

South Devon College

General further education college

Inspection dates

31 October–3 November 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good	Full-time provision for 14- to 16-year-olds	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Outstanding

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- College leaders have implemented a mission for the college that focuses closely on the needs of the local community. This mission is at the heart of the college's curriculum and all its strategies.
- Very effective partnerships with stakeholders, including employers, shape the college's strategies, curriculum and resources that prepare learners well for employment in the local area.
- College leaders have very effectively engaged with employers to ensure that the college offers a wide range of high-quality work-experience placements and work-related learning.
- Teachers use their industrial experience and industry-standard resources well to develop learners' vocational skills and competences.
- Teachers deliver effective training for learners through which learners develop a deep understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and how to keep themselves safe, including when online.
- Managers have developed an extensive programme of activities which enriches learners' time at the college by providing them with opportunities to pursue interests and take part in competitions and work-related activities locally, nationally and internationally.
- College leaders have a strong and successful focus on progressing learners into higher education, which raises learners' aspirations to move on to higher level courses.
- Learners demonstrate high standards of behaviour, professionalism and readiness to progress into employment. However, their attendance at lessons is too low.
- College leaders do not take action quickly enough to prevent weaknesses, such as in learners' attendance and some declining qualification outcomes, and so having a negative effect on learners' progress.
- The proportion of learners who achieve functional skills qualifications is low and has fallen over the previous four years. The proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship has also fallen over the previous four years. However, of those who complete their apprenticeship, a high proportion do so by their planned end date.
- Learners aged 16 to 19 on level 3 vocational study programmes do not achieve the grades of which they are capable.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations that their learners, particularly the most able, can complete challenging work, including in the provision for 14- to 16-year-olds.

Full report

Information about the provider

- South Devon College is a large general further education college which mostly serves the communities of Torbay and neighbouring areas of Teignbridge and South Hams. Most learners attend the college's main site in Paignton, with others attending centres in Newton Abbot, Torquay, Heathfield and Noss on Dart. A very large proportion of apprentices are employed in companies in South Devon. Most of the college's funding for further education provision is for 16 to 19 study programmes, with approximately nine out of 10 16- to 18-year-olds on vocational courses. Adult provision and apprenticeships account for approximately a third of the funding the college receives. The college provides full-time and part-time education for learners aged 14 to 16 through the South Devon High School, which is located on its site in Paignton.
- The Torbay area has areas of deprivation characteristic of many coastal communities. The percentage of children in low-income families is higher than the average for England, and average earnings are low. A low proportion of people are employed in professional occupations and a relatively high proportion are employed in low-skilled jobs. A high proportion of 16-year-olds, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, achieve high grades in GCSE English and mathematics ('high grades' refers to grades A* to C, or grades 9 to 4 for GCSEs in English and mathematics taken in 2017). The proportion of people in work in the area is high, with a relatively high proportion of self-employed workers.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Managers should identify areas for improvement swiftly and accurately to arrest the decline in learners' achievement of qualifications.
- Teachers should set learners specific, measurable and increasingly challenging targets, and monitor their progress towards achieving these rigorously, to ensure sustained improvements in learners' achievements over time.
- Teachers should make sure that activities enable learners of all abilities to achieve the highest grades of which they are capable, especially in provision for 14- to 16-year-old learners and vocational study programmes.
- Teachers should ensure that learners understand the importance of English and mathematics as part of their programme and they should support learners to attend lessons and achieve qualifications in these subjects.
- Managers and teachers should ensure that apprentices complete and achieve their functional skills qualifications more quickly. Across the whole of their apprenticeship programme, teachers should set targets for the skills and knowledge apprentices need to develop and closely monitor apprentices' progress in completing these.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers at all levels have excellent relationships with a very wide range of partners, employers and stakeholders who consider the college to be a positive, proactive and supportive partner. Senior leaders place their responsibility to support the needs of businesses and to meet the skills gaps within the region at the heart of all developments. Senior leaders have made sure that, through these partnerships, the curriculum and college's resources enable learners to gain employment. These partnerships foster the economic development of the Torbay and South Devon community. For example, they have worked with the local NHS trust to develop programmes to fill very specific gaps in its workforce development.
- Effective and impartial careers advice and guidance support learners to plan their future effectively. The provision of enrichment and extra-curricular activities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally further extends and enhances learners' experiences and raises their aspirations. The large majority of learners benefit from a range of well-considered work-experience placements and work-related learning.
- Leaders and managers have worked sensibly to improve the process by which they evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Professional development for teachers is now more bespoke to each teacher's needs and more sharply focused on improving learners' progress. However, this approach has not yet resulted in consistently high standards of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders, managers and governors have, as a strategic priority, increased considerably the number of teachers and resources for teaching and learning English and mathematics. As a result, the proportion of higher grades in GCSEs, particularly in mathematics, increased in 2016/17. However, these measures have not yet prevented the decline in the achievement of learners on functional skills programmes. Learners do not improve their English and mathematical skills in all curriculum areas and at all levels well enough.
- The majority of middle managers have identified the key areas of weakness accurately, although not always quickly enough to secure improvements in a timely manner. Senior leaders have not taken account sufficiently of the weaknesses identified in curriculum areas when evaluating the college. For example, in the most recent self-assessment report, nearly half the curriculum areas were graded lower than the college's overall assessment. They recognise the limitations of the quality assurance process and are implementing revisions, but it is too early to see the impact of these changes.
- Leaders and managers, through the college's quality improvement and self-assessment processes, have not been able to improve quickly enough the low achievements of learners in functional skills and the declining achievements of apprentices. Insufficient numbers of learners gain high grades. Leaders did not identify weaknesses and take action swiftly enough, for example in their oversight of the South Devon High School.
- Leaders are now taking appropriate actions to improve how they evaluate strengths and weaknesses in curriculum areas and hasten the impact of quality improvement plans. However, it is too early to see the outcomes and impact of these changes. Managers have clear and timely performance indicators to measure and improve their performance.

The governance of the provider

- Governors know the college well and understand its strengths and the areas identified by senior managers that require further improvement. In partnership with the senior leadership team, they have set the strategic direction of the college, its vision and values and fully support the leadership team in pursuing ambitious plans for the future. They contribute to, and fully support, the strategic engagement with key stakeholders and employers and many play an active role with employers.
- Governors provide appropriate challenge to senior managers and hold them to account through the monitoring of improvement plans and key performance indicators. They use their wide range of expertise and skills well to support key priorities, such as safeguarding and the college's finances.
- Governors engage with learners, staff and stakeholders regularly through visits to classrooms, focus groups and the inclusion of learner and staff governors. They value highly what learners tell them and respond well to concerns that learners raise. They recognise the valuable and insightful contributions that the learner governors bring to the board. They are very keen to ensure that the college remains welcoming to all and invests resources appropriately in its people.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Learners and apprentices feel safe at the college, have a good understanding of potential risks and know how to protect themselves. They receive an appropriate induction to the college, which includes safeguarding, and they take part in a wide range of enrichment and tutorial activities which focus on key safeguarding themes appropriate to their age and level of study. Learners are aware of, and use, the support available to them through the positive intervention team at the college and also the lines of communication open to them to report any instances of bullying or harassment or other concerns. Leaders, managers and staff respond effectively to any issues raised and work closely with external agencies to keep learners safe.
- Leaders and managers have implemented the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty very well and learners demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. British values are fully integrated into the values of the college, and learners and staff demonstrate them throughout the college and in the workplace. Managers have well-established partnerships with a wide range of external support organisations and learners are effectively supported to access these when appropriate.
- Staff recruitment procedures are effective, with a comprehensive scrutiny of the suitability of candidates. All staff receive safeguarding training that is appropriate to their role, and attention to effective health and safety procedures is strong both within the college and for off-site activities and in the workplace.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers use their industrial experience effectively to enliven teaching and learning and teach the skills and knowledge that learners need to progress to their next stage of

education, training or employment. As a result, learners enjoy their learning, become more confident and gain a clear insight into the jobs or higher education courses to which they aspire.

- Learners benefit from extremely good resources to support their learning. Teachers use technology very well to make lessons interesting for learners and to provide useful resources and activities for learners to complete for homework and research outside lessons. In many curriculum areas, such as media, performing arts, and hair and beauty, learners use blogs to develop their professional and web-based communication skills.
- Teachers keep workshops and resources up to industry standards. This benefits learners by ensuring that the skills they develop are commensurate with contemporary practice in industry. For example, learners on healthcare courses use a very well-equipped suite that simulates hospital and domiciliary care environments. A centre focused on energy and renewable technologies contains a full-sized house so that construction learners can practise a wide range of skills such as working at height and the safe use of scaffolding.
- Teachers increase learners' understanding of different cultures through an excellent tutorial programme, discussions, guest speakers and visits. For example, learners from construction and public services visited a local Islamic centre, where the imam provided information that challenged negative conceptions of the Islamic faith. The tutorial programme and the careers guidance staff contribute to learners being well prepared for future study and employment through high-quality careers guidance and an excellent understanding of the employment and higher education opportunities available to learners.
- Support staff provide very good assistance to learners who need additional help and these learners are well supported in lessons and around college. They plan the support effectively through discussions with learners and parents prior to learners starting college and throughout the learners' time at college. Support staff provide very useful one-to-one support as well as a quiet space for learners who find busy environments difficult at times.
- Learners receive excellent guidance on the opportunities available to them at the college, and staff take a lot of care early in the year to ensure that learners settle into their courses. They provide very good help to those learners who feel that a course is not right for them and help them when necessary to move to another course in college or to another provider.
- Learners aged 14 to 16 and a minority of learners in vocational areas do not receive sufficiently challenging work to ensure that they reach their full potential. Although teachers give these learners additional work, this does not provide them with the opportunity to practise higher level skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving, or develop new practical skills. For example, a small number of apprentices do not receive helpful or clear guidance on how to develop new skills.
- The vast majority of learners produce work at the standard expected for their qualifications. Teachers provide learners with good verbal feedback both in theory sessions and during practical activities. Learners' development of practical skills is good. In a minority of cases, learners do not have clear enough information about what they need to do to improve the standard of their work or gain new skills quickly.
- Teachers do not consistently develop learners' English and mathematical skills relevant to

their subject or vocational area. The teaching of English and mathematics GCSEs has improved, which has led to an increase in the achievement of qualifications, particularly in mathematics, for both adults and 16- to 18-year-olds. However, some teachers of vocational subjects do not set work that develops the English and mathematical skills relevant to their vocational area. Teachers of functional skills do not ensure that enough learners achieve their qualifications.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners show high levels of confidence and commitment. They clearly articulate the skills that they have developed and how their time at the college has increased their confidence. They respond extremely well to their teachers' expectations for high standards of behaviour and professionalism. As a result, learners' behaviour around the college and in lessons is very good. Learners show mutual respect and are polite to their peers, colleagues and visitors.
- The majority of learners develop the skills that employers expect of their employees, such as personal presentation and effective communication. Learners receive positive and useful feedback from employers when they have undertaken work experience, which ensures that they understand the expectations employers have of their employees.
- Learners have access to a carefully chosen range of additional courses and qualifications, which enhances their chances of gaining employment or further training in their chosen sector. For example, early in their course, learners in security and event stewarding complete five additional qualifications, which improves their chances of gaining employment. Staff successfully raise some learners' aspirations by supporting them to take part in national and international activities and competitions. For example, some learners complete work experience abroad, others have performed well in skills competitions and learners' achievements have been recognised through awards in a very large number of sectors.
- The vast majority of full-time learners benefit from extremely well-organised collaboration between the college, industry representatives and employers. This collaboration leads to relevant work-experience placements, guest speakers or visits to employers. As a result, learners develop a good understanding of future careers options, and this places their learning into the context of the industries they aspire to join.
- Learners understand how to stay safe online and teachers use effective methods to reinforce this. For example, following a tutorial, learners understood how their use of social media could prevent others from feeling offended or hurt.
- Learners are highly tolerant and respectful of each other and can explain how they put democracy into practice, for example by electing course representatives. They develop their personal and social skills well through the wide range of additional activities that enrich their time at college. These include activities that the college has provided in response to learners' interests, such as archery, golf and a chess club. Learners with high needs are supported to join the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme to support their personal development, and learners aged 14 to 16 follow a programme to develop their communication, teamwork, problem-solving, customer service and organisational skills.
- Tutors provide an excellent tutorial programme through which learners gain a good

understanding of British society and world events.

- Learners do not attend lessons regularly enough. This is particularly the case in functional skills. Managers and teachers have not set and maintained high enough expectations. Until recently, they have not challenged absences quickly enough. However, the attendance of learners at South Devon High School is high.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Across the college, a high proportion of learners complete and achieve their qualifications. On A-level, access to higher education and full level 2 and 3 courses, the proportion has remained high for a long period of time. Learners gain the skills and knowledge they need to progress to the next stage of education, training or employment.
- A high proportion of learners progress to higher education as a result of the work by managers to raise learners' aspirations to go to higher education. They have done this partly through providing a wide range of higher education courses at the college for those learners who wish to stay in the local area. In addition, the number of learners progressing to universities, including those demanding the highest grades from applicants, has increased as a result of a wide range of activities to broaden learners' aspirations.
- As a result of the courses being designed well with local employers, and with a clear insight into the employment opportunities available in the local area, many learners progress into jobs.
- Around one in 10 learners aged 16 to 18 study A-level courses. These learners achieve the grades expected of them when taking into account their previous qualifications. However, learners aged 14 to 16 and learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 vocational courses do not achieve the expected grades. College leaders have started to take action to support the learners aged 16 to 18 on these courses to make better progress. On the one-year level 3 vocational courses, their actions have resulted in more learners achieving high grades in 2016/17.
- The previously high proportion of apprentices completing and achieving their qualifications has declined over the last four years and is now comparable with that of other similar colleges. A relatively high proportion of the apprentices who complete their apprenticeship do so within the expected timescale. However, this proportion has also declined over the last four years from its previously high level.
- The proportion of learners completing and achieving a high grade in GCSE English and mathematics has risen since 2015/16. Adults on these courses are particularly successful. However, the college's investment in English and mathematics has failed to arrest a steep decline in the proportion of learners completing and achieving their functional skills qualifications, which is now low.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The college provides study programmes for approximately 2,300 learners across levels 1 to 3. Nearly half are on a level 3 study programme, with around two thirds of these on a vocational study programme.
- Learners on study programmes benefit from teachers' industrial knowledge, experience and occupational skills. Teachers use these well to enthuse and motivate learners by illustrating how theories are applied in practice. As a result, learners develop a clear understanding of the skills required for moving on to further education or employment and the career options open to them. For example, in automotive engineering, learners clearly understand specialist career pathways.
- Learners are well behaved and respectful towards each other and they work well with their peers. For example, in media make-up, learners evaluated the quality of each other's work sensitively and offered constructive advice on how to produce higher standards of work in the future.
- Learners receive high-quality, impartial information, advice and guidance that ensure that they are on the correct study programmes for their chosen career path or their progression. Level 3 learners receive very good support when considering progressing to higher education. For example, managers arrange for high-achieving learners to visit universities that take the most able learners.
- Learners acquire good personal, social and employability skills, which prepare them for progression to the next level of study, employment or higher education. For example, within business and sport, they develop the confidence to make presentations, lead coaching sessions and develop good interpersonal and communication skills. Learners benefit from a part-time jobs fair and job shop provided by the college, which helps them understand the importance of developing their employment experience and contributes to them securing employment.
- Most teachers assess learners' work accurately and provide useful feedback. Learners use teachers' verbal feedback effectively and improve their occupational skills quickly. They take pride in their work and persevere to achieve high standards. For example, in carpentry, learners described how they repeated a task to hang a door until their work reached the high standard set by their teacher.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet employers' needs and the principles of the 16 to 19 study programme. Learners have access to a wide range of high-quality enrichment activities and the vast majority of learners benefit from work experience or work-related activities. For example, hairdressing learners develop their occupational skills through work experience in professional salons and some performing arts learners take part in 'living history' events at a local visitor attraction. However, a small number of learners do not benefit from external work experience to enhance their learning and prepare them for employment.
- Too few learners on vocational courses achieve the grades of which they are capable. Managers are now tackling this effectively through monitoring learners' progress more closely. They have recently introduced a system to improve their monitoring of learners'

progress as part of an effort to tackle this.

Apprenticeships

Good

- The college has 832 intermediate apprentices, 374 advanced apprentices and 81 higher apprentices. The majority of apprentices follow programmes in accounting and business management, construction, engineering, hospitality and sport.
- Apprenticeship programmes are well managed. Leaders and managers have made significant progress in increasing the range of apprenticeships to meet local and regional employers' needs. For example, in marine engineering and boat building, an employer has extended the apprenticeships provided by the college from a local marina to others in the region. Strong collaborative partnerships between the college and local employers have led to the college training apprentices in over 700 businesses.
- Apprentices in most areas achieve additional qualifications which both enhance their career prospects and improve their effectiveness in the workplace. For example, motor vehicle apprentices gain automotive technician accreditation, which improves the service their employers offer to customers.
- Employers and college staff work together very effectively to coach and develop apprentices' skills. They ensure that apprentices benefit from the opportunities to complete work at college that is relevant to their job, and experiment with new skills and techniques in a controlled environment. For example, an engineering apprentice, as part of her off-the-job training in product design, manufactured a storage unit to protect delicate optical fibres from damage.
- The close work between the college and employers ensures that many apprentices' training is closely linked to their workplace. For example, the marine academy apprentices' off-the-job training is in a working boatyard and dental technicians apprentices have some off-the-job training delivered in a local clinic.
- Most apprentices become effective and valued team members. They work well and progress their careers by taking on additional responsibilities.
- During their off-the-job training, apprentices benefit from access to well-resourced workshops of industry and commercial standards. Apprentices complement this training effectively by carrying out work on their own using good online resources. Employers frequently sponsor and donate equipment and resources. For example, a business donated high-specification computers for digital technology apprentices to run specialist 3-D design software.
- Apprentices increase their confidence as a result of trainers encouraging them to take part in a wide range of competitions and industry and community events at regional and national level. For example, at the national Skillbuild competition, a site carpentry apprentice achieved a bronze award, and accounting apprentices made a well-received presentation at the 2017 Federation of Small Businesses conference.
- Apprentices enjoy their learning. They ensure that they work safely and show good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and in the workplace.
- A minority of advanced-level apprentices, with previous experience or qualifications, find aspects of the off-the-job training too easy and are not given more difficult work to

develop their skills further.

- Trainers do not provide apprentices with sufficient information about how to improve further. Trainers set targets that inform apprentices what units they need to complete, but seldom identify the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to develop.
- Too many trainers do not set high enough expectations for apprentices' attendance at functional skills lessons, and college managers do not provide trainers with easily accessible information about apprentices' attendance at these subjects. As a result, too many apprentices take too long to achieve their functional skills qualifications. Trainers do not develop further the English and mathematical skills of those apprentices who already have English and mathematics qualifications.
- In a minority of vocational areas, too few apprentices complete their programme within the planned duration. Female apprentices do not achieve as well as their male peers and too few apprentices who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities successfully complete their apprenticeship.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- College leaders have expanded the provision for learners with high needs over recent years in response to local demand. Of the 174 current learners in receipt of high needs funding, 89 are on discrete programmes and the remainder are on mainstream programmes. Most learners are aged 16 to 18.
- Leaders have responded well to the increased demand for places for learners with high needs by increasing staff expertise and the range of specialist equipment and widening the curriculum offered to learners. Learners' programmes are designed specifically to help each of them develop their independence well. Learners become more involved in activities and benefit from high-quality work placements and additional experiences such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- Learners enjoy their time at the college and value the way they can progress from one level to the next, gaining life skills and qualifications that are useful for future employment. For example, learners develop their confidence to travel to college and work placements independently.
- Managers and leaders provide a comprehensive range of specialist support services that are coordinated well, including counselling and nursing care and help with housing, relationships, behaviour or attendance. Learners value the support from staff that helps them achieve qualifications and become more independent.
- Teachers and leaders ensure that learners are on the right course, feel comfortable at the college, settle quickly and become ready to learn. Learners benefit from a special learning centre for learners who have mental health difficulties and a quiet area where they can relax, use computers and take time out, which helps them manage their anxieties. This contributes to the large majority of learners completing their programme and making good progress.
- Learners benefit from individually tailored learning programmes that meet their needs and interests well. Learning support assistants provide bespoke classroom support that enables most learners on vocational and academic courses to take part fully in lessons and achieve well. Learners improve their English and mathematics as a result of the

effective individual help they receive.

- Teachers and managers maintain a strong focus on the importance of employability skills. Learners gain good skills that enable many of them to increase their self-confidence, and a high proportion of those who go on to supported internships successfully secure employment. Learners benefit from interesting lessons that include CV development and how to impress employers. Employers value the positive contribution that learners make to their businesses.
- Teachers are experienced in their subjects and make good use of their knowledge and good resources to provide stimulating activities. They motivate learners well by providing interesting practical tasks and praising learners appropriately for their determination and efforts. In practical lessons, learners concentrate well, for example when making creative and colourful story sacks for children and caring for animals such as guinea pigs.
- The large majority of learners improve their spelling and vocabulary well. However, in a few cases, teachers do not correct spelling appropriately and these learners make slower progress in improving their English skills.
- Learners are often not clear about what they have to do to improve further and how far they have progressed because teachers do not use the formal recording system well to record learners' incremental achievements. Teachers use a range of different systems to record challenges and achievements. As a result, teachers are not always able to identify the progress that learners make over time or whether they are progressing at an appropriate pace or when their planned outcomes have been achieved.
- Teachers do not always plan activities that are closely related to outcomes identified in learners' education health and care (EHC) plans. Learners' outcomes itemised in their EHC plans are not broken down into specific targets that learners can understand and achieve. Plans for learners' achievements are too often related to academic achievement and not to the development of personal or independence skills. As a result, not all learners know what they need to be working on to achieve their full potential.
- A small amount of teaching does not challenge or motivate learners sufficiently. Learners make slower progress in mathematics as the subject is not as well embedded into subject areas as English. Learning support does not always help learners to make good progress. In a small number of cases, support workers do tasks for learners. As a result, learners lose interest and rely too heavily on the member of staff.

Full-time provision for 14- to 16-year-olds

Requires improvement

- There are currently 150 full-time learners, of whom 79 are in Year 10 and 71 are in Year 11. The remaining 255 learners are part-time learners, many of whom are electively home educated.
- South Devon High School is led by a college assistant principal, who provides strategic leadership of the high school while a deputy provides day-to-day operational leadership. The high school takes learners from a number of local schools. Many of these learners have had negative experiences at their previous schools and have a range of social, emotional or behavioural needs.
- Leaders have not evaluated the impact of actions taken well enough. They are not sufficiently aware of weaknesses and have not taken appropriate action to remedy them.

As a result, learners are not making sufficient progress in all subjects because managers and teachers do not review their progress carefully enough using agreed procedures.

- Staff expectations of what learners can achieve in some academic subjects, including English, mathematics and science, are too low. Staff are too ready to use learners' prior difficulties or negative experiences at other schools as a reason for underachievement. Many learners who join the school are of high ability and, even allowing for previous underachievement, are not pushed to achieve their potential. However, learners engage well with vocational courses and achieve well in these areas.
- Teachers do not plan well enough to meet the different needs of learners, particularly the most able. This means that the most able learners are not challenged to deepen their thinking and make more rapid progress.
- Leaders and teachers do not assess or monitor the progress of learners with sufficient expertise and attention to help them acquire the knowledge and skills they need.
- Leaders are not clear what the impact of pupil premium funding has been on raising learners' achievement. Managers have not fully evaluated the effectiveness of professional development for staff and the support for learners. As a result, disadvantaged learners do not receive a consistently high level of support to meet their academic needs. However, additional funding has been used well to raise the attendance of these learners.
- Teachers are appropriately qualified and highly committed in their work. They help learners when they struggle with their learning. Learners value the 'personalised approach' taken by staff and being treated with respect. These contribute to learners behaving well. This is particularly true in vocational subjects where they concentrate well.
- Learners receive excellent, impartial, comprehensive guidance in order to make informed decisions about their next steps. The vast majority of learners progress to a college course at the end of Year 11.
- Staff meet learners' pastoral needs well. Many learners have significant social, emotional and behavioural issues and staff provide timely, effective support. Learners and parents value highly the support they receive from committed, understanding staff.
- Learners' attendance has improved rapidly and is broadly in line with national averages. This is because staff monitor their attendance robustly and take rapid, appropriate action to tackle absence.
- Learners feel safe in the high school because staff have cultivated a culture that champions tolerance and mutual respect. Learners understand how to be at ease with each other's differences and they support each other well. Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Learners are taught successfully to become responsible citizens who want to make a positive contribution to their communities. They are tolerant, respectful and considerate towards each other and adults. Learners develop good moral, cultural and social awareness. For example, learners' participation in a mental health awareness day improved their understanding of mental health and how to support those who have a mental health condition.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130648
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	14+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	9,797
Principal/CEO	Stephen Criddle
Telephone number	01803 540540
Website	www.southdevon.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+
	517	156	629	543	1023	110	0	635
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	339	493	128	246	0	81		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	20		1		21			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	405							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	174							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Construction Training South West Gershwin's New Key OCP West Plymouth Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Teign School Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal for curriculum, quality and performance, 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 learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Steven Tucker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Zimmerman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steve Battersby	Ofsted Inspector
Gavin Murray	Ofsted Inspector
Penny Mathers	Ofsted Inspector
Lyn Bourne	Ofsted Inspector
Carol Hannaford	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Smith	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Stittle	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Wardle	Ofsted Inspector
Judy Lye-Forster	Her Majesty's Inspector

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