is not of a sufficiently high standard to support apprentices' progress to a higher-level qualification. Assessors do not set specific improvement targets to address this.
- Support for apprentices is very effective. Staff carefully identify apprentices' individual needs at the start of their programme to ensure that they study at the correct level and plan any additional support effectively. Staff adapt learning materials, the length of the programme and the frequency of visits to the workplace according to apprentices' needs. As a result, few apprentices leave the programme early and those with identified needs make good progress and achieve at least as well as their peers.
- Apprentices develop good industry skills and demonstrate the expected behaviours required for their sectors. Apprentices quickly gain in confidence and integrate well into bustling workplaces through the development of good teamworking skills. Engineering apprentices produce work that is often subject to high levels of external scrutiny for the marine, aviation, road transport and defence industries. Health and social care apprentices become compassionate carers who treat clients with dignity and respect.
- Apprentices benefit from the opportunity to do additional activities and courses, such as entering skills competitions. Recently, two apprentices were runners-up in a regional competition in painting, decorating and brickwork, and will represent the college and their companies at the national finals.
- Apprentices adopt safe working practices. They fully understand how they must keep themselves and others safe in some particularly hazardous situations. They know how to stay safe online and protect themselves from identity fraud and exploitation. Assessors are introducing discussions on how to be vigilant against radicalisation and extremism but for a small minority of apprentices too little emphasis is placed on how they relate this to their particular workplace and associated risks.

Provision for learners with high needs

Outstanding

■ The college currently has 160 students in receipt of high-needs funding. Over half of



these students are on discrete Pathways entry and foundation courses, 12 are on supported internships and the remainder are supported on the vocational study programme courses at entry level to level 2.

- Leaders and managers have a very strong focus on meeting the demand for high-needs provision on the island. They use the funding exceptionally well to ensure that the provision is carefully planned and designed. The varied range of programmes ensures that students take highly individualised and challenging courses that prepare them very well for future employment and/or greater independence in their everyday lives.
- Leaders and managers work extremely well with the local authority to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are met where appropriate. The college has received significant capital and development funding to ensure that high-quality facilities and resources are available to meet the needs of these students. Students benefit from outstanding hydrotherapy and sensory stimulation facilities.
- A highly specialist teaching and support team provides outstanding support to students with multiple and complex needs. Staff review support regularly and adjust it over time, for example as students become more independent. Staff have a very clear understanding of the needs of students and use this exceptionally well to ensure that they make excellent progress.
- The assessment of students' needs and the transition of students into college is exceptional. Students benefit from a highly effective induction into the college through carefully planned events, such as reviews in schools, careers and parents' evenings and college taster sessions. Students with high levels of anxiety really value the experience of attending the summer school when it is quiet. As a result, they develop in confidence and gain an invaluable awareness of what to expect when they start their course.
- Teachers prepare students extremely well for employment. The majority of students participate in meaningful work experience, work tasting and/or community projects. A job coach supports students on the supported internship programme very effectively to develop the independent skills needed to enable students to travel to work, and to address learning difficulties to help them to sustain work.
- Teachers and support staff use reviews very effectively to record students' progress and achievements. Students reflect on their progress very well and as a result develop self-confidence and self-esteem. Staff and students use photographic and video evidence well to enable students to express their views. However, for a minority of students written feedback is not sufficient to enable them to identify what they need to do to improve.
- Students develop highly effective communication skills which enable them to increase their independence. Staff develop the communication of students with profound disabilities exceptionally well through the use of communication boards, technology, switches with digital recordings and simple yes/no responses, to allow greater interaction with staff and carers.
- Students achieve very well at college and the majority of students progress to vocational college courses, supported internships or employment. Students on vocational programmes achieve qualifications relevant to their career aims.
- Teachers carefully plan classroom sessions to support the effective development of students' mathematics and English skills. Where accreditation is appropriate, students



achieve well in functional skills mathematics and English qualifications.

■ Teachers have very high expectations of their students. Teaching is lively and interesting, behaviour is well managed and students show respect to both staff and their peers. Students enjoy their studies and value the support they receive.



Provider details

Unique reference number 130724

Type of provider General further education college

4,457

Age range of learners 16–18/19+

Approximate number of all learners over the previous full

contract year

Principal/CEO Debbie Lavin

Telephone number 01983 526631

Website www.iwcollege.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		
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	
	425	189	412	1,274	526	273	0	11	
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		e Adva		nced		Higher		
	16–18	19)+	16–18	19+	16-	-18	19+	
	155	155 133		68	165	C	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19			19+			Total		
		14		6			20		
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	N/A								
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	160								
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency								
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Highbury College Southampton City College UK Sailing Academy Platform One Bridgewater College								



Information about this inspection

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

Inspection team

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