

Inspection of Cambridge Regional College

Inspection dates: 4–7 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected.

Information about this provider

Cambridge Regional College is a general further education college. Following a merger with Huntingdonshire Regional College in August 2017, it operates from two campuses. The largest is in Kings Hedges, on the northern outskirts of Cambridge; the other is in Huntingdon.

In October 2016, prior to merger, Cambridge Regional College was subject to a two-day Ofsted inspection and was judged to have good provision. Huntingdonshire Regional College was also inspected in October 2016, when overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate.

At the time of inspection, the college had 2,900 students on education programmes for young people, 3,000 adult learners, 1,340 apprentices and 448 students in receipt of high needs funding. The college offers courses from entry level to level 5. Provision is offered in 11 of the 15 subject sector areas. The college currently works with seven sub-contractors. These provide courses for adults.

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

Study programme students benefit from high-quality enrichment and work experience activities. These enhance their motivation to achieve their qualifications. For example, sport students visit Morocco to support children in orphanages. They help them develop new skills in sport-based activities and English. They learn basic Arabic to help them converse with the children when they are there. As a result, they develop the skills and knowledge sought by employers, as well as developing their understanding of different cultures.

The quality of provision for adult students is too inconsistent. While they enjoy learning, they do not all benefit from well-planned teaching sessions. For example, adults whose first language is not English do not study courses that enable them to develop their language skills quickly. On more effective courses, such as counselling, students develop the skills they need to help children in their care to express their feelings appropriately. Macmillan nurses and bereavement counsellors develop their listening skills so that they can help their clients more effectively.

Too few apprentices gain their qualifications because assessors often do not ensure that they develop their skills quickly, and many take too long to complete their qualification. Teachers at college help most apprentices develop appropriate occupational skills that they need to do their jobs. For example, plumbing apprentices learn pipe bending techniques that complement those taught on-site. This helps them to broaden their skills and knowledge. As a result, they work independently.

Teachers use well designed and useful resources to help students to develop the skills they need for industry. For example, catering students benefit from industry standard equipment. As a result, students learn to use high specification resources expertly. They confidently apply their knowledge in national skills competitions.

Students who have high needs benefit from a very caring and inclusive learning environment. Relationships between students and their teachers are strong. This motivates students to be successful in their learning. Students develop their confidence and self-esteem. However, not all students who require physiotherapy and occupational therapy receive it. As a result, their physical well-being is not promoted well enough.

Students and apprentices work in a professional and calm environment. They are respectful of staff and each other. They behave well and feel safe.

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

Governors and senior leaders have not always ensured that improvement actions have been effective. Governors are well qualified and experienced, they clearly understand the strengths and weaknesses of the college. However, they have not

ensured that the actions taken have improved weaker areas of provision, such as English and mathematics and apprenticeship provision, quickly enough.

Leaders have not clearly identified the purpose of part-time courses for adults and level 2 programmes for young people. Furthermore, they do not accurately assess students' skills and career ambitions on entry to ensure that courses meet their needs. For example, staff enrol too many adults on courses that do not take account of their current skills and experience. Too often students studying at level 2 are on courses that are of little use to them. They are not able to progress to more advanced courses rapidly enough. As a result, students do not quickly develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their career aims.

Leaders have carefully planned the curriculum for full-time programmes. They make sure that courses align closely with local and regional business needs. For example, to meet employer demand, managers are developing a heavy goods vehicle maintenance course. As a result, most full-time students study courses that help them gain jobs and achieve their career aims, because courses lead to employment opportunities.

Teachers plan most education programmes for young people effectively, so that students develop their industry skills systematically. Teachers vary their teaching strategies to take account of students' starting points so that students consolidate and build on their prior learning. Students talk confidently about what they have learned. For example, health and social care students can clearly articulate the requirements of the Care Quality Commission. Beauty therapy students can explain the importance of massage qualifications to help them access employment.

Apprenticeship teachers do not plan the curriculum to ensure that apprentices gain new knowledge and skills in a logical way. This is because they do not effectively assess the starting points of apprentices on entry. For example, although business administration apprentices undertake a skill scan at the start of their programme, this does not identify what they can already do or what they need to develop further. Because hairdressing teachers do not consider apprentices' current skills, such as cutting hair, they are unable to explain why they teach skills in the order they have planned. As a result, apprentices take too long to improve their technical skills and often make slow progress.

Teachers use their good subject and industry knowledge to help students develop up-to-date industry-related skills. For example, motor vehicle students work accurately to change car tyres and radiators and replace suspension dampers to prevent oscillation. Teachers make sure that students understand the importance of safe manual handling and health and safety.

Teachers help students on education programmes for young people and apprenticeships to gain useful additional skills and qualifications that help them in their future career choices. For example, public service students work with the army cadets and the police academy to develop their understanding of the workplace.

Teachers provide apprentices with updates to industry regulations and enable childcare apprentices to complete paediatric first aid.

Teachers assess high needs students' abilities thoroughly when they come to the college. Staff use students' educational and health care plans to develop meaningful individual targets. They effectively link these to the main aims of students' learning programmes. Teachers ensure that students participate well in vocational classes. Students contribute to whole-class discussion effectively. As a result, students successfully build their subject knowledge and skills.

Learning support mentors work very effectively with teachers to help students who have high needs to study successfully. Mentors skilfully defuse potentially disruptive behaviour to enable students to complete learning tasks. They concentrate on helping students learn new skills rather than simply completing tasks and activities. Consequently, students develop their knowledge and skills well and become more independent.

In contrast, some students on study programmes who have learning support needs do not receive effective support. Too often, students who self-refer do not get specialist help to manage their learning. As a result, these students do not progress or develop their skills quickly enough.

Apprentices are not sufficiently well informed about their career progression options. Teachers tell apprentices what qualifications they can move on to but not what wider careers are available to them. Consequently, apprentices do not know what other jobs are available to them or how to achieve them.

Leaders have been too slow to improve apprenticeship teachers' use of assessment. Too many apprentices still do not receive useful or developmental feedback from their tutors. This hinders their learning and understanding of topics. Teachers do not tell apprentices how they have achieved their grades or how to improve. Consequently, too many apprentices do not know what they are doing well and what they need to improve.

Apprentices and adults do not have a sound understanding of British values. For example, apprentices do not know enough about their legal rights and responsibilities as employees. Adult learners on functional skills programmes have a limited understanding of the benefits of living in a democracy. On education programmes for young people, teachers effectively develop students' knowledge of how to stay safe online, and what their rights and responsibilities are as citizens.

Leaders have been too slow to improve the quality of English and mathematics provision. Management interventions have had little impact on improving the quality of teaching. Too much teaching is planned to simply enable students to pass the qualification, yet too few learners gain higher grade GCSE passes. Too many students cannot recall or accurately apply their skills and knowledge to their work. Attendance at these lessons is too low.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have developed a safe environment for students, apprentices and staff. They follow safe recruitment practices when appointing new staff. Managers have developed an effective tutorial programme for young people. The result is that most young people can discuss the local dangers that may impact on their lives.

Members of the safeguarding team undertake their roles effectively. Governors also undertake appropriate annual safeguarding training. Learners feel confident about voicing any concerns about safety, knowing that staff will act quickly. As a result, students and apprentices feel safe and are safe.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders need to ensure that part-time courses for adults are meaningful. They need to develop a more ambitious curriculum that enables more adults to progress to higher level study or gain employment.
- Leaders must ensure that young people on full-time level 2 programmes study qualifications that enable them to progress to higher level study more rapidly. Teachers need to carefully assess students' skills and knowledge on entry to ensure that courses are sufficiently challenging.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that more apprentices pass their courses. Teachers need to be more ambitious in planning learning programmes that take account of apprentices' current skills and knowledge to help them to quickly develop more advanced skills.
- Leaders and managers must improve the quality of education for students, adult learners and apprentices studying English and mathematics. Teachers need to ensure that students' attendance to these classes improves significantly. They need to ensure that adults recall and apply their learning and make sure that more students achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders need to ensure that adults and apprentices receive impartial careers advice and guidance to help them plan their next steps.
- Leaders need to ensure that all students who need learning support receive timely and effective help to enable them to develop their skills and knowledge more rapidly.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that students who require access to physiotherapy and occupational therapy receive this help promptly.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130610
Address	Science Park Campus Kings Hedges Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB4 2QT
Contact number	01223 418 200
Website	www.camre.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Mark Robertson
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	22 October 2016
Main subcontractors	Back 2 Work Complete Training Limited Cambridge Community Arts Go Train Limited Learning Curve Group Limited Intech Centre Limited The Number 4 Group Limited The Skills Network Limited

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Assistant Principal for Quality 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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