

Lincoln College

General further education college

Inspection dates

13–16 March 2018

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	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good	Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Governors, leaders and managers have taken effective actions which have led to substantial improvements; the majority of learners make good progress and many more now achieve their qualifications.
- Governors and leaders have successfully created a culture that focuses on the needs of learners and employers. They offer provision that meets the needs of the local community well, and most learners progress to positive destinations.
- Governors and leaders have introduced accurate and accessible management information. As a result, they can monitor learners' progress and take steps where necessary to improve outcomes for learners.
- Leaders and managers have improved the quality of teaching and learning at the college. Their actions have encouraged staff to focus on the craft of teaching.
- Teachers and assessors use their industrial expertise and experience well to motivate learners and apprentices, and develop their vocational and work-related skills.
- Learners benefit from well-planned and coherent work experience. As a result, the vast majority of learners are well prepared for the world of work in modern Britain.
- Learners with high needs receive very effective support which is well adapted to their individual needs and preferences.
- Learners' rates of attendance across the college have improved in the last year but are still too low.
- Governors, leaders and managers have not shown how they plan to sustain improvements in the progress that learners and apprentices are making.
- Assessors do not routinely use findings from initial assessments of apprentices' skills to ensure that they challenge them to develop their skills and knowledge. Too many apprentices do not achieve their qualifications within the planned timescale.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Lincoln College is a large general further education college with campuses in Lincoln, Newark and Gainsborough. The college provides a wide range of courses, including apprenticeships, study programmes and adult learning programmes. The college's apprenticeship provision is offered both directly and through subcontractors. Around 6% of college learners are from minority ethnic groups, and just under a third have a declared learning difficulty.
- The proportion of young people leaving schools in Lincolnshire with at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is similar to the national rate. Educational levels of the population as a whole are slightly lower than the average for England. Unemployment is higher than the national rate, and fewer individuals are employed in managerial and technical roles than in other parts of the country.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve learners' attendance rates across the college by rigorously evaluating the impact of new initiatives aimed at raising attendance rates.
- Ensure that governors, leaders and managers work more effectively with wider staff teams within the college to form and implement clear plans to sustain improvements to learners' progress.
- Ensure that all assessors use the information from apprentices' starting points to help apprentices rapidly develop new skills and knowledge and complete their qualifications within planned timescales.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Governors and senior leaders have a very clear ambition for the college to meet the needs of employers. Leaders have set high expectations through the use of challenging targets in relation to the quality of provision, outcomes for learners and employer engagement. Staff understand and share the vision.
- Following the previous inspection, senior leaders set a clear priority to improve outcomes for learners. They have achieved this by substantially improving the availability and use of accurate management information throughout the organisation and by holding managers and staff to account for meeting challenging performance targets.
- Senior leaders have prioritised improvements to teaching, learning and assessment and invested resources to this end. Managers use observations of teaching to encourage professional discussions on how teachers can improve learning. They use effective methods for evaluating and improving the work of individual staff. In particular, they place a strong focus on the impact of teaching on learners' progress and provide good support which enables staff to improve.
- Leaders and managers have put in place a plan for improving teaching and learning which, combined with a change in culture at the college, has focused staff on the craft of teaching. Staff engage in coaching and training activities which lead to better teaching. Many staff improve their teaching by engaging in the college's online learning community group to share good practice. Staff value the change in the culture and say that they feel supported, and in some cases liberated, by the new strategy for teaching and learning and performance management.
- Leaders and managers have established strong partnerships, which meets the needs of employers and learners well. Employers and partners are actively involved in planning the curriculum to meet the needs of the local community, stakeholders and local employers. For example, the college has worked closely with the local authority to support those in low-income households by introducing a bespoke course to improve their mental health and well-being. In association with national and international businesses, the college provides fruitful opportunities for learners to experience current working environments and supports progression into employment. For the apprenticeship provision, employers work in partnership with college staff to ensure effective coordination of on- and off-the-job training. Consequently, apprentices meet the standards expected by their employers.
- Leaders and managers promote a strong culture of respect and understanding of difference throughout the college. They place a high priority on improving the understanding of British values and on meeting the 'Prevent' duty for learners and staff. As a result, a large majority of learners are able to demonstrate their knowledge of how related issues apply to them.
- Learners have good opportunities to engage with employers and to understand the careers available to them. Well-qualified staff provide impartial careers guidance to all learners. As a result, learners are clear about opportunities within their vocational areas and routes to employment. They receive further support on careers through their taught sessions and tutorial activities.

- Governors and leaders focus appropriately in their strategic plans on improving learners' English and mathematics. However, staff are not yet consistently effective in the development of learners and apprentices' skills in lessons. Last year, managers implemented actions which have ensured that all staff are aware of their responsibility to develop learners' English and mathematics. As a result, more learners achieved their English and mathematics qualifications in 2016/17. Governors and leaders recognise that there is further work needed in this area.
- Leaders' self-assessment is accurate and identifies correctly the areas for improvement. However, the resulting quality improvement plan focuses on what managers have achieved to date. It does not identify sufficiently what actions managers and staff need to take to ensure further improvement.
- Leaders and managers were slow to respond to the poor progress and outcomes for apprentices, including those on subcontracted provision. Managers took the decision to cease enrolling to the subcontracted provision a year ago. In the current year, the apprenticeship provision, including the subcontracted provision, is subject to the special scrutiny that governors and leaders give to underperforming areas. Managers have strengthened the apprenticeship management team through new appointments; members of this team conduct regular contract reviews with subcontractors, through which they closely monitor the quality of provision. As a result, the significant minority of apprentices on subcontracted provision are making similar progress to college apprentices.

The governance of the provider

- Governors understand the college's strengths and areas for improvement well. They are appropriately involved in college activities and events in order to understand the college further and support improvements.
- Governors support senior leaders effectively to promote improvement. They contribute to the employer-focused strategy for the college. Recent changes to the structure of governance enable them to focus on priorities through committees.
- Governors provide appropriate challenge for senior leaders both at board level and in one-to-one meetings with senior leaders. They have access to a range of effective management information and use this well to hold leaders and managers to account for the performance of the college.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- All staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Managers maintain close and productive links with local safeguarding boards. The designated safeguarding lead is a member of the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire boards and plays an active part in these. In addition, managers engage with other colleges and external groups to model best practice and bring the most up-to-date practice back into the college.
- The single central record of employment checks for staff is up to date and meets statutory requirements. Managers have developed their own database system for recording safeguarding concerns which is fit for purpose and effectively used to follow up incidents.

- Safeguarding managers have close links to the 'Channel' coordinator in the area. Leaders have also invested in a college-based 'Prevent' officer to promote further understanding and communication of issues related to radicalisation and extremism. Health and safety practices are effective. Leaders promote a culture of safe working practices, and as a result they have seen a reduction in the number of accidents over the last three years.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the previous inspection, following successful actions by managers and staff to improve teaching practice, for example in relation to classroom management and questioning techniques.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers plan learning successfully to meet learners' individual needs. As a result, learners on study programmes, learners with high needs and adult learners make good progress in improving their knowledge and practical skills. In English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), GCSE English, public services, hairdressing, and beauty therapy, teachers make effective use of peer-to-peer learning to develop learners' written and oral communication skills.
- Staff and learners use and integrate a wide range of e-learning platforms well into their subjects. Learners find the resources motivating and engaging. Study programme learners who are using the English and mathematics platforms are making good progress towards achieving their GCSE qualifications with grades 9 to 4. Hairdressing and beauty therapy learners successfully use social media platforms to promote their services and attract new clientele. Access to higher education learners benefit from using the virtual learning environment (VLE) to continue their learning outside the classroom.
- Teachers and assessors are well qualified and have good, up-to-date industrial skills. They use their industrial expertise and experience well to motivate learners and apprentices and develop their vocational and employability skills. For example, study programme learners on performing arts courses develop their staging and movement techniques while performing to a piece of music from 'Les Miserables'. In advanced electrical installation, apprentices develop sufficient fault-finding and problem-solving skills to be responsible for overnight maintenance of electrical equipment in a chicken hatchery, where climate and light control is crucial to the effective rearing of live chicks.
- Teachers work successfully with learning support assistants to ensure that they challenge and support learners with additional learning needs effectively in lessons. Learners, including those who have special education needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, benefit from an inclusive social environment. They are treated with dignity and respect and are empowered to make choices and decisions. As a result, most learners make good progress.
- Learners and apprentices have a good working knowledge of health and safety in the workplace. They reflect the values of living in a British society in their respectful behaviour towards each other, staff and visitors, as well as the local community. For example, construction learners carry out maintenance and repair activities for local people in sheltered accommodation.
- Learners participate in activities in lessons and through enrichment that develop them spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. For example, learners with high needs work

collaboratively to organise events for Autism Awareness week. Adult learners in hospitality and catering attend work experience at a shelter for the homeless. Learners on study programmes support a wide range of charitable initiatives.

- The large majority of learners develop their English skills well in lessons and workshops. They are articulate and use technical language effectively. For example, in level 3 biology, adult learners use textbooks and glossaries well to identify and apply technical terminology related to anatomy and physiology. Level 3 engineering study programme learners apply technical language to problem-solving activities. However, teachers and assessors do not sufficiently develop apprentices' English skills.
- Learners with high needs and apprentices in the workplace develop good mathematics skills. For example, apprentices in carpentry and joinery work out the correct angles when cutting timber. Apprentices in hairdressing work out ratios when mixing up colours for clients and calculating costs of cuts and treatments. Learners with high needs convert tally chart information into pie charts and measure angles successfully with protractors. Teachers do not routinely develop the mathematics skills of study programme and adult learners in vocational lessons.
- In too many instances, teachers do not take account of the different abilities of apprentices when they attend training in the classroom. As a result, learning is too slow for some apprentices, who do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable. Assessors do not routinely use findings from initial assessments of apprentices' skills to plan accurately so that they develop the new skills of which they are capable. As a result, too many apprentices do not reach their full potential. Similarly, in a minority of lessons on study programmes, teachers do not challenge the most able learners to make sufficient progress. They do not set activities or question learners well enough to help them extend their learning.
- In lessons, learners respond well to teachers' oral feedback and consequently make good progress. Most teachers provide helpful feedback on learners' written work. However, in a few instances, teachers do not check that learners have acted upon the feedback given on their marked work. Consequently, these learners often repeat the same mistakes and do not make rapid enough improvements. This area for improvement was noted at the previous inspection.
- Staff set targets for learners and apprentices which, in a minority of progress reviews, are not detailed enough to support them to make rapid progress. They do not review targets with learners often enough. Consequently, too many learners and apprentices are insufficiently challenged to make the progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- The majority of learners are developing good personal and social skills. Learners enjoy their learning and speak positively about their experiences at college. Most learners behave well in class and in social areas, showing respect for each other, members of staff, visitors and the college environment. The vast majority of learners work well together in class, support each other during group activities and appreciate other people's viewpoints.
- Learners are actively involved in improving the college and its provision. Learner

representatives sit on a wide range of college committees and groups. They are well trained to undertake these duties and take their responsibilities seriously. They gain valuable experience and skills in readiness for their next steps. Apprentices are under-represented on learner consultation groups.

- Learners benefit from well-planned and coherent work-experience activities which relate to their future career goals. The vast majority of learners develop good work-related skills and gain additional qualifications through an extensive tutorial and enrichment programme. They participate in a wide range of work-related activities, including practising interview techniques and undertaking voluntary work in the community, before progressing into external work placement. As a result, learners are well prepared for the world of work.
- Employers provide positive feedback on the range of relevant skills and attributes learners have when they start work placements. This enables learners to settle into the workplace quickly, make a positive contribution to the business and enhance their prospects of future employment. For example, all the learners on work placements at a local computing company were offered permanent employment after completion of their studies.
- Learners with high needs undertake relevant work experience that closely matches their needs and abilities. Tutors and employers provide good support in the workplace. Consequently, learners develop new skills and improve their independence.
- Most learners receive good and impartial careers information, advice and guidance from specialist advisers. This support helps them make the right initial choice of learning programme. Learners applying for higher education receive very effective support for the application process and in choosing the most suitable study pathway to match their career aspirations. Vocational tutors provide useful specialist advice about local employment opportunities and the specific demands of their industry. However, staff do not challenge a minority of apprentices sufficiently to follow a programme that builds on their prior attainment.
- Learners and apprentices feel safe in college and the workplace. The large majority demonstrate safe working practices in practical lessons, in workshops and in the workplace. Learners value the strict enforcement of security measures by all staff on all college sites. Learners recognise how this helps to keep the college community safe. Learners know how and to whom they should report any concerns and are confident that staff will respond quickly and appropriately.
- A high proportion of learners make expected progress in developing their English skills in vocational lessons. However, staff have not embedded mathematics skills well enough for learners to improve these over time. Too many apprentices do not develop their English and mathematics skills beyond the basic demands of their qualifications. As a result they do not continue to improve these skills over the duration of their programmes.
- Tutors promote and reinforce British values in lessons and in the workplace effectively. As a result, learners and apprentices have a good understanding of issues relating to living and working in modern Britain. Learners know how to recognise risks associated with radicalisation and extremist behaviour and how to report their concerns.
- Learners' attendance rates across the college require improvement. Attendance has improved marginally in most vocational areas over the past year, but remains below the

college's own expectations. In particular, attendance in English and mathematics lessons is not high enough. Attendance rates at the Newark and Gainsborough sites are slightly higher than those at the Lincoln campus.

- Managers have put in place several imaginative initiatives to improve learners' attendance. However, they have not routinely monitored them to evaluate the impact. For example, managers have not measured the impact of appointing attendance monitoring officers in their curriculum areas.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The vast majority of learners on the study programme are making good progress from their starting points. Most adults who are taking substantial qualifications are also making good progress. The majority of apprentices are making the expected progress.
- The proportion of learners who complete their study programmes successfully has increased steadily over the past three years. In 2016/17, there was a substantial increase in achievement rates, covering all levels, all qualifications and nearly all subject areas, with particularly high achievement rates in science and mathematics, retail and sport.
- The proportion of adults who complete their programmes successfully has also improved substantially across the majority of subject areas. Learners taking access to higher education, information and communication technologies (ICT) and retail courses have high achievement rates. Achievements for learners taking ESOL courses declined in the previous year, although current learners on these courses are making good progress.
- Study programme learners demonstrate good practical skills which reflect industry standards. Their written work is of a good standard. Apprentices in the workplace develop vocational skills which meet industry expectations and enable them to contribute to the business objectives of their employers.
- The achievement of functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics has improved in the past year for both study programme learners and adult learners, and is in line with national rates. The proportion of study programme learners gaining high grades in English and mathematics GCSE improved substantially in 2016/17 to just above the low national rate.
- Most groups of learners achieve in line with the college average. Learners who previously received free school meals are making good progress from their starting points, as are learners with high needs. However, adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have consistently achieved less well than other learners. Children looked after achieve slightly less well and make slower progress than other learners on the study programme.
- The proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programme within the planned timescale has improved marginally over the past three years but remains low. Overall, achievements are much improved but below national rates. The large proportion of apprentices are aged over 24 and achieve less well than their younger peers in the provision.
- The vast majority of learners progress to positive destinations. The majority of level 3 learners progress to higher education, as do most learners on access to higher education

programmes.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Study programmes account for just under half of the college's provision. Across 15 subject sector areas, nearly a third of learners are studying at level 2 and around half at level 3, with the remainder studying at level 1.
- Programme leaders set high expectations and take steps that are effective in improving the quality of provision. Staff are using a new model of assessment which encourages learners to reflect on their work and helps them to progress and improve their skills. In previously underperforming areas in hairdressing and beauty therapy, business services, engineering and construction, managers' support actions are helping staff to improve provision.
- Teaching and learning sessions are well planned and meet differing learner needs well by successfully building on their prior learning. Learners' punctuality is good and they come well prepared for learning; they make a prompt start in the large majority of sessions. Teachers use learning objectives well to check and reinforce learning. Staff promptly identify learners' additional learning needs and provide effective support to address those needs.
- The large majority of teaching sessions are motivating, focused and productive, enabling learners to make good progress relative to their starting points. In engineering, beauty therapy and public services, teachers use learning technology and resources well to support learning. Teachers use good questioning techniques and purposeful discussions to develop knowledge and understanding. In hairdressing and catering, they integrate practical skills and theoretical understanding well. In art and design, fashion and construction, teachers use peer evaluation effectively to provide feedback and identify improvements.
- Learners produce written work of a high standard and demonstrate practical skills in accordance with good industry practice. Facilities for the development of learners' practical skills are good at all sites. For example, automotive, hospitality and catering, and sports programmes have good industry-standard accommodation that teachers use to provide a realistic work experience for learners.
- Teachers are well qualified and apply their current vocational experience to encourage and support learners in good professional and vocational skills development. Learners benefit greatly from regular visits to industry, presentations from employers and other enrichment activities, including trade shows and awards, to underpin the relevance of these skills to employment and work roles. For example, learners in the air and defence academy have overnight visits to defence establishments and have assessment and selection experience in line with defence recruitment practices. Learners have also been able to showcase their skills and gain national recognition for their work.
- Learners benefit significantly from purposeful work-related learning, including work experience, and develop good employability skills to support progression into employment and apprenticeships. For example, equine studies learners at level 3 develop skills in pitching for work as a groom; in beauty therapy, consultation and timed activities for

facials and other treatments are developed in accordance with commercial practice. A major national employer in Newark provides high-quality work-placement experiences for business studies and ICT learners. Staff implemented a new strategic approach for work-related learning which resulted in an increase in the number of learners that have completed work experience in comparison to the previous year; as part of this, they operated a system for recording learners' personal learning skills and behaviour developed in work experience.

- Teachers use a wide variety of methods that check the progress of learners successfully; as a result, learners are aware of what to do to improve. Staff use learners' starting points effectively to track and monitor progress, and take effective steps where learners do not make the progress expected of them
- Learners develop a good understanding of health and well-being, British values, 'Prevent' and citizenship skills in effective tutorials and learning sessions. Learners know and understand how to protect themselves from the risks associated with radicalisation, extremism, abuse, grooming and bullying. They feel safe and work safely in learning, and know whom to contact with any safety concerns they have.
- Learners benefit from good careers advice that enables them to make informed careers choices. Consequently, a large majority of learners progress to positive destinations on completion of their learning, such as into employment, apprenticeship or higher education.
- Learners develop good English skills. They communicate with clarity and confidence and understand the importance of good English in their wider lives. While teachers encourage learners to develop their mathematics skills in all subjects, in a minority of vocational sessions the application of mathematics skills is weak; as a result, learners do not always appreciate the importance of mathematics in their work.
- A small minority of learning sessions are not effective enough in supporting progress and achievement. Teachers do not use questioning techniques that enable all learners to contribute; they do not set challenging activities for the most able learners, which means that not all learners make good progress.
- A few teachers do not always give consistently good feedback. Learners receive feedback on their work frequently, but too much of this lacks sufficient detail and precision to enable them to improve rapidly enough. In a few instances, teachers have set targets for learners which are not sufficiently challenging to enable them to make the extended progress they are capable of.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- Currently, 1,269 learners are on adult learning programmes. The provision is split between three main campuses, with most learners attending the main campus at Lincoln. The college also has a community education centre (CEC) located within Lincoln city centre. The majority undertake programmes in access to higher education, ESOL and community learning funded provision, as well as some infill into study programmes.
- Leaders and managers design adult learning programmes to meet the needs of the local community and also support the city's wider plans for its citizens. They work with a range of partners to develop bespoke training for disadvantaged adults in the community. For

example, they have worked with the city council to help members of low-income households to access information in order to improve their well-being.

- Learners on community learning funded provision also benefit from courses that are well planned in partnership with local organisations. As a result, provision meets the needs of the local area and provides clear opportunities for learners to progress and become more independent. For example, staff work with local primary schools to provide beauty therapy courses to the families of pupils. This engages these learners with a local organisation, raises their self-confidence and provides a stepping stone to further education and employment.
- Courses are well designed to offer progression opportunities for the majority of learners. Most learners have a clear idea of the purpose of the provision and how it meets their needs and supports them in their next steps. As a result, many learners have progressed to college provision because of their initial experience in the community.
- All adult learners speak very highly of the college and the opportunities it offers, including the learning resources and careers support into employment. For example, the college's 'network initiative' with the city council and the pre-employment support it provides to Jobcentre Plus and local businesses help prepare learners well in developing job search and interview skills. Other examples include the support for access to higher education learners with childcare costs, the online access to remote tutor support and the resources of the VLE.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers help learners to develop the skills to progress to their next steps. In the majority of lessons, teachers promote the use of technical and vocational terminology well, and encourage learners to develop their own application of it effectively. As a result, learners apply and develop appropriate English skills.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers plan interesting and engaging activities and ensure that learners are clear about the skills and knowledge they need to acquire. Learners make valuable and informed contributions in class. In an ESOL class, where the group spoke a range of languages, learners were required to correct and feed back to their partners in English in relation to spelling and pronunciation. This led to learners quickly extending the range of their vocabulary.
- Adult learners arrive to most sessions ready and prepared to learn. Most learners display positive behaviour and attitudes to learning. They are polite to staff and each other and show mutual respect. This leads to a positive and productive learning environment where learners are confident and motivated to participate fully in lessons. As a result, learners develop their ideas and understanding and gain confidence as learners. Most learners make at least the progress expected of them. Those undertaking substantive qualifications are making good progress.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers do not use the range of information about learners' pre-existing skills, experience and personal circumstances well enough to make sure that all of them make the best possible progress. In one access to higher education lesson, this meant that the more able learners were not fully engaged, as they had covered the topic previously. In a few ESOL classes, teachers used the same activities for learners with differing needs and abilities. The more able learners finished early and, with no further challenge, lost interest.

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- At the time of inspection, there were 1,567 apprentices, almost three quarters of whom were adults. The great majority of apprentices study at intermediate and advanced level across a wide range of subject areas. Nearly a third of apprentices are supported through subcontractors, though the college is moving, over time, to delivering all apprenticeships directly.
- Although the proportion of apprentices who have achieved within the expected time frame has improved, it remains low. Too many apprentices do not complete their programmes by the planned end date. Leaders and managers have made significant changes to improve the monitoring of apprentices' progress and put in place effective interventions. As a result, a greater proportion are making better progress than in previous years. However, these changes have yet to improve timely achievement rates significantly for all apprentices.
- Assessors do not take sufficient account of apprentices' varied levels of prior learning, workplace knowledge and skills and experience to ensure that they are challenged to fulfil their potential. A few management apprentices with many years of experience did not find the apprenticeship programme particularly demanding. Teaching assistant apprentices and a minority of younger apprentices on business administration who have previously achieved A levels and higher grade GCSEs are not undertaking work which stretches and challenges them.
- Too often assessors set targets which focus solely on unit or task completion. Targets are not sufficiently focused on the skills and knowledge apprentices need to improve their work tasks or job roles. As a result, a minority of apprentices have a limited understanding of what they need to do to improve, or to gain new skills and contribute fully to their employer's business.
- Apprentices do not routinely develop their English skills beyond the minimum framework requirements. Apprentices with existing higher-level English skills do not receive sufficient support to improve their knowledge and skills further. Assessors do not use the results of early assessment tests to address any identified weaknesses. In one instance, they had not provided sufficient language support for a younger apprentice who speaks English as an additional language, despite two written reports from his off-the-job college tutor saying that this lack of skill was slowing his progress.
- Leaders and managers ensure that programmes meet the principles of apprenticeship frameworks. Managers have built strong partnerships with employers to develop programmes to meet the needs of the local community and address skills shortages. Managers work closely with employers to develop and teach to the new national standards, in order to improve the skills of people in the community and prepare them for local jobs in, for example, electro-technical engineering, business and warehousing. Managers also work effectively with large corporate clients to design and develop programmes to address skills shortages in the areas of construction, engineering and ICT.
- Employers support apprentices well so that they develop industry-standard skills in the workplace. Employers have a good understanding of the skills required to achieve apprenticeship frameworks and ensure that on-the-job training is relevant and timely. They are aware of what apprentices are covering in their off-the-job training. As a result,

the majority of apprentices develop good vocational skills.

- The majority of apprentices make a positive contribution to their employers' businesses, which employers value. As a result, many apprentices receive permanent employment or are supported to progress to the next level. Apprentices enjoy their learning and value the progress they have made which enables them to develop industry-standard skills.
- Assessors are well qualified, skilled and experienced in their vocational subjects and use their professional experience well to develop the practical and vocational skills and behaviour of younger apprentices. Assessors use their considerable industry knowledge and experience to provide practical skills training that motivates most younger apprentices to ensure that they develop the necessary skills to undertake their job roles; this feature is particularly strong in some areas of business administration. Apprentices' standards of practical work in the workplace are good.
- The different types of support available for apprentices enable them to make the expected progress and develop skills that meet expected standards. Apprentices value the newly introduced functional skills workshops that provide them with additional opportunities to develop their skills and achieve their qualifications. Apprentices in construction and engineering value the additional drop-in workshops to undertake further practice or revision sessions. Apprentices become more confident and relate their knowledge, skills and understanding to industry standards.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- The college has 72 learners with high needs. Just over half are studying on foundation courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The remainder are on study programmes in a wide range of vocational areas across all college sites.
- Leaders and managers have made good use of funding for learners with high needs. Through high levels of investment, they have created new roles and systems to address the areas for improvement since the previous inspection. As a result, outcomes for learners with high needs significantly improved in 2016/17. High numbers of learners progress to positive destinations.
- Learners with education, health and care (EHC) plans benefit from very timely careers guidance before their transition from school to college. Parents and carers are highly involved in the process and contribute to the baseline assessment of learners' skills. The transition manager attends the learners' final review of their EHC plan to support a smooth transfer. Learners visit college through school links and taster days to try different subjects before making their choices.
- All learners with high needs benefit from an appropriate choice of course options from entry level to study programmes up to level 3 in a variety of subject areas. Lower-ability learners, for whom a full diploma may be too much of a challenge, can complete smaller qualifications. Learners with more complex needs complete programmes that are internally assessed. The entry level programmes cover automotive studies, catering, childcare, creative arts, sport, construction and skills for work. As a result, learners are well prepared for work in a range of settings or further study.
- Learners' development of essential life skills is good. They learn a wide range of transferable skills both in and outside of the classroom, such as travelling safely, cooking,

washing clothes, ironing, managing money and being aware of hazards.

- All learners have completed, or plan to complete, a short but relevant work placement, many of which they have sourced and organised for themselves. This beneficial experience allows learners to develop their job search and interview skills. Placements link well to learners' career goals or studies. A few learners successfully participated in a recently introduced supported internship. They are already developing new skills rapidly, which employers value. For example, they have learned to mark down and label sales goods and reorganise merchandise on the shop floor.
- Communication with parents is good, and support services teams respond quickly to any issues raised. Parents speak very highly of the support their children receive in college. Parents of learners with high needs have access to online systems where they can read feedback and make comments. This was introduced because of an issue raised through the parents and carers group. A few parents are less confident using the online system, but receive hard copies of reports so are equally well informed of their children's progress.
- All learners feel safe and are safe; they know whom to go to if they do not feel safe. A comprehensive tutorial programme reinforces messages to learners about being safe repeatedly, backed up by information displayed around all campuses. The college operates an inclusive approach, and learners with high needs are well integrated into study programmes across all areas and campuses.
- Staff ensure that assessments of learners' starting points are comprehensive and accurate. As well as an assessment of learners' current skills, they provide risk assessments of learners' medical and learning needs, and an assessment of their behaviour both at college and in external settings. Teachers use this information well to set appropriate targets, often in small incremental steps, for learners with complex needs.
- Attendance for most learners with high needs is generally good, and they frequently monitor their own progress closely using the online systems. This allows learners to have a clear view of how well they are performing in terms of attendance, punctuality and target grades as appropriate.
- Learners receive effective support when working with other learners on 16 to 19 study programmes; support is provided in a discreet manner, often at the learner's request. In the foundation-level classes, the support is highly visible but equally effective in its impact on learners' progress and outcomes.
- Learners develop a strong sense of social responsibility and are supportive of other learners and community groups. In response to a small number of learners saying that they felt isolated, the student support team set up and facilitate a learner-led support group. As a result, learners have improved their social and conversational skills so they can interact face-to-face and via social media more easily, share interests and generally have fun. Another learner with high needs has set up and is leading a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) group and is planning to run an event as part of the town's 'Pride' event later in the year.
- Support assistants are well trained with relevant experience in supporting learners with a diverse range of needs. They undertake mandatory training in moving and handling, safeguarding and mental health awareness. Support assistants have completed systematic instructional training. Learners benefit from a more holistic approach to their

support.

- Assessment officers are providing more effective help with progress-tracking for staff who teach or support those learners with high needs who are attending courses in academic and vocational areas. Staff are now using improved electronic monitoring systems to keep a better check on learners' progress. As a result, staff are providing better support for learners with high needs, leading to higher achievement rates.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not plan learning objectives to ensure that wider learning and skills development take place. A significant minority of tutors do not always highlight learners' spelling and grammar errors on their work or in feedback, so learners continue to make the same mistakes over a period of time. A minority of tutors make spelling errors in their feedback to learners, failing to model best practice.
- A few reviews of learners' personal development targets lack detail or dates and do not indicate what the learner has achieved within the specified time frame. This makes it difficult for both tutors and learners to measure where a learner is at a given point in time and therefore to further extend their development beyond the initial target.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130762
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	10,105
CEO	Gary Headland
Telephone number	01522 876000
Website	www.lincolncollege.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+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	543	385	676	475	1,235	375	5	34
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	285	565	92	529	2	94		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	72							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Acacia Training Ltd Ervanti Ltd JHC Skills for Business Ltd Stanford Management Processes Ltd Tempest Training Ltd Train Together Ltd							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, education and training delivery, 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

William Baidoe-Ansah, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Cameron Brandwood	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicholas Sanders	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Green	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Newbould	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Tucker	Ofsted Inspector
Allan Shaw	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca Perry	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Groves	Ofsted Inspector

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