

# Inspection of Capital City College Group

Inspection dates: 5 to 12 December 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Information about this provider

Capital City College Group (CCCG) is the largest further education and skills college in London. The provision is split across nine main campuses that stretch from Victoria in central London to Enfield in north-east London. This includes the Alexandra College and Kennet West Skills Centre, from which staff support learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities. CCCG delivered post-16 education to over 35,500 learners in 2021/22 with a turnover of more than £113 million. It is one of the largest providers of further education in England. CCCG offers courses in all 15 subject sector areas, with a focus on applied education, vocational specialisms and A levels.

At the time of the inspection, there were around 9,000 young learners on study programmes, 12,500 learners on adult learning programmes, 900 apprentices on a range of apprenticeship standards from level 2 to level 5 and 417 learners were in receipt of high-needs funding.

The college subcontracts a range of courses across the provision types to 19 subcontractors.

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

The majority of learners and apprentices, across all campuses, enjoy a rich and challenging curriculum. Teachers, with very good subject knowledge, teach the curriculum so that learners and apprentices gain highly relevant knowledge and skills to help them progress to their next steps. The majority of learners across the provision types go on to further study or employment at the end of their programmes.

Young learners on A-level courses develop a deep understanding of their subjects. This is because teachers frequently revisit prior learning, helping learners to consolidate their learning effectively. For example, A-level economics learners understand the features of different types of markets, such as monopoly and perfect competition. In A-level physical education, learners recall confidently their knowledge of topics such as lactic acid and the cardiovascular system.

Apprentices gain skills they apply successfully in the workplace. Apprentices on the rail technician standard know the correct way to install specialist electrical sockets on trains. They know how to work safely on the railway. Commis chef apprentices gain expert food preparation skills and knowledge. They understand the biology of the food they cook, for example of different poultry such as duck, which helps them decide the best method of cooking.

Adults on courses for learners with English as a second language (ESOL) improve their communication skills. They gain the confidence to carry out tasks in their daily lives. Unemployed learners on employability courses gain valuable skills that employers need. For example, on security courses, learners understand the legal limitations of a security job and how the rule of law applies to this work. Learners on health and social care courses are very knowledgeable about the protected characteristics and why these are important.

The majority of learners with high and complex care and education needs receive very good support from teachers at the college and the subcontractors. Skilled staff help learners access the curriculum and additional activities successfully. Learners are very keen to take part in lesson activities because teachers encourage them through a range of effective communication techniques. For example, teachers use sign language and visual resources to help learners understand their learning and join in activities.

The majority of learners and apprentices have positive attitudes to their learning. They are supportive and respectful towards each other and their teachers. They learn in positive environments, where they feel safe. They appreciate the security measures in place across the campuses to keep them safe. The majority have high attendance at their lessons and are on time.

## **Contribution to meeting skills needs**

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders and managers make extremely good use of labour market information. They use this to identify and respond to the strategic priorities in the area. They use this information to create a detailed and comprehensive curriculum strategy.

Leaders and managers build strong and useful links through a broad network of sector and representative groups. This includes the skills advisory boards and the mayor's academy hubs. Leaders and managers use these links very well to plan the curriculum. They help identify useful employer-related opportunities for learners. As a result, learners benefit from guest speakers, work and industry placements, live project briefs and supported internships.

Leaders and managers work very closely with a range of external stakeholders. These include training providers, local authorities, the Greater London Authority (GLA), job centres, local schools, colleges, subcontractors, trade unions and community groups. This is across most curriculum areas and campuses. These partnerships result in a rich curriculum for learners. The curriculum meets skills priorities, supports employers, provides good progression for learners and ensures that learners from a range of backgrounds engage in learning. For example, managers engage with the local authority Refugee Resettlement Team at Islington Council. This is to respond to the need for ESOL courses to support migrant families from Afghanistan.

In many curriculum areas, leaders and managers involve employers and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of the curriculum. This ensures that the curriculum aligns to employers' needs and provides learners with the knowledge and skills they need to progress successfully. For example, college staff collaborate with employers from the London School of Basketball. They identify the need for coaching units and fitness testing as part of the level 1 sports programme. Similarly, the employability team works closely with a construction industry employer. As a result, managers introduce tailored construction skills training for unemployed adults. Managers have worked closely with a National Health Service trust to introduce the level 3 pharmacy apprenticeship.

Leaders work effectively with several universities to provide training in areas such as hospitality, counselling, gaming and teacher training. These partnerships provide excellent opportunities for learners to access higher education training close to where they live.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders, managers and staff have worked hard and effectively to improve the quality of education for the majority of learners and

apprentices. Leaders provide good continuous professional development for staff. For example, training and support to A-level teachers has successfully raised standards. Leaders and managers have made notable improvements to the teaching of GCSE English and mathematics. Leaders ensure a good degree of consistency in the quality of education that learners and apprentices receive across campuses. This ensures that most learners and apprentices, no matter which campus they study at, or which course they are on, have a positive experience.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum offer is very broad and, for the most part ambitious. They ensure that the curriculum for young learners provides good progression routes at all levels. On most vocational programmes, leaders and teachers work closely with industry to shape and design the curriculum. For example, on level 3 animation courses, leaders include major industry experts who help shape the curriculum content and design. In business studies, managers engage effectively with local digital employers to improve the experience of learners by making sure that what they teach is relevant to current industry practices.

Leaders and managers ensure that they create a curriculum for adult learning programmes that is informed by the needs of learners, employers and the skills needs identified by the GLA. Through the courses offered, the college group contributes to social inclusion, which benefits the community. Through attending employability programmes, adults are able to gain the skills they need to succeed in work. As a result, a high proportion of unemployed adults gain jobs on completion of their course.

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale for the apprenticeships they offer. They ensure that the range of programmes provides training for sectors where there is high demand for a skilled workforce. Apprentices' employers attend progress reviews frequently. They contribute detailed feedback on how well their apprentices perform at work. Managers work well with employers to ensure that the training apprentices receive is planned effectively.

Leaders and managers plan a wide range of highly relevant programmes for learners with high needs effectively. They base the curriculum coherently on learners' education, health and care plans and information gathered from learners' previous schools. Teachers support learners with high needs to gain the essential skills they need for adulthood, employment or further study. Learners study a range of formal and non-accredited programmes that are well suited to their needs.

Teachers carefully plan, teach and sequence their curriculum content. This ensures that learners and apprentices build their skills and knowledge in complexity and over time. For example, in vocational programmes such as plumbing, rail and electrical, teachers ensure that learners and apprentices understand health and safety and how to use tools properly before practical application. On A-level courses, teachers teach content that underpins theory at the start of the year. They revisit this throughout the year and in subsequent topics. Learners and apprentices successfully recall, remember and apply what they have learned.

The majority of teachers use their subject and industry expertise to good effect. They give learners and apprentices clear and comprehensive explanations in lessons. Most teachers assess learners' and apprentices' existing skills and knowledge carefully. They use this information successfully to choose their teaching methods and adapt the content they teach accordingly. For example, on the pharmacy apprenticeship programme, teachers accurately identify when apprentices need extra support in understanding areas such as patient-centred care. For learners with high needs, teachers consider learners' aspirations and ambitions to ensure that they teach content in lessons that meets learners' needs.

The majority of teachers use effective assessment methods to identify gaps in learners' and apprentices' knowledge. They use carefully crafted questions and information technology applications effectively to check learners' and apprentices' understanding. A-level teachers use retrieval methods skilfully. Teachers are accomplished at facilitating group discussions, which helps learners and apprentices reflect on their learning. For example, on employability courses adult learners discuss and reflect on what they know about and how to deal with conflict.

The majority of teachers give learners and apprentices useful and helpful feedback on their work so that they know how to make improvements. The standard of learners' and apprentices' work is mostly good or better. For example, in A-level graphics, learners produce work which shows their skills in research and professional graphics. A-level learners introduce technical terminology accurately into their essays. Apprentices show a good level of understanding in their written work. However, in some adult programmes and a minority of programmes for young people, teachers do not give helpful enough feedback.

The majority of learners complete their courses successfully. The proportion of learners who achieve high grades in GCSE English and mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. However, in 2021/22 too few apprentices achieved their programme. Teachers did not prepare learners on level 2 and level 3 vocational courses adequately for the examined component of the courses. As a result, the performance of learners on vocational examination units was too low compared with their coursework outcomes.

Most learners and apprentices have an appreciation of British values. They show this through a variety of activities and their positive behaviours. For example, class representatives value the opportunity to speak freely and raise concerns from their peers with leaders. Learners respect the diverse culture across the college group. They understand the importance of tolerance and why some rules are in place to protect them. However, not all apprentices and adult learners have sufficient knowledge about these values.

Leaders ensure that learners and apprentices have relevant opportunities to prepare them for the world of work. For example, learners access work experience, external educational trips and employer-related activities. Leaders and managers ensure that the majority of learners receive good-quality careers advice and guidance. This is particularly strong for young learners. However, for apprentices and some adult

learners, the information they receive about how to achieve their next steps is not sufficient enough.

Most young learners enjoy a well-organised and effective tutorial programme. This helps them understand a range of topics and how to stay mentally and physically healthy. Many learners understand about healthy relationships and how to identify inappropriate behaviour. However, leaders and teachers have not developed apprentices' and adult learners' understanding of these topics well enough.

Leaders, managers and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development across the college group. They have put in place effective processes to identify these areas, and clear action plans that lead to improvement. For example, their improvement plan in hairdressing and beauty therapy courses resulted in a more positive experience for learners. Leaders and managers have put in place sensible actions to improve the known weaknesses in adult Access to Higher Education programmes.

The arrangements for governance are effective. Governors have good knowledge and experience for their roles. They offer suitable challenge and support to the leadership team. Leaders and governors have sufficient oversight of the majority of their subcontractors and have robust procedures to check the quality of subcontracted provision. However, on a minority of occasions, leaders do not check closely enough on how well subcontractors ensure that apprentices have enough opportunity to apply their learning at work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, managers and staff across the campuses have created an environment and culture where learners and apprentices feel safe and secure. Most learners and apprentices understand well the risks to their safety. This includes how to stay safe online. Learners and apprentices trust that college staff would deal with any safeguarding issues they needed to raise. They know who to talk to if they have concerns. However, learners' and apprentices' understanding of the dangers posed by those who hold extremist views is too varied.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have put in place suitable policies and procedures to safeguard learners and apprentices. They ensure that their staff and their subcontractors' staff attend relevant training. They ensure that the right employment checks are in place to ensure that staff are safe to work with learners and vulnerable adults. Designated safeguarding leads and officers understand the significance of their role. They undergo appropriate training and follow procedures effectively when they receive safeguarding referrals.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Teachers should ensure that learners and apprentices on all programmes receive feedback about their work which helps them identify the areas they need to improve.
- Leaders should ensure that learners taking vocational qualifications at level 2 and level 3 receive sufficient support to help them prepare for and pass their examinations.
- Leaders should ensure that the proportion of apprentices who achieve their programme increases.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices and adult learners benefit from the same detailed information young learners receive around impartial careers advice and guidance, how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and improving their understanding of the importance of fundamental British values.
- Leaders should ensure that learners and apprentices improve their understanding of the dangers associated with people with extreme views.

## Provider details

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<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Roy O'Shaughnessy
<b>Provider type</b>	Further Education College
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 to 24 January 2020
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Chickenshed Theatre Trust ELA Training Excellence Solutions Fashion Enter Learning Curve Playback Studio Train to Work Academy



## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of group 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 visiting 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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