

City College Nottingham

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

28 November–1 December 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Quality assurance and improvement arrangements lack rigour, and do not secure consistently high standards of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers make insufficient use of data to monitor and improve performance.
- The attendance and punctuality of learners are too low and this limits the progress of a minority of them.
- Teachers do not make effective use of the results of initial assessments of learners' skills to plan and provide learning that addresses their individual needs.
- A minority of lessons are uninspiring, do not challenge learners and lack pace; learners in these lessons become disengaged and make little progress.
- Too few learners receive consistently effective information, advice and guidance that help them to clarify and achieve their career aspirations.
- In a few cases, learners who need to improve their English and mathematical skills do not have the opportunity to do so early enough in their programmes.
- Teachers do not do enough to develop learners' understanding of British values and their relationship to radicalisation and extremism.

The provider has the following strengths

- Good strategic planning and highly effective use of partnerships have enabled managers to develop a curriculum that supports social and economic inclusion.
- Managers have developed a caring and nurturing culture that helps individuals to re-engage in learning.
- Learners behave well around college: they are respectful of each other, respond well to instructions and develop professional behaviours and attitudes.
- Learners and teachers value the diverse backgrounds, knowledge and experience that learners bring to the college.

Full report

Information about the provider

- City College Nottingham is an independent learning provider, established in 1993, operating mainly from offices in Nottingham, Derby, Leicester and Slough. It provides 16 to 19 study programmes and apprenticeships through subcontracting arrangements with a number of colleges, and holds direct contracts for the provision of adult learning programmes. The inspection only considered the directly funded provision. This includes programmes in childcare, health and social care, construction, electrical installation, information and communication technology (ICT), beauty therapy, fashion and textiles, professional cookery, and business studies.
- Locally, fewer adults are qualified to level 3 or above than nationally. Unemployment in Nottinghamshire is lower than the national rate, especially for males. The proportion of people employed in managerial and professional occupations is similar to the national picture. The largest employment sectors in the area are public administration, education, health, wholesale, retail, accommodation and food services, construction, and manufacturing.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Implement clear and effective quality assurance and improvement processes to secure a consistently high quality of teaching, learning and assessment and good outcomes for learners, specifically to include:
 - frequent analysis of management information, including information on attendance, punctuality, achievements and learner destinations, to inform management decision making
 - acting on the information from observations of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to help staff improve their performance
 - the development of a quality improvement plan with clear actions, success criteria and milestones that managers use to drive quality improvements.
- Implement a rigorous approach to improving attendance and punctuality. This should include:
 - setting clear and high expectations for teachers and learners
 - equipping staff with the skills they need to challenge poor attendance and punctuality, and to support learners to improve
 - close monitoring of attendance and punctuality that allows managers to intervene when problems are identified.
- Ensure that all teachers have access to the results of assessments of learners' English and mathematical skills shortly after each learner starts their programme, so that they can plan and provide lessons that meet learners' needs and arrange for additional English and mathematics lessons for those who would benefit from them.
- Increase the extent to which staff provide learners with impartial information, advice and guidance that help them to clarify their learning and career goals. Provide further training

to teachers and those staff who provide advice and guidance so that they can provide this support throughout each learner's time at the college.

- Support staff to improve their own understanding of British values, and to improve the ways in which they make links between these values and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, for example, by:
 - training staff so that they understand British values more fully
 - sharing the good practice that already exists in parts of the organisation
 - providing staff with details of news items that might provide useful discussion topics, along with guidance notes and helpful questions to ask.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not yet firmly established a culture of consistently high expectations. As a result, although outcomes for learners and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are strong in most areas, there are significant areas where this is not the case.
- Leaders and managers rely too much on the use of informal arrangements to increase learners' achievements and to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, they do not improve standards rapidly enough. Managers have not synchronised self-assessment and improvement planning, and they have yet to produce an improvement plan for the current academic year. Managers make insufficient use of time-constrained deadlines for monitoring purposes.
- Senior managers recognise that they do not exploit data effectively to evaluate the quality of provision, or its contribution to learners achieving their aspirations. Managers collect a wide range of relevant data, such as learners' destinations. However, they do not systematically collate or evaluate this information to identify any emerging trends or shortfalls in standards.
- Managers have yet to take decisive action to improve learners' attendance and punctuality. Teachers do not always challenge appropriately learners' lateness or poor attendance. This prevents learners from developing a proper understanding of the importance they should place on these valuable employment attributes.
- In a minority of cases, leaders' and managers' use of lesson observations is not wholly effective. For example, they do not observe newly appointed teachers early enough to evaluate their effectiveness and improve their practice quickly, and in a small minority of cases, the recording of observers' findings places insufficient emphasis on the extent of learning. As a result, the quality of too much teaching, learning and assessment is not good.
- Managers adeptly identify teachers' further development needs during annual appraisals. However, not all teachers have had a recent appraisal. Teachers take part in a wide range of suitable training opportunities designed to improve professional competence. However, managers do not effectively review how well training improves teachers' performance and the experiences of learners.
- The principal, senior managers and trustees are highly committed to improving the social and economic conditions of inner-city residents. They have implemented a clear strategy to deliver these aims by addressing the training and education needs of disadvantaged groups. Senior leaders successfully engage learners in programmes that help them to achieve their career goals and enhance their personal lives.
- Learners and staff work within a caring culture that prioritises the well-being and success of all learners. The principal has carefully fostered an ethos within the college where all staff adhere to a nurturing philosophy when dealing with learners. Consequently, learners feel respected and valued.
- Strategic planning is good. Senior managers make good use of published research and feedback from effective external partnership working to inform curriculum planning.

Senior managers use their links with local authorities and the learning enterprise partnership well to contribute to the achievement of local and regional priorities. They have successfully improved the range and quantity of programmes to meet identified needs. For example, they offer higher level ICT courses to address local skills shortages. They have introduced professional cookery programmes and English courses for speakers of other languages, in response to requests from community groups.

- Leaders and managers have established high-quality learning centres within the areas where their target groups live. These offer learners ease of access to provision, as they are within acceptable travelling distances. Senior leaders and managers use the funds provided by a wide range of income-generating activities to develop a learning environment that benefits all learners.

The governance of the provider

- Trustees know the college well and exhibit a clear understanding of its main strengths and areas for improvement. They use their extensive community links effectively to identify how well the college is performing and any required improvements.
- The board of trustees provides appropriate scrutiny of senior managers' actions. When trustees have access to appropriate information, they successfully hold senior managers to account for their performance. They are particularly effective in interrogating decision making at a strategic level. Challenges to senior managers' plans have successfully shaped the college's curriculum direction. However, trustees do not receive a full range of detailed reports to inform their work and this hampers their effectiveness. Trustees acknowledge that the board has no female representation and are seeking to rectify this imbalance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers give safeguarding a high priority. They use safe and effective recruitment practices to check that teachers are suitable to work with learners. Learning centres are subject to very detailed risk assessments that managers monitor well so that staff and learners are safe.
- All staff and managers have a sound appreciation of their safeguarding duty. They know who their vulnerable learners are, and carefully monitor them so they can intervene quickly if needed. Learners know how to raise concerns. They are confident that these will be dealt with in a confidential manner and appropriately resolved. Managers have good links with external agencies that they use well to refer learners for specialist support.
- Designated safeguarding officers are appropriately qualified. They, along with all staff, regularly complete appropriate safeguarding update training. All staff have received training on the 'Prevent' duty. However, not all teachers are confident in helping learners to develop their understanding of British values, and how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation and extremism. As a result, a majority of learners have a limited understanding of these themes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- At the time of inspection, 51 adult learners were on level 2 and 280 on level 3 programmes. They follow a wide variety of subjects including childcare, health and social care, construction, ICT, beauty therapy, fashion and textiles, professional cookery, and business studies.
- Teachers do not make good use of the information available to them about learners' existing English and mathematical skills to plan and provide learning. They do not take into account learners' different starting points; as a result, a minority of learners do not develop their skills well. A small minority of teachers fail to support learners' development of these skills early enough in their programmes; this hinders their progress in their main vocational subjects.
- Teachers do not do enough to develop learners' mathematical skills within vocational lessons. Learners use mathematical skills where they are a fundamental requirement of the topics they are studying, such as making measurements for brickwork or for textile patterns. However, teachers do not make enough effort to introduce mathematics in other contexts. As a result, learners lose an opportunity to develop useful skills that would enhance their employability.
- In a minority of lessons, small class sizes limit the range of teaching strategies used, and this slows learners' progress. In these lessons, group work and discussions are not effective and deprive learners of the opportunity to develop teamworking and speaking and listening skills.
- The majority of teachers help learners to develop their English skills, including their use of professional and technical language. For example, they use word walls to help learners to develop their technical vocabulary and make effective use of debates to develop learners' speaking and listening skills. However, in a minority of cases, teachers do not provide learners with clear guidance about what they need to do to improve. They often overlook spelling and grammatical errors and do not provide guidance to help learners improve their writing.
- The majority of learners engage in lessons that are motivating and stimulating. Teachers maintain learners' interest and consequently, the majority make good progress in lessons. For example, in a lively level 3 childcare session, learners engaged in discussions about how children's play enhances their learning and development, and the extent to which risk assessment is applied within their work placements. They were able to share their workplace learning experiences with their peers. However, in a minority of lessons, the pace of learning is slow and learners do not engage fully in activities and discussions. As a result, learners in these sessions do not make enough progress.
- Teachers are suitably qualified and most have teaching and vocational experience that they use well to help learners understand the relevance of their learning. As a result, the majority of learners develop a good range of vocational skills in realistic contexts. For example, learners on level 3 beauty therapy programmes develop their pedicure skills in a simulated customer service environment.
- Teachers assess learners' work frequently and appropriately to ensure they are making at least the progress expected. The majority of learners produce work of a standard expected and a significant minority produce work of high quality. The majority of teachers

use probing questions that enable them to gauge learners' understanding of topics and provide focused feedback that helps learners to develop their skills and understanding.

- Most learners enjoy their programmes and are enthusiastic about the skills they develop. For various reasons, many learners find it difficult to access provision at large colleges, and teachers work hard to make them feel welcome and to overcome any difficulties that might interfere with their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Attendance is low; too many learners do not arrive to lessons on time and ready to learn. This disrupts learning for the whole class; tutors do not challenge this consistently. As a result, a minority of learners do not develop the skills needed to progress into further education, training and employment.
- Learners receive useful initial advice and guidance that help them to choose an appropriate course of study. However, they do not receive ongoing support from specialist staff to ensure they make informed choices about employment or further study. Staff do not adequately document their interventions with learners so they have a written record of the advice they have been given to refer back to later. Targets set for learners' are not consistently reviewed as part of a planned process of guidance over time.
- The majority of learners have a limited understanding of British values and how to avoid extremism and radicalisation. Many teachers lack the confidence to include these themes in lessons, despite the availability of appropriate online learning resources. Although staff are vigilant, and know how to raise concerns, learners are not always sufficiently knowledgeable to identify and avoid any risks they might encounter.
- Learners feel safe and know to whom they should report concerns. In workshops, they wear the correct personal protective equipment and demonstrate appropriate awareness of health and safety procedures to keep themselves and others safe.
- Behaviour in classrooms and around the college is good. Learners are respectful of each other and respond positively to guidance and instruction from staff.
- Learners increase in confidence and take pride in their work. Many were keen to show inspectors the work they had produced and to explain what they had achieved. The standard of learners' work is at the expected level and the majority of learners develop appropriate professional behaviours and attitudes.
- Teachers and learners have a very positive attitude towards diversity and value the different viewpoints, knowledge and experience learners bring to lessons.
- Many learners develop their work readiness through a range of activities including work experience. This is most notable in childcare, and health and social care. For example, health and social care learners in Leicester work with staff at a city day centre. This allows them to develop their understanding of the needs of different client groups and exposes them to a wide range of job roles and opportunities. However, in a few vocational areas, learners do not have the same opportunities to develop their work readiness, and as a result, their skills are less developed.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- In most lessons, too many learners are absent or late and this has a detrimental impact on their progress. As a result, a minority of learners make only limited progress. In the current academic year, the proportion of learners who have left their courses is too high.
- In a minority of subject areas, the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications is too low. However, there are significant variations between subject areas. For example, those following childcare programmes are very successful, whereas those taking courses in beauty therapy achieve at a rate well below that of other providers. Overall, the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications is broadly in line with the rate at similar providers.
- Managers do not make systematic use of the detailed information collected about learners' destinations to judge the relevance of the college's programmes. As a result, they are unable to assess the impact of their programmes on learners' employment prospects.
- Upon completion of their programmes, most learners enter employment or further study. However, a small minority of learners remain unemployed, particularly those who have completed beauty therapy courses. A high proportion of access to higher education learners progress to university.
- Learners who attend make good progress in lessons, and over time those who attend regularly develop their skills and knowledge to the expected extent, given their starting points. They work at an appropriate pace and produce work that meets the requirements of their qualifications and the expectations of their chosen industries. In a few cases, learners produce high-quality work. For example, learners following fashion and textiles programmes in Slough produce a range of excellent high-quality garments.
- Many learners develop knowledge and a range of skills that allow them to play a more active and productive role in their families and communities. For example, they learn practical skills that help them maintain their homes, while others develop knowledge that helps them support their children at school.
- Learners enjoy attending college and speak positively about the welcoming and inclusive environment and the care and support they receive. Teachers maintain good records of learners' progress, and most learners are clear about the skills and knowledge they have developed and what they still need to improve.
- There are no significant gaps between the outcomes of different groups of learners.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1236708
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	119
Principal	Hassan Ahmed
Telephone number	0115 910 1455
Website	http://citycollegenottingham.com

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+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	0	0	0	51	0	280	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality assurance, curriculum and accreditations manager, 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

Russ Henry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nigel Bragg	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bob Hamp	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jo Brodrick	Ofsted Inspector

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