

Inspection of Chichester College Group

Inspection dates: 3–6 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Education programmes for young people	Outstanding
Adult learning programmes	Outstanding
Apprenticeships	Outstanding
Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Information about this provider

Chichester College Group comprises four college campuses: Brinsbury College, Chichester College, Crawley College (formerly Central Sussex College) and Worthing College. The group was created in 2017 with the merger of Chichester and Central Sussex Colleges. It expanded in March 2019 with the addition of Worthing College.

Chichester College received a full inspection in March 2014, at which time inspectors judged provision to be 'outstanding'. Crawley College, as Central Sussex College, received a full inspection in October 2016 and inspectors judged provision as 'requires improvement'. A subsequent monitoring visit was conducted in February 2019 of the Crawley College campus. Inspectors found that leaders and managers had made 'significant progress' in all themes. Worthing College received a full inspection in February 2016, at which time provision was judged to be 'good'.

The merged college group provides a range of vocational, further and higher education courses, as well as apprenticeships. At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 6,200 16- to 18-year-old learners on academic and vocational programmes, 3,500 apprentices and 2,500 adult learners. There were approximately 90 learners in receipt of high-needs funding.

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

Learners, including adult learners, and apprentices are rightly very proud of their college. They value the active role they take in working with leaders and staff to create an inclusive and vibrant community. Learners and apprentices greatly appreciate the many opportunities they have to participate in decision-making across the college.

Learners and apprentices benefit from the strong culture of mutual respect and tolerance that leaders, managers and staff have created. Learners and apprentices of different abilities and backgrounds work harmoniously together and in so doing support and inspire one another.

Learners and apprentices enjoy greatly their time at college. They are ambitious to achieve. They benefit from the excellent relationships that leaders and staff have developed with employers and other stakeholders to inform and contribute to courses. Consequently, learners and apprentices study courses that are relevant and are in line with industry practice. They cherish the passion and subject expertise of their teachers which inspire them to extend their learning. Almost all learners and apprentices make strong progress with their studies, develop new knowledge and skills and often achieve to a high level.

Learners and apprentices, and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, rightly feel highly supported by college staff. They speak warmly of the approachability and care of staff who rapidly put in place measures to help those who need support so that they achieve very well.

Learners and apprentices take part in a substantial range of activities beyond the classroom or their training. They develop new interests and pursuits, such as involving themselves in wider community, national and international interests, with enthusiasm. For example, learners work with Crawley Open House, a centre for homeless people, the Alzheimer's Society or with overseas education charities. As a result, learners and apprentices develop their understanding of wider society and learn how to become active and responsible citizens.

Learners and apprentices attend very well. They feel safe at college and in the workplace. They respond very positively to the wide range of support they receive. They develop their confidence and have a comprehensive knowledge of how to look after themselves and each other. Learners and apprentices know in detail the options open to them after completing their courses at college.

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

Governors, leaders and staff have high expectations of all learners and apprentices. They help them achieve their goals and become responsible members of both the college and wider community. Leaders have created an outstanding culture of

inclusivity and respect. Consequently, learners develop an understanding of different groups in wider society. Teachers inspire learners to fully commit to their studies and, as a result, they develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be successful. Learners and apprentices benefit from the considerable range of options that enable them to follow the most appropriate programmes for their future aspirations.

Leaders and managers work closely with employers and other external stakeholders to research and design appropriate courses for learners. They ensure that these courses meet fully the demands of their local and regional communities. Leaders and managers work closely with employers to include additional qualifications to apprentices' programmes which better prepare them for their jobs. For example, engineering apprentices at Rolls-Royce complete additional units in leatherwork and upholstery to improve the quality of their work. Managers and staff consider carefully the needs of learners when planning courses. For example, managers and staff create bespoke programmes for learners with high needs that meet their personal interests, as well as their academic requirements.

Employers value greatly the positive impact apprentices' new skills and knowledge have on their workplace. Managers and teachers keep employers very well informed about the progress that apprentices make. In the few instances when an apprentice falls behind, staff and employers take swift and effective action to ensure they catch up quickly. Apprentices develop key knowledge securely and learn how to apply this to their specific job roles. For example, teachers of the level 4 ambulance practitioners' apprenticeship make sure that apprentices understand the key underlying causes of shock, such as cardiogenic and hypovolaemic causes, before looking at effective treatments. Apprentices frequently use their improved knowledge and skills to secure promotion.

Learners and apprentices benefit greatly from the vocational expertise of their teachers. Teachers use their considerable experience to structure lesson content logically and to teach interesting and engaging lessons. Consequently, learners build and develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. Teachers support learners to build their theoretical knowledge, which they can then apply to practical situations. For example, students studying level 3 vocational sport use their theoretical knowledge of measuring and recording healthy weight to teach applied gym sessions. As learners on health and social care courses develop their theoretical knowledge of nursing care, they become increasingly empathetic and more confident in their care for patients within their work placements.

Learners rapidly develop the specific skills they require to be successful on their courses. They use subject terminology with fluency and confidence, work well in groups, listen well and respond maturely. For example, adult learners studying mathematics use mathematical terms correctly and with confidence to explain how to solve algebraic equations. Learners studying A-level English language and literature complete detailed research projects on gendered language and so develop higher-level research skills in preparation for higher education. Those studying level 3 animal management become increasingly adept at handling small animals and

confidently move on to cloven-hoofed animal husbandry. Learners on level 3 performing arts engage positively in constructive critiques of each other's performances.

Learners benefit from excellent resources that very closely match industry standards. Learners within catering courses work in excellently resourced kitchens and with guest chefs who help them to develop their culinary skills. Learners and apprentices within engineering and health and beauty courses access commercial-level equipment. Learners and apprentices at different levels work collaboratively in these work spaces, which raises their aspirations and consolidates learning.

Teachers use assessment to understand learners' and apprentices' progress very well and to intervene rapidly to support them when they fall behind. In GCSE and A-level courses, teachers use frequent assessments, which replicate actual examinations, to check understanding and address any gaps in learning. Teachers provide constructive and motivational feedback so that learners know what they need to do to improve further, and many aspire to do so. In a small minority of cases, apprentices do not receive feedback on their written work that promotes the development of their professional writing skills, beyond what is required for their programme, to prepare them for study at a higher level.

Leaders, managers and staff have carefully designed and planned adult learning courses to meet the needs of the community and learners. Teaching staff sensitively and skilfully support adult students returning to education. For example, teachers work with ex-military learners within building programmes to help them develop skills for employment and readjust to civilian life. As a result, adult learners develop new skills and knowledge and grow in confidence.

Leaders, managers and staff are highly ambitious for disadvantaged learners and those with additional needs. Disadvantaged learners rapidly develop the skills needed to participate within society and gain employment. For example, prisoners at a local open prison complete barber training to prepare them for employment on release. Staff who work with learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well informed and trained to support the learners' individual academic and social goals. As a result, learners with high needs rapidly gain confidence, independence and employability skills. They achieve at least as well as their peers, and sometimes better.

The proportion of learners who pass their qualifications is high. At Crawley College, leaders, managers and staff have worked with learners to dramatically improve the number of learners who pass their qualifications. Learners and apprentices make at least good, and often better, progress. Where attendance has been an issue, leaders, managers and staff have intervened swiftly and decisively and, as a result, attendance has improved.

Learners and apprentices benefit from substantial careers advice and guidance to ensure they are well informed about their next steps. They value the support they receive from tutors and the dedicated 'Progression Plus' team with their Universities

and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) applications and interview preparation. The significant majority of students benefit from well-planned and relevant work experience or work-related activities. As a result, a high proportion of learners and apprentices move on to further or higher education and employment.

Leaders, managers and staff provide a rich and varied range of extra-curricular activities that expose learners to topics beyond their immediate experience. Staff encourage learners and apprentices to develop personal qualities that will help them flourish in life. For example, learners and apprentices visit charities in Kenya to build schools, and many go on to return to Kenya before starting higher education. Learners and apprentices routinely take part in national competitions and produce work of a high industry standard.

Leaders and managers have robust measures in place to make sure that subcontracted provision is of a high standard. They hold subcontractors to account and frequently check on the progress that learners and apprentices are making in this area of provision. As a result, learners and apprentices within subcontracted provision achieve as well as their peers, and occasionally better.

Governors, leaders and managers have a detailed understanding of the strengths of the college. They routinely consider the views of staff, employers and learners. They identify areas for improvement and take effective steps quickly. Governors have been highly effective in using their skills, experience and knowledge of the colleges during the merger process. They have successfully overseen considerable expansion while making sure that senior leaders maintain a strong focus on the quality of education and training. Governors and senior leaders make sure that they meet their legal responsibilities.

Governors, leaders and managers make sure that staff feel well cared for, valued and supported, particularly during the merger process. Leaders and managers have successfully developed a strong collaborative culture between the campuses, particularly within teaching, training and learning. Staff value, and benefit from, the strong focus on professional development, which improves their practice and increases their confidence and resilience. Staff are very proud of and enjoy working at the college.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Learners and staff are safe and know who to contact if they have a concern. Leaders use their comprehensive policies and procedures, including highly effective information technology monitoring systems, to make sure that learners and staff are safe. Well-trained staff and governors understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They ensure that learners, including the small number of 14- to 16-year-olds who attend the college, understand how to keep safe. Staff keep detailed records of safeguarding incidents and work effectively with external agencies where necessary. They recruit staff safely.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130843
Address	Westgate Fields Chichester West Sussex PO19 1SB
Contact number	01243786321
Website	www.chichester.ac.uk
CEO	Shelagh Legrave OBE
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	3 March 2014
Main subcontractors	WMC Training Ltd Universal Learning Streams Ltd Global Skills Training Ltd Grey Seal Academy Ltd Lewtay Training Ltd Quest Training South East Ltd Boom Training Ltd Eglantine Catering Ltd

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the executive principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection reports. 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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