

Inspection of North East Surrey College of Technology

Inspection dates: 24 to 27 January 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Information about this provider

North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot) is a medium-sized general further education college located in Epsom, Surrey. The college provides a range of vocational and higher education courses, as well as apprenticeships. Nescot last received a full inspection in September 2010, when it was judged to be good. A short inspection later confirmed this grade in January 2016.

At the time of the inspection, Nescot had 2,072 students aged 16 to 18 on education programmes for young people, 900 adult students, 617 apprentices, 180 students with high needs, of whom 25 were on supported internships, and 30 14- to 16-year-old students. Of these, 13 were directly recruited by the college and studied full-time courses. The remaining students are enrolled with other education providers and attended part-time learning.

While Nescot works with one subcontractor, this provision was out of scope for this inspection.

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

Students and apprentices, including those with high needs, enjoy their courses and are motivated to succeed. They benefit from the highly supportive and caring relationships they enjoy with staff and other students. Students and apprentices work well with each other and their teachers, demonstrating kindness and consideration.

The vast majority of students and apprentices develop relevant and useful skills quickly. They become adept at putting their theoretical knowledge into practice. For example, level 1 animal care students learn how to perform first-aid techniques, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation on small mammals. Level 3 plumbing and domestic heating engineer apprentices measure piping accurately and minimise wastage. Level 3 adult hairdressing students employ professional salon techniques, such as using reverse balayage to colour hair. Consequently, students and apprentices apply their learning in the classroom and the workplace confidently and successfully.

In a few areas, students' attendance is too low. As a result, students who do not attend enough are slower in developing skills and knowledge.

Most students and apprentices benefit from opportunities to develop their understanding and appreciation of life in modern Britain. For example, level 3 public services students learn about the impact of crime on society and the significance of trust and respect when representing a public service. Level 5 operations manager apprentices consider the relevance of legislation and the management of risks from terrorism in their own businesses and communities. Consequently, students and apprentices are respectful and well informed about modern society.

Students and apprentices can access a wide and engaging range of additional activities. For example, leaders and managers have devised a regular programme of visiting speakers, including a former prisoner and a BBC director, who give students opportunities to learn about life beyond their direct experience. Students have recently been successful in World Skills competitions.

Nearly all students and apprentices benefit from a well-organised programme of careers events and opportunities. Staff link these to the content of individual courses. For example, level 3 performing arts students receive support from their teachers to produce high-quality portfolios and audition materials that meet their needs when they apply to acting schools.

The vast majority of 16- to 19-year-old students benefit from work-related experiences that provide them with a rich insight into employment and the workplace. For example, nearly all animal care students benefit from relevant work placements, including with dog groomers, stables and veterinary surgeries. Health and social care students attend careers fairs and receive useful advice on volunteering opportunities at local NHS Trusts.

Students and apprentices feel safe at college and are safe, including online. They are rightly confident that staff challenge bullying, harassment and discrimination immediately and know how to report any concerns they have. Plumbing and carpentry apprentices keep work spaces clean and tidy and use equipment safely.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders collaborate very effectively with a wide range of stakeholders to identify, understand and contribute to meeting skills needs locally, in the region and nationally. For example, senior leaders have played a key role with the Surrey Chambers of Commerce to help them to start developing a comprehensive local skills improvement plan for the region.

Leaders work closely with many local, regional and national employers. For example, they have collaborated with employers to develop courses to ensure that their employees have the future skills they need. These include a laboratory science degree apprenticeship for the Animal and Plant Health Agency and T-Level provision in health and science together with the Surrey Heartlands NHS Partnership.

Leaders work in partnership with other colleges in the region and national education providers. They use these relationships to ensure that they work together to meet skills needs effectively. For example, leaders are working with further and higher education partners to set up the Sussex and Surrey Institute of Technology. Leaders, together with the Open University, are introducing a degree in digital skills as part of the institute. This will be the only opportunity in the region to study this subject at this level.

Leaders and managers work effectively with stakeholders in the community to meet employment needs. For example, they have collaborated with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and other local partners to create a youth hub for 16- to 24-year olds that supports them with finding work and developing their skills.

Leaders and managers have set up effective stakeholder engagement panels in most of the sectors they have identified as priorities in meeting skills needs. Where they have been established, these panels influence the content and teaching of courses. Leaders plan to ensure that all course managers and teachers work with employers and other stakeholders consistently, but it is too early to see the impact of this.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that staff plan topics in a logical order. For example, level 2 carpentry and joinery apprentices begin with planing, joints and alignment before moving on to interpreting technical drawings and marking up wood carefully.

Level 2 electrical installation students start by working with plastic conduits and trunking before handling complex metal forms. As a result, students and apprentices develop basic knowledge and skills sensibly over time before proceeding to master more advanced techniques.

Most leaders and managers plan courses that set ambitious goals for what students will learn. For example, staff work closely with local technology employers to ensure that level 3 computing students cover up-to-date topics that will prepare them for the digital world. Adults studying level 3 hairdressing undertake non-compulsory assessments to ensure they learn a wider range of skills, which they will use in future employment. Consequently, most students are well equipped to progress to further study or job roles.

Teachers use a range of effective teaching methods that reinforce students' knowledge and skills over time. For example, GCSE English students repeat individual reading and writing skills in a variety of different contexts to ensure they understand them well. Level 3 computing teachers use project-based tasks so that students can practise their skills and knowledge in real-life situations, such as developing a pizza ordering system for a local company. Consequently, students embed skills and knowledge into their long-term memories securely.

Staff use assessment to check students' and apprentices' progress carefully. Teachers assess the starting points accurately of 16- to 19-year-old students studying GCSE English so that they are very clear about what they do well and where they need to improve. Staff check the work of adults on distance learning courses to ensure they use important concepts correctly and write accurately. Level 5 operations manager apprentices receive rapid feedback on their analytical skills using reflective logs, which they apply successfully in reports and projects at work. Consequently, students and apprentices gain new skills quickly and usually progress to further study or employment.

A few teachers do not make use of sufficiently challenging targets or questioning techniques. For example, a very small minority of apprentices do not receive clear enough guidance on how to improve their work. A small minority of students do not benefit from questions that build on their previous knowledge effectively. As a result, these students and apprentices make slower progress.

Experienced and expert staff help most apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to become better at their jobs. For example, level 3 early years educator apprentices learn how to work with parents so that they have the confidence to pass on information about their children. Level 5 operations manager apprentices use their planning skills to make significant contributions to the annual budget-setting process for their organisations. Most teachers and assessors work closely and effectively with employers to set targets for apprentices and measure how quickly they are developing new skills and knowledge. They assess carefully apprentices' starting points and adapt what they learn to ensure that they make good progress. Consequently, most apprentices become valued and productive employees.

Leaders and managers are developing a range of courses for adult students that accurately matches the needs of the local and regional economy and supports the development of students' skills and future employment effectively. Most adult students benefit from short distance-learning courses that directly support their career goals. For example, students working to enter caring roles undertake courses in nutrition, and aspiring mental health leads in the workplace select certificates in the awareness of mental health problems. Adult learners on functional skills mathematics courses, who had previous poor experience of education, become more confident and competent in mathematics, and many progress to employment as a result.

Experienced staff use their secure knowledge of students with high needs to plan learning carefully and support them well. For example, students with physical difficulties benefit from laptops that remove barriers to accessing learning materials and writing course work. As a result, students with high needs become more confident, independent and ready for adult life. They progress to their next levels of education well. Many students with high needs on academic and vocational programmes make as good progress as their peers. Students with high needs, including those on supported internships, benefit from challenging and fulfilling placements that equip them with the skills they will need for life. Consequently, most go on to paid employment or volunteering opportunities.

Leaders and managers ensure they meet their statutory requirements with regard to full-time 14- to 16-year-old provision. However, they acknowledge that the wider curriculum for relationships, sex and health education for directly enrolled 14- to 16-year-old students is not yet sufficient. While they are responding to improve this quickly, it is too early to see the impact of their actions.

Leaders evaluate the progress of different groups of students and apprentices carefully. For example, they have rightly been able to assure themselves that students with education, health and care plans, and children in care, achieve outcomes in line with other students.

Well-qualified and experienced governors support and challenge leaders effectively. For example, they have supported senior leaders to better align adult courses with local needs.

The vast majority of staff feel they are well supported by leaders. Staff value the steps leaders and managers have taken to improve their well-being and manage their workloads. For example, they have introduced protected time to support staff to complete administrative tasks and have put in place well-being days.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The appropriately qualified and experienced safeguarding team ensure that staff receive annual safeguarding training and monthly updates, which include information about local risks.

Leaders use appropriate measures to ensure that 14- to 16-year-old students are safe.

Leaders have put in place an effective policy for safer recruitment and ensure that this is updated regularly. As a result, leaders and managers make appropriate checks to assure themselves that newly recruited staff are safe to work with apprentices and students.

Leaders and managers have evaluated carefully potential risks to students and apprentices, including to their mental health and from sexual harassment and abuse. As a result, they have taken appropriate actions to manage these risks.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that teachers in all areas use questioning and target setting appropriately so that students and apprentices know what they need to do to improve.
- Leaders should ensure that students attend consistently well in all areas.
- Leaders should ensure that full-time 14- to 16-year-old students benefit from a suitable curriculum for relationships, sex and health education.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130822
Address	Reigate Road Ewell Epsom Surrey KT17 3DS
Contact number	02083941731
Website	www.nescot.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Julie Kapsalis
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 January 2016

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, curriculum and 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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