

Inspection of City College Nottingham

Inspection dates:

5–8 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

City College Nottingham is an independent learning provider. It operates from eight sites across Nottingham, Burton-on-Trent, Derby, Leicester and Stoke-on-Trent. At the time of inspection, 191 learners were on adult learning programmes and 110 apprentices were following apprenticeship frameworks and standards-based programmes. Leaders offer courses primarily aimed at helping the most disaffected in society to gain qualifications and enter work. These include English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English, mathematics, fashion and textiles, construction trades, health and social care, and beauty therapy. Courses are offered from entry level to level 3, with most learners studying at level 2 and below. Around two thirds of apprentices are on level 2 apprenticeships.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners who attend regularly enjoy their learning and value the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills. They appreciate the importance of this in progressing to further study or work.

Learners and apprentices told us that they appreciate learning in a supportive and inclusive environment and inspectors agreed. Relationships between them, their teachers and assessors are positive and productive.

Although most learners and apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours, too few are sufficiently challenged to achieve as well as they are able.

Despite the mostly shabby surroundings, most classrooms are vibrant and suited to learning. Learners do not benefit from access to sufficient high-quality learning resources and too often have to tolerate poor-quality photocopies.

The small number of learners who have additional needs are not supported well enough. Although well meaning and caring, staff do not have the expertise to support these learners to succeed as well as they might.

Not all learners feel safe in their learning environments. A few learners are particularly concerned for their safety while on college sites, and inspectors agreed with them.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders' strategic intent to help the most disadvantaged and disaffected people in the community to acquire knowledge and skills and to gain work, is clear and understood well by staff. Leaders use regional information to inform their intent, but, for most adult learners, this is not supported by sound research into the skills and knowledge required by local employers.

Teachers' planning of the curriculum for most adult programmes is variable. Most vocational subjects are delivered unit by unit, with few opportunities for learners to recall and build on knowledge and skills over time. For example, while adult learners on business programmes are challenged to recall earlier learning and knowledge, reinforced though the use of videoclips, learners on health and social care programmes study subjects in isolation, and teachers do not revisit subjects or sequence teaching to securely build learner expertise.

Assessors involve employers in planning the curriculum content for apprentices but do not sequence training carefully to fit with the work being completed by apprentices in their jobs. For example, in construction, staff ensure that the content of apprenticeships meets the needs of the local economy well, but do not adapt the content or sequence for individual apprentices. As a result, apprentices are unable to develop and apply the knowledge and skills they learn at college effectively at work,

or are not sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled for the tasks their employer gives them.

English and mathematics are taught effectively, enabling learners to develop new knowledge, and building on existing skills and previous learning well. The curriculum for ESOL learners is weak. Teaching does not consider learners' different existing abilities well enough. The teacher lacks specialist training and is unable to help learners practise their spelling, pronunciation and listening skills.

A small number of learners do not experience effective teaching, as their tutors are not sufficiently qualified or experienced to plan and deliver an effective curriculum and do not have sufficient resources. For example, the fashion programmes tutor is only qualified to the same level as is being taught, and the college does not have an assessor suitably qualified to assess level 3 plumbing apprentices. Resources and facilities for beauty therapy learners are poor and do not reflect industry standards.

Support for the small number of learners with additional learning needs is poor. Staff are not suitably qualified or appropriately trained. Where staff have been redeployed to deliver additional learning support, managers have not ensured that they fully understand how to support learners in class and what the expected impact should be.

Although an increasing number of learners achieve their intended qualification, too few are challenged enough to make the best possible progress, for example by being encouraged to work towards a merit or distinction grade. Managers do not know what progress learners are making, as the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities to reinforce and assess knowledge and skills over time. As a consequence, it is not possible to determine with assurance whether all learners are making adequate progress with their qualification and gaining the knowledge and skills needed for their intended next step.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficiently high expectation for learners' attendance, and as a result adult learners' attendance is not consistently high. Apprentices attend well. Managers are developing systems to monitor this more effectively but have yet to analyse this in enough detail to act on it.

Learners and apprentices have a positive attitude to learning and behave well. Learners work well together and demonstrate respect for each other and their teachers. They feel confident to share their views and opinions in discussions. Apprentices and adult learners are confident, mature and responsible. They contribute to their working environment well and enjoy their learning.

Most learners and apprentices can access effective careers advice and guidance to plan and prepare for their next step. Adult learners can attend job clubs to improve their curriculum vitae writing and interview skills. Health and social care apprentices know the career options open to them; they have explored occupational courses to help them progress into work and for applying to university to study nursing. However, in the majority of subjects, managers do not adequately use information

on learners' intended and actual destinations to plan and evaluate the curriculum.

Despite recent investment in new staff and the introduction of improved processes, particularly for apprenticeships, leaders and managers have not brought about the much-needed improvements in the quality of education identified at the previous inspection. Leaders are not sufficiently ambitious for key areas of performance, such as attendance and retention. As a result, the quality of education has not improved sufficiently.

Governors understand well the context and intent of the college and understand the need to improve quality. They have a wide range of business skills and represent the community well but lack the educational expertise to enable them to monitor the quality of education effectively. The reports they receive, often verbally, are insufficiently detailed to enable them to challenge leaders sufficiently on the progress being made to improve quality.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Not all learners feel safe. A member of staff also expressed concerns about their own safety at community venues. Access to learning areas is open to the public without challenge. Not all learners have been issued with identity badges. Staff and learners cannot be sure whether anyone on site is supposed to be there or not. Staff identified these significant concerns before the start of term, but managers have failed to resolve them. In practical workshops, poor practice and safety concerns identified before the beginning of term remain unresolved. Learners can easily access inappropriate materials on college computers, including pornography and sites promoting radicalisation.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Governors, leaders and managers must ensure that all learners are safe while at college and are protected from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders should set higher expectations for managers and staff to improve curriculum design, planning and teaching, so that learners achieve the grades of which they are capable.
- Leaders must ensure that learners with additional learning needs are adequately supported to achieve as well as they are able.
- Leaders should ensure that there are enough suitably qualified and experienced teachers to implement the intended curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers have access to sufficient high-quality resources to support their teaching.
- Governors must ensure that leaders' improvement actions lead quickly to learners and apprentices knowing more and achieving their best.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1236708
Address	Carlton Road Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG3 2NR
Contact number	01159101469
Website	citycollegenottingham.com
Principal/CEO	Mr Hassan Ahmed
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	28 November–1 December 2017
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the work-based learning manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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