

The Bournemouth and Poole College

General further education college

Inspection dates

12–15 March 2019

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement	Adult learning programmes	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Good
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement	Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Good

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Senior leaders, managers and governors have not sufficiently addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. As a result, the quality of provision has declined.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the college is too variable. Too few students benefit from good-quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- The majority of students on 16 to 19 study programmes do not make strong progress from their starting points.
- Too few students achieve their qualifications in English and mathematics first time, or at the level of which they are capable.
- The proportion of students who complete external work placements is too low.
- Attendance remains too low. Teachers and managers do not ensure that students' attendance at college reflects the expectations of employers.
- The majority of teachers do not demonstrate high enough expectations of students. Teachers do not provide feedback or set targets to ensure that students improve their skills and standards of work.
- Teachers do not provide feedback to students and apprentices that helps improve their written English skills.
- Too few students and apprentices have a good understanding of the risks posed to them from radicalisation and extremism.

The provider has the following strengths

- Senior leaders, managers and governors have developed highly effective partnerships with local stakeholders, including businesses, employers and schools, to develop a curriculum that meets local and regional skills well.
- Well-planned adult learning programmes enable most adult students to develop the skills they need for employment and their future careers.
- Well-planned and highly effective apprenticeship programmes enable most apprentices to develop good skills in a range of different occupations.
- Students who have high needs benefit from a well-planned transition into the college. They settle in quickly, make friends and enjoy their learning.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The Bournemouth and Poole College is a large general further education college located on three sites. The college is the largest provider of academic and vocational education in Dorset. The provision covers almost all subject sector areas. Courses are available from pre-entry level to higher education. Study programmes account for around 60% of the college's provision. A small number of subcontractors assist with the delivery of adult learning programmes. Most students on full-time programmes are aged 16 to 19. Apprenticeships account for some 25% of provision. Most employers linked to the college are within the region of the Dorset local enterprise partnership (LEP). The college delivers training in partnership with a number of large employers.
- The proportion of students and apprentices from minority ethnic backgrounds is in line with that of the local population. Students and apprentices are primarily recruited from across Dorset and parts of Hampshire.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Senior leaders and managers should improve rapidly the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to remove the inconsistencies across curriculum areas, subjects and teachers by:
 - using the information about students' progress, standards of work and the outcomes of lesson observations to identify what individual teachers need to do to improve their performance and outcomes for students
 - identifying those vocational teachers and assessors who are already doing this well and ensuring that they have regular opportunities to share their approaches with colleagues.
- Enable students to make good progress on their programme, including the development of their English and mathematical skills, by ensuring that:
 - managers and teachers use the information on students' starting points to plan learning
 - teachers set challenging targets for students to enable them to achieve higher grades
 - managers, teachers and staff monitor and take action to improve students' attendance and punctuality at sessions.
- Senior leaders and managers should ensure that more students complete relevant work experience which prepares them for their progression into work.
- Ensure that students and apprentices improve their understanding of, and can keep themselves safe from, the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders, managers and governors have not tackled the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The majority of students still do not achieve well enough in their functional skills and GCSE English and mathematics qualifications. Most students' attendance remains too low across all areas of the college. The quality of provision has declined since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders and managers do not provide effective professional development for teachers to improve their skills. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all curriculum areas is too variable. Managers do not ensure that teachers receive feedback or training that improves the quality of their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good. Teaching, learning and assessment for students aged 16 to 19 on study programmes, which are the majority of students at the college, require improvement.
- Leaders and managers do not set sufficiently challenging targets through the strategic plan or self-assessment process to help them drive improvements. Managers have not secured rapid improvements across all curriculum areas. Managers have not improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment or outcomes for students aged 16 to 19 on study programmes. Too many students aged 16 to 19 on study programmes do not make the expected progress on their course or achieve at the level of which they are capable.
- Managers regularly review the progress of curriculum teams against the targets set from self-assessment. The majority of managers accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of their provision through self-assessment. However, they set too few targets to help improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for students. Managers do not clearly identify the impact of the actions they have taken. As a result, the quality of provision is not consistently good across all curriculum areas and subjects.
- Senior leaders have recently rationalised the structure of the management team. Leaders have provided good support for newly appointed managers through management training. However, managers are not supported to clarify their roles with teachers and staff. A minority of managers are too often undertaking tasks on behalf of teachers. Managers do not skilfully manage their teams to improve the quality of provision and the experiences of students.
- Senior leaders, managers and governors have recently developed a strategy to improve the delivery of English and mathematics. Senior leaders have appointed a new senior leader with responsibility for English and mathematics. Managers and teachers have improved the planning and resources for delivery. However, it is too early to assess the impact of the strategy. Students' achievements in functional skills and GCSE English and mathematics have improved; however, they remain too low at most levels.
- Managers do not undertake a detailed analysis of achievement gaps for different groups of students and apprentices. Managers do not identify gaps or act to narrow the gaps that exist between males and females, different age groups of students, or students with a disability compared to those who do not have a disability.

- Senior leaders have worked tirelessly with all teachers and staff to improve the culture of the college. Leaders, managers and governors ensure that students are at the centre of their decision-making. Senior leaders and managers act on the views of students and apprentices. They meet with student ambassadors regularly at meetings and at the annual student voice conference. Students and apprentices feel confident in raising their concerns and making suggestions for improvement.
- Leaders and managers have developed a curriculum which is responsive to local and national business priorities. Managers have recently reviewed the curriculum for students aged 16 to 19 on level 1 programmes. Early indications show that most students have achieved their short qualifications and demonstrate that they have improved their readiness to learn. Most level 1 students now remain on their programme and plan to move on to their next steps.
- Leaders and managers work highly effectively with businesses, employers and schools. Managers have developed level 4 courses in project management and associate nurse practitioner in response to requests from key partners. Managers work well with local special schools. They have extended the provision for students with high needs in response to a growth in student numbers.
- Managers of the apprenticeship programmes have been very effective in the development of programmes to meet local and national employers' needs. Managers are thorough in their tracking of apprentices' progress on their programme. As a result, achievements for apprentices have significantly improved since the previous inspection and are now high.
- Managers ensure good access for students and apprentices to careers education, information, advice and guidance. Careers staff are well qualified and experienced, which enables them to support students to plan for their future careers. Staff provide most students and apprentices with effective guidance to help them move on to college and work. Apprenticeship managers place apprentices with appropriate employers. Most apprentices and students secure places in further training, higher education and work when they complete their programme.

The governance of the provider

- Governors bring a wide range of appropriate experience to the board. Governors are well qualified. A few governors have extensive experience within the further education sector. The board is well managed, and the chair undertakes frequent meetings with individual board members to review the performance of the board.
- Most governors conduct learning walks in the college. Governors use the knowledge they gain to provide a greater focus on quality improvement plans. They know the college well, and they have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors have access to regular, detailed reports from senior leaders. Governors use the information they receive to provide good support to senior leaders. Governors challenge senior leaders; however, this challenge has not led to sufficient improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for students aged 16 to 19.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Managers and staff who have responsibility for safeguarding students and apprentices effectively record, track and manage safeguarding incidents. Staff quickly identify incidents of serious concern and refer to the appropriate external partners for support.
- Managers and staff have developed effective partnerships with key agencies. Managers work closely with the Transport Police, local designated safeguarding leads networks, the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Board to identify local concerns. Managers use the information they gain on local issues to support students and apprentices in college and at work. Staff have improved most students' understanding of 'county lines', and personal safety on local railway lines.
- Students and apprentices have a good understanding of health and safety in sessions and at work. Students and apprentices wear appropriate personal protection equipment in practical sessions and when at work. Students and apprentices use equipment safely.
- Managers ensure that teachers and staff receive appropriate training in the 'Prevent' duty and British values. However, the majority of teachers and staff are not confident in these topics. As a result, the majority of students and apprentices do not have a detailed understanding of how to keep themselves safe from extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment across the college are too variable by subject and level to be good. The majority of teachers do not have high enough expectations for students aged 16 to 19 on study programmes. Too much teaching for students aged 16 to 19 on study programmes requires improvement.
- Most teachers do not plan sessions well enough for students aged 16 to 19 using the information they have on their starting points. Teachers do not set or review targets for students frequently enough. Teachers do not set challenging work, in particular for students aged 16 to 19 on level 3 vocational and academic programmes. The majority of students do not achieve their potential.
- Teachers on the majority of 16 to 19 study programmes and a few adult programmes do not sufficiently check students' understanding. At times, teachers do not plan activities to improve students' skills and knowledge. As a result, these students often quickly lose interest, do not pay attention and make slow progress in sessions.
- The majority of teachers do not review students' progress carefully enough. For example, reviews of the progress of students on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses for adults, 16 to 19 study programmes and students with high needs on foundation learning programmes are not used to bring about improvements. Therefore, the majority of students do not achieve their qualifications to the level of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not sufficiently improve students' English and mathematics skills. Too few students achieve their qualifications in English and mathematics to the level of which they are capable. Teachers and assessors do not ensure that students and apprentices improve their standards of written work. Teachers do not provide feedback to apprentices on how they can improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work. Too many apprentices do not improve their English skills and do not demonstrate good standards of written skills at work.

- Teachers and assessors use their extensive knowledge and skills well to develop students' and apprentices' practical skills. The majority of students develop a good understanding of the theories relevant to their subjects. Teachers and assessors in hospitality and catering have very high expectations for students and apprentices. As a result, students and apprentices in hospitality develop excellent skills and knowledge; they produce the standards of work expected by high-profile employers.
- Assessors frequently review and track the progress of apprentices throughout their programme. Assessors and employers set realistic targets for apprentices. Apprentices have a detailed understanding of what they need to do to improve. As a result, most apprentices make expected or better progress on their programme. However, teachers do not provide sufficient feedback to apprentices to ensure that they improve their written English skills.
- Most teachers provide effective feedback to adult students on vocational and access to higher education courses. Teachers' feedback is frequent and provides students with the guidance they need to improve. Teachers on access to higher education courses develop students' written skills and ensure that they demonstrate the skills they need for higher education courses. The majority of students move to higher education when they finish their course.
- Learning support assistants are well qualified and provide good support for students with additional learning needs. Learning support assistants plan a reduction in support for students to ensure that they increase their independence. A few students have successfully moved on to apprenticeships, where they continue to receive the support they need. The small minority of students who are identified as having high needs and those with additional learning needs gain confidence in their work and personal lives.
- Teachers and staff have developed extensive online resources for most adult students and a few students on 16 to 19 study programmes. Students routinely access resources both in and out of the classroom. Most adult students use online resources to catch up on work they have missed and get back on track quickly. A minority of students use resources to broaden their understanding of topics. Students are motivated to learn. They improve their independent learning skills, which helps to prepare them for further learning and work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- The majority of teachers in tutorials do not set targets for students, to improve their attendance, punctuality or behaviour in sessions. Too many students do not attend sessions frequently enough, and attendance across different courses remains too variable. Teachers do not always challenge students' poor time-keeping. As a result, too many students do not attend sessions punctually.
- The majority of students studying English and mathematics do not take pride in their written work. Too often, students' work is poorly presented, and students produce low standards of work. However, students with high needs produce a good standard of work in English and mathematics.
- Too many 16 to 19 study programme students and apprentices do not improve their written English skills well enough. The majority of assessors do not provide enough guidance to apprentices on what they need to do to improve their written assignments.

- The number of students aged 16 to 19 attending external work placements is too low. Currently half of the students on study programmes have not attended a work placement. Students on level 1 programmes and a few students on foundation learning do not have access to sufficient external work placements. Managers and staff have recently increased the number of placements. The students who do attend placements receive effective support from staff. Work-placement staff work well with employers. Students in public services, childcare, music and construction benefit from helpful workplace learning experiences and develop good practical skills.
- Most apprentices, 16 to 19 study programme students and students with high needs do not have an in-depth understanding of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation. The majority of adult students, in particular those studying on ESOL courses, have a good understanding of the 'Prevent' duty. They are able to identify the risks posed to them in their local communities.
- Most students and apprentices enjoy attending their learning programmes at college and in the workplace.
- Most students take part in helpful work-related learning activities. Specialist staff in the business, apprenticeship, skills and employability (BASE) team and local employers support students well. Students improve their skills by completing workplace projects, attending skills and knowledge workshops and volunteering. For example, a minority of students studying science at levels 1, 2 and 3 participated in an exhumation project at a local cemetery. Students studying fashion and textiles at level 3 gain a good understanding of working for themselves through participating in a workshop with guest artists.
- Most students and apprentices develop good study and practical skills. They develop the skills they need to prepare them to move on to further training and employment. Students in catering develop their skills in butchery and they develop their understanding of using local and sustainable produce. Apprentices develop good skills in independent working, problem-solving and teamworking. Apprentices rapidly apply the skills they have learned to their workplace and improve their company's productivity. However, apprentices' off-the-job training in beauty therapy does not develop the skills apprentices need to reflect current commercial practices. As a result, beauty therapy apprentices make slow progress.
- Most students and apprentices develop a comprehensive understanding of their rights and responsibilities as students, employees and community members. Student ambassadors and course representatives plan, organise and participate in an annual conference. Students share their experiences at the college and workplace with governors and staff. Managers and governors use this information to improve the learning experience for all students and apprentices at the college.
- A minority of students and apprentices extend their learning by undertaking additional qualifications. Students in childcare undertake additional paediatric first aid and citizen aid courses. Students in public service at level 1 complete the British award in canoeing and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Apprentices in catering undertake a level 3 course to become food hygiene supervisors. Students and apprentices improve their job prospects by developing their skills and knowledge for the workplace.
- Most students and apprentices receive detailed careers education, information, advice and guidance at the start of their programme. Managers place apprentices appropriately with employers to meet their long-term employment ambitions. Teachers provide good subject

advice for students when they are making decisions on their next steps and applying for higher education courses or jobs. However, a few students with high needs do not receive impartial advice and guidance to enable them to have realistic plans to help them achieve their long-term goals.

- Students and apprentices feel safe at work and in college. Students on 16 to 19 study programmes have an extensive knowledge of e-safety and how to keep themselves safe when working online. Students have a good understanding of the risks associated with online exploitation. However, a minority of students do not always follow college rules or wear their identification badges when in sessions and in college.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- The proportion of students who achieve their qualifications varies too much between different subjects and different types of qualifications.
- The proportion of learners on 16 to 19 study programmes who complete and achieve their qualifications remains too low. The majority of students do not make good progress on their programme. A minority of students develop good practical skills on their programme.
- Too many students on GCSE English and level 3 programmes do not make the expected progress. Most students achieve well in GCSE mathematics. Their achievement of high grades is now high.
- In adult learning programmes, students' achievement has improved and is similar to that found in other providers. Most students are making expected or better progress on their programmes. Too few adults achieve higher grades in GCSE English and mathematics courses.
- The proportion of students achieving functional skills English and mathematical qualifications, although increasing, remains too low. Too many students do not pass their qualification first time. Adult students' achievement in English at level 1 is good.
- Achievement gaps exist for different groups of students: males achieve less well than female students, students aged 16 to 19 achieve less well than adult students and those with a learning difficulty and disability achieve less well than those who do not have a learning difficulty and disability.
- Most students aged 16 to 19 now remain on their programme. Students aged 16 to 19 on level 1 short courses improve their readiness for education and training. Most progress to the next qualification on completion of their course.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieved their qualifications in 2017/18 significantly improved and is now high. The large majority of apprentices achieved within the planned time. The large majority of apprentices are making good progress on their programme.
- Apprentices' standards of practical work are at least good. Apprentices' standards of work in boat building, cookery and marine engineering are very high.
- Students with high needs on foundation learning and level 3 vocational programmes achieve well on their programme. The minority of students with high needs on level 1 and level 2 vocational and functional skills English and mathematics qualifications achieve less well than their peers.

- The majority of students and apprentices who have left the college have moved on to further training, apprenticeships, higher education or employment. Most apprentices remain with their current employers and gain additional responsibilities at work.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The college currently has 2,896 students on 16 to 19 study programmes in a wide range of subject areas from entry level to advanced level. A small proportion of students study A-level programmes. Students' prior attainment is lower than average. The largest numbers of students follow programmes in health, care and early years; business; uniformed public services; engineering and manufacturing; creative arts and media; hospitality and catering; information and communication technology; and foundation learning.
- Managers and teachers do not have high enough expectations for the majority of students on study programmes. Teachers do not set targets to ensure that students achieve to the level of which they are capable. Over time, students do not make the progress of which they are capable. Managers have not acted to improve weaker subject areas. The performance across subjects remains too variable.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient feedback to students to ensure that they improve their skills and knowledge. Teachers have low expectations of the standards of students' English and mathematical work. They do not challenge students to produce work of a high enough standard. The majority of students produce work at the level of their programme, irrespective of their capabilities. A large minority of students do not produce work to the standard required to secure high grades.
- Students' attendance has increased but remains too low. Teachers and staff do not challenge students' lateness to sessions. Too many students do not wear their identification badges or adhere to college rules. In a very small number of incidents, students demonstrate poor behaviour. As a result, a few students do not develop the skills they need to move on to their next steps or employment.
- A large minority of students have not completed work experience. Not enough students have completed work experience to improve their understanding of the skills required for work. However, the majority of students develop sufficient personal, social and work-related skills that prepare them for their next steps. Teachers encourage students in uniformed public services to live by clear rules which reflect the requirements of the uniformed services. Students undertake challenging international expeditions to develop their physical and mental well-being in preparation for entry into the services. Students in level 2 fitness improve their understanding of training plans and exercising safely.
- Teachers use questions skilfully in a minority of theory sessions to assess students' prior knowledge and skills. Teachers use questioning to challenge and broaden students' understanding. For example, teachers use questioning in electrical installation sessions to improve students' skills and accuracy when drawing electrical diagrams. A minority of students make rapid progress in their practical and theory sessions.
- On some occasions, teachers develop and improve students' practical skills well. Teachers challenge beauty therapy students to improve their timing of treatments when working

with clients in the salon. The majority of students make expected progress and improve their skills over time.

- At times, teachers provide frequent and detailed feedback to students on what they need to do to improve. Teachers' feedback is specific and encouraging. Students who receive such feedback are making expected or better progress on their course.
- Most students enjoy their studies and are respectful of each other and staff in the college. The large majority of students behave well in college. Well-planned tutorials help students develop their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy and how they can contribute to wider society. Students feel safe in college and within their communities.
- Most students benefit from the support and advice they receive before and during their programme. Students receive good careers education, information, advice and guidance on their programme. Teachers provide good subject-specific advice to students, which enables students to plan their careers and to identify their next steps. Most students successfully move on to the next level of course, apprenticeships, higher education or employment.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- Around half of the 2,047 adult students study at level 2 through online courses offered by the college and one subcontractor. Most students study lean management, team leading, health and social care, and mental health awareness. The remaining students study from entry level to level 4 on either full-time or part-time courses. Most adult students study programmes in ESOL, access to higher education, English, mathematics or accountancy.
- Leaders and managers have developed the adult learning curriculum to meet the needs of the local community and employers. Managers refine and adjust the provision following feedback from employers. Managers use the feedback from employer advisory boards to ensure that programmes are relevant to the workplace. Adult students develop the skills they need for employment and their future careers.
- Managers and teachers support students to improve their skills over time. Teachers and staff inform students of appropriate work-related programmes through social media. Staff keep students informed on how they can develop their skills in their online learning programmes. Managers have developed programmes for county taxi drivers. Drivers improve their customer service skills and understanding of the needs of disabled clients. Students improve their skills and confidence in their job roles.
- Leaders and managers manage the adult learning subcontracted provision well. Managers have high expectations of teachers. Teachers undertake a thorough assessment of students' starting points. Teachers and staff provide appropriate support for students with additional learning needs. Adult students achieve well in subcontracted provision. They achieve better than adult students who attend college programmes.
- Most teaching builds on students' previous skills and knowledge well. The majority of teachers identify students' starting points to inform session planning to enable students to make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers support students well on ESOL programmes to develop their English skills. ESOL students improve their spoken English through group work and practical activities.

- Most adult students develop good vocational and academic skills. Students in health and social care develop their understanding of how to communicate with different types of client groups when at work. Counselling students develop their self-awareness and improve their listening skills when working with clients. Students in media work as a team to develop and produce short animation films. A minority of teachers ensure that level 3 students develop their study skills. As a result, students improve the skills they need for work and to move on to further and higher education.
- Teachers use online learning well to help students who are falling behind with their studies to catch up. Students have access to good-quality resources, including online books, revision work and study notes. Students are able to recap on the learning in sessions and to extend their skills and knowledge. Students develop their skills in working independently in preparation for their next steps.
- The majority of students enjoy their studies and are respectful of one another. Most students work well with their peers within sessions. Students recognise the support they receive from teachers and staff. The large majority of adult students move on to further training, higher education and employment.
- Students have good access to careers education, information, advice and guidance to help them make choices. Students on access to health programmes attend talks with the National Health Service. The advice they receive broadens their understanding of careers and apprenticeships within the health service. Students use the information and advice they receive to plan their programmes and ensure that they have the skills they need for their next steps.
- Teachers draw on students' personal experiences when planning activities. ESOL students discuss their views of current affairs and increase their understanding of life in modern Britain. Students feel safe in college and in their local communities. Most students know how to stay safe when working online.
- Too many students do not attend their mathematics sessions regularly enough. As a result, they make slow progress on their programme.
- A few teachers do not frequently check students' understanding. Teachers do not check learning sufficiently before moving on to the next topic or task. A minority of students on functional skills mathematics, teaching and learning assistants, and accountancy technician courses do not make expected progress on their programmes.

Apprenticeships

Good

- Currently the college has 1,997 apprentices on roll; approximately one third are aged 16 to 18. The large majority of apprentices are on level 2 and level 3, with a minority on level 4 or 5 apprenticeship programmes. Most apprentices follow programmes in engineering, construction, health, catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and information technology and digital. Approximately equal proportions are on frameworks and standards-based apprenticeships.
- Leaders and managers have established effective and collaborative relationships with employers. Managers work with many very high-profile local and national employers. Managers plan the apprenticeship provision to meet local workforce priorities. Employers recognise that managers and staff provide good support. This supports and enables them

to recruit high-quality apprentices. Apprentices fulfil demanding roles, for example in avionics, boat building and digital marketing.

- Managers, assessors and employers work together to plan and deliver high-quality programmes. Apprentices in avionics, aerospace and boat building receive particularly good workplace training. Training is often delivered in facilities which provide up-to-date equipment and resources. For example, training for aeronautical apprentices uses the very latest machines. Apprentices develop computer coding skills to set up large production runs. Most apprentices develop very good practical skills, knowledge and behaviours for the workplace.
- Assessors use their expertise and industry experiences to provide good support for apprentices. Assessors work with employers to set realistic targets. Employers and assessors plan future training to meet the learning needs of apprentices. Apprentices are quickly referred to the college's well-being team when they need support. Assessors and staff support them to overcome problems at work. Apprentices improve their confidence at work.
- Most apprentices benefit from good on- and off-the-job training. A small number of apprentices receive outstanding training in hospitality and catering. Managers have developed strong links with key industry employers. Assessors train apprentices to work in high-profile restaurants and hotels. As a result, commis chef apprentices develop their personal and social skills, as well as their technical skills, to a high standard. This enables them to work with demanding employers who expect high standards. A very small number of apprentices do not benefit from up-to-date training. Apprentices in beauty therapy do not develop their skills in line with current industry practice.
- Assessors review apprentices' progress thoroughly. Employers take an active role in evaluating apprentices' practical and theory skills. Assessors agree and set further targets with employers. Assessors are preparing apprentices on standards-based qualifications well for their end-point assessment. Assessors set ambitious targets for the majority of apprentices to achieve high grades.
- Apprentices benefit from completing additional qualifications and activities. Many apprentices win local and national awards. Apprentices in digital marketing achieve their membership of the Chartered Institute of Marketing. This supports them to move on to their next level of apprenticeship. Most apprentices gain the skills they need to move on to higher-level training and employment.
- Apprentices are aware of their next steps and have a clear understanding of their career paths. Many apprentices undertake different roles with their employers. Apprentices gain wider skills and experience in all aspects of their employers' businesses. The information, advice and guidance they receive help them to make decisions about their future careers.
- Most apprentices develop good mathematical skills relevant to their job roles. Apprentices recognise how the knowledge they have learned relates to the workplace. Apprentices in hairdressing accurately calculate ratios when using hair dyes. Apprentices improve their confidence and apply the mathematical skills they have learned.
- The large majority of apprentices improve the digital skills they require for the workplace. Business and management apprentices develop their understanding of how to use digital systems at work. Business administration apprentices develop their skills to plan, organise meetings, schedule tasks and track correspondence. Employers recognise the skills

apprentices have learned. As a result, a small number of apprentices have taken on extra responsibilities at work, including planning and managing staff meetings.

- Apprentices have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe at work and in their personal lives. Hospitality and catering apprentices receive comprehensive training and support to prepare them for moving away from home. Apprentices receive training to develop their understanding of personal budgets, drug awareness and mental health. Apprentices who are living away from home for the first time are given personal alarms. They improve their understanding of the differences between banter and bullying at work. Assessors prepare apprentices for understanding the risks posed to them at work.
- Too many assessors place insufficient importance on correcting apprentices' written English. Assessors do not correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in apprentices' written assignments. Apprentices do not improve their English skills quickly enough. They often repeat mistakes in the workplace.
- Managers and assessors do not ensure that apprentices have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the risks posed to them from radicalisation and extremism. Too many apprentices do not have a good enough understanding of British values. Managers and assessors have not ensured that apprentices fully understand local issues, including people trafficking, modern-day slavery or 'county lines'. Apprentices cannot identify the potential risks and issues faced by the employers with whom they work.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- Some 86 students identified as having high needs are studying at all sites. There is specialist provision for foundation learning at the North Road site. There are roughly equal proportions of students studying on vocational and academic programmes alongside students who are not identified as having high needs and those studying in foundation learning.
- Leaders and managers use the funding they receive well. Managers across the college work well together to develop the curriculum and provide the support that students need.
- Managers and staff have developed good relationships with local special schools. Students benefit from well-planned transition programmes. Staff know the students and their families well before they start on their programmes. Students on the 'Steps' programme undertake an extended summer programme in catering or floristry. Most students complete shadowing days on programmes. This reduces their anxieties about starting at college. Most students quickly settle in to life at college.
- Most teachers plan sessions well to ensure that students improve their skills and independence. Most students make expected progress on their programme. Students improve their independent living skills and learn to cook basic meals for themselves. Students improve their social skills, make friends and become more confident in their daily lives.
- Most students improve their communication skills. Managers have ensured that students have regular access to speech and language therapy. Teachers use these strategies when planning sessions. Students improve their communication skills through volunteering and work placements. Students working in the 'Snax' café improve their skills by serving customers. In drama, students gain confidence in speaking in front of others. Students'

improvement in their communication skills has led to a reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour in sessions.

- Most teachers and learning support staff provide good support for students. Teachers and staff frequently review levels of support. Staff reduce support when students no longer need it. A small number of students benefit from assistive technology to support them in their studies. A few students benefit from accessing specialist mental health services and counselling support. Staff plan support to ensure that most students make rapid progress and enjoy their time at college.
- Teachers and staff listen and respond to feedback from students. Student ambassadors represent their peers at student voice meetings. Managers act promptly on feedback from students. They have provided a sensory room to support students who require a quiet space. Managers have improved facilities, including the canteen and a lounge with games for students. As a result, students are better able to manage their anxieties and remain in college.
- Managers have developed a curriculum to meet the interests of most students. However, a few activities for students on foundation learning programmes are not held in suitable learning environments. For example, beauty therapy and drama sessions are not taught in industry-standard facilities. A few students do not develop an understanding of professional standards for the workplace.
- The majority of teachers and learning support staff work effectively with students and families to plan their next steps. Level 3 students receive help with university and loan applications. However, a few students have not received sufficient impartial advice and guidance when planning their next steps. As a result, a few students do not have realistic career plans or the support in place to achieve their long-term goals.
- The majority of teachers and learning support staff do not record or track well enough students' progress against the outcomes set within their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Staff do not use EHC plan outcomes well enough to enable them to set challenging targets. A few teachers and staff do not provide feedback to students on what they need to do to improve. As a result, a minority of students do not make the expected progress towards their planned EHC plan outcomes.
- A minority of students have completed internal and external work placements. A few students do not have relevant work experience planned. As a result, a minority of students do not develop their understanding of the world of work and they are not able to make informed choices about their future careers or next steps.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130652
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	7,033
Principal/CEO	Diane Grannell
Telephone number	01202 205608
Website	www.thecollege.co.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)	861	584	796	1169	1239	286	-	8
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	556	439	204	681	2	115		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	7		-		7			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	86							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	The Learning Curve Group Activate Learning							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal curriculum, 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

Andrea Dill-Russell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Denise Olander	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sara Hunter	Ofsted Inspector
Penny Mathers	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Attfield	Ofsted Inspector
Amanda Washbrook	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqui Ecoeur	Ofsted Inspector
Ray Walker	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Zimmerman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Harpreet Nagra	Ofsted Inspector

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