

Inspection of LTE Group

Inspection dates: 4 to 7 March 2025

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
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

LTE Group is a very large learning, training and employment group comprising The Manchester College (TMC), Novus, Total People, UCEN Manchester and MOL. This inspection covered TMC only. TMC is one of the largest further education colleges in England and is the largest single provider of 16 to 19 and adult education in Greater Manchester. TMC has six campuses in and around Manchester city centre. These are the City Campus, City Labs, Openshaw, Wythenshawe, Harpurhey and the Shena Simon campus.

TMC provides technical and vocational training for students aged 16 to 19 years, adults and students with high needs from entry level to level 6. At the time of the inspection, there were 5,445 students aged 16 to 19 studying a wide range of vocational courses in sectors such as business, digital and service industries, automotive, construction, engineering and logistics, creative and media, sports, public services, care professions and science across five of the college's campuses. There were 18 T-level courses. In addition, 68 students aged 16 to 19 were studying the King's Trust programme with the subcontractor, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority.

At the time of the inspection, 4,694 adult students were studying a wide range of courses from entry level 1 to level 6. The largest number of enrolments were in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English, mathematics, employability

skills and access to higher education (HE) courses. Adult students study at all six of the college's campuses.

At the time of the inspection, there were 574 students with high needs. Most students with high needs study across the full range of courses available at the college. One hundred and thirteen students studied on provision solely for students with high needs. These courses included routes to learning, industry, skills and employability and supported internships.

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

Students are enthusiastic and motivated to learn. In classroom lessons, most students willingly take part in activities. They ask and answer questions with confidence and work well individually and as part of a team. In practical sessions, students work safely together. Their behaviour models professional industry standards. Students are well prepared for their next level of learning or employment in their chosen sector.

Students have access to a wide range of course-related activities, trips and visits. Art, media and fashion students take over a local art gallery to display their work and produce film content. T-level digital, design and production students visited the Lloyds Bank Reboot Conference and Immersive Gamebox and automotive students visited the National Motor Show. Students are aware of the many wider college activities they could take part in such as sports teams, clubs and societies. However, too few take up these opportunities because they are sometimes based at campuses other than the ones where they study.

Most students attend college well and arrive on time. However, a few students on a small number of courses do not attend often enough. In most cases, staff know why students are absent, and it is often due to a variety of factors that impact student's lives. Where students' attendance is not at the expected level, interventions are put in place, which, in most cases, have a positive impact on increasing students' engagement with learning.

Students contribute positively to their local communities by volunteering and raising money for charity. Beauty therapy students raise money and provide hair donations for a charity supporting children with cancer. Sports students volunteer at sporting events where they check in competitors and support by passing out drinks. Students with high needs help at a local supermarket to raise money for a breast cancer charity. This helps students take pride in and become active citizens in their local communities.

Students aged 16 to 19 develop their confidence and learn new skills and knowledge because of their studies. Performing arts students learn new and increasingly complex choreography and monologues that they perform for their peers. Bricklaying students learn the importance of teamwork when working on projects with the Royal Engineers. Beauty therapy students learn how to look for signs of skin cancer when carrying out treatments on clients. Students on the King's Trust programme gain significantly in confidence and are keen to tell others what they are learning. Students are proud of the new skills they gain.

Adult students benefit greatly from the courses they attend at the college. They develop substantial new knowledge and skills to increase their employability and improve their life chances. ESOL students use their English-speaking skills to integrate into the community. They make new friends and can now help their children with their homework. Access to HE students carry out research and use Harvard referencing well in preparation for degree-level study. Counselling students

improve their knowledge of terminology such as unconditional positive regard and conditions of worth when describing relationships. Most adult students move on to further study or employment on completion of their courses.

Students with high needs are well supported by staff and by using assistive technologies to ensure their individual needs are met. Students value this support and recognise that it helps them to achieve their future goals. Students are proud of their achievements and become more confident in reducing their support as they progress through their course. Supported interns in placements at Manchester Airport become confident in speaking to passengers in their roles as passenger assistants. They are polite and courteous and show high levels of respect for each other, staff and members of the public.

Students feel safe at college and in work placements. Students benefit from the productive, inclusive and welcoming environment that leaders, teachers and staff create. Leaders, teachers and support staff, including those in roles such as catering in the college refectories, are friendly, approachable and supportive. They are proud to work at TMC. Students are highly supportive of each other, particularly at events such as TMC's Got Talent, where students encourage and cheer for their peers. A sense of belonging permeates the college, and although it is a large environment, students say they feel part of a family.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders and governors play a pivotal role in providing education and training to the residents and employers in Manchester and the wider Greater Manchester area. Leaders have created highly effective working relationships with many stakeholders such as Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Chamber of Commerce and the Department for Work and Pensions. This close working helps leaders to understand fully the emerging needs in the area and adapt their college strategy at pace to ensure their curriculums meet these needs.

Leaders take an active role in a wide range of groups in Manchester such as the post-16 strategy group, the anti-poverty group and the community strategy group. This involvement helps leaders contribute and shape the strategic direction of the city. Leaders have been integral in providing curriculums that reduce the number of 16- to 18-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training. They work closely with Manchester Adult Education Service to provide a cross-city ESOL strategy to reduce duplication of offer and ensure that residents are signposted to high-quality courses that best meet their needs.

Leaders and teachers seek advice and involvement from stakeholders and employers in designing and implementing their curriculums. In automotive, a large car manufacturer provides opportunities for students to take part in a work-based programme alongside their studies so they gain the most up-to-date skills and knowledge. In hospitality, leaders have developed an advisory board of employers

that advises students about business acumen and the 'nose to tail' methodology to help reduce food waste in the sector. In early years, advisory board members suggested that speech development was an area that needed more focus in the curriculum. Leaders listen carefully to this advice and develop their curriculums very effectively in response.

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

Leaders have selected and developed courses that meet the needs of the people of Manchester and its surrounding areas. They concentrate on vocational and technical education and no longer offer A-level courses because this provision is already offered at neighbouring sixth forms. Leaders have developed curriculums that lead directly to further training or employment in much-needed sectors such as digital and health. Leaders use their role as a focal point for education in the city by providing entry-level courses for those who speak English as an additional language and courses that encourage those furthest from the job market back into education.

Leaders and teachers plan and teach most of their curriculums in a well-considered order. Most teachers identify the foundation knowledge students need to know before they move on to more difficult concepts. For example, in ESOL, teachers teach students to use the present tense, which they continually practise before moving on to more complex sentence structures using perfect tenses and modality. Access to HE medicine teachers make sure students have grasped physical quantities in mathematics before supporting students to apply this learning in chemistry. In a very few instances, teachers do not plan the curriculum logically. In these cases, a few students struggle to understand what they have learned.

Leaders have invested significantly in buildings and industry-standard resources to ensure students are trained to use the latest equipment. In automotive, students use specialist software to adjust steering to manufacturers' specifications. In health, students work in industry-standard mock hospital wards and in digital, students use the latest industry-standard hardware and software. Students become skilled in using the equipment they will encounter at work.

Teachers are industry-experienced, well trained and knowledgeable. They use their expertise and experience to engage and motivate students in the topics they teach. In musical theatre, teachers demonstrate correct positionings to improve leg elevations. In health, teachers show students how to use equipment to measure patients' blood oxygen levels accurately. Staff benefit from returning to industry each year and attending specific professional development courses in the college. Students value their teachers' experience and use their guidance to improve their skills.

Most teachers use effective questioning techniques to assess students' understanding, probe further and correct misconceptions. Where this is done well, teachers use students' initial responses to ask further, more challenging questions to identify deeper knowledge. Teachers of students with high needs give sufficient

processing time for those with complex learning needs or hearing impairments to ensure that they can fully contribute to class discussions. However, in a few instances, teachers do not widen questions to all of the group. This allows some students to be too passive in class. Therefore, teachers cannot assess their understanding. In a few instances, teachers move on before checking that students have fully understood the topic.

Teachers mostly provide students with useful feedback that gives praise and tells them what they need to do to improve their skills and work. Where feedback is effective, students use this information to make steady improvements. For example, following feedback, students on the King's Trust programme improved the sentence structure in their written work. Dance students use the correction given by teachers to alter their weight transference and the placement of their feet to improve the speed and accuracy of a pirouette. However, in a few instances, teachers confirm that work is complete but do not give students enough information on how they can challenge themselves to improve. In these few cases, students continue to make the same mistakes and do not make the progress they could.

Staff provide good, individualised support to students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with high needs. Leaders have placed a team of specialist staff at all campuses so that students receive consistently good support. Where specific support is required, such as speech and language, professional staff provide specialist therapy to help students improve their communication skills and self-esteem and become more expressive. In a few cases, staff do not monitor well enough the targets they set for students with education, health and care plans (EHC plan). In a few instances, they do not track the smaller steps of progression that students make. On some vocational courses, teachers do not consider well enough students' EHC plan targets when planning learning. In these cases, students' progress is slowed.

Students learn a wide range of new knowledge and skills that prepare them well for their next steps in employment or training. Electrical installation students learn the importance of using capacitive reactants to be more financially efficient and sustainable. Students with high needs studying hairdressing learn the difference between mohawks and mullets. Fork-lift truck driving students learn how to drive and reverse through chicanes and how to lift and stack pallets on high-level shelving.

Students have access to a broad range of careers advice and guidance at the college. They discuss careers with their teachers in tutorials and can make individual appointments with careers staff at each campus. Where appropriate, students receive guidance tailored to their specific next steps. In music, students learn about self-employment. In performing arts, students are coached on audition pieces. In access to HE, students are supported with their university applications. The vast majority of students move on to positive destinations on completion of their courses.

The proportion of students who achieve their qualifications is high on most courses and improving. On the few courses where achievement is too low, such as the

proportion of students achieving a grade 4 to 9 in GCSE mathematics, leaders have put interventions in place such as staff training, changes to the curriculums and improved initial advice and guidance. In most cases, these interventions are having a positive impact on increasing the proportion of students who achieve their qualifications.

Leaders use a comprehensive range of quality assurance measures such as student and staff feedback and data on student achievement, attendance and destinations to assess the quality of their provision. Leaders monitor the quality of provision at the subcontractor appropriately. They self-assess the provision accurately and are honest and critical when they identify areas for improvement. Where they need to make improvements, their actions are appropriate, well thought out and, in most cases, have a positive impact.

Governors have a wide range of skills and experience. They use this expertise to challenge leaders effectively. Governors take part in curriculum area reviews and learning walks to assure themselves of the quality of education. They provide effective support to senior leaders. For example, where concerns were identified in health and social care, governors were involved in setting actions and meeting with staff and students in this area to monitor improvements. The quality of education in this curriculum area has improved significantly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Provide feedback to students that tells them what they need to do to improve their work and challenges them to strive higher.
- Use questioning techniques that are effective in encouraging students to participate fully in class discussions.
- Fully incorporate students' EHC plan targets into teaching so the progress of students with high needs can be accurately monitored.
- Increase students' attendance on the few courses where attendance is still too low.

Provider details

Unique reference number	135524
Address	Whitworth House Whitworth St Openshaw Manchester Greater Manchester M11 2WH
Contact number	01619535995
Website	www.themanchestercollege.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Rachel Curry
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	28 January to 1 February 2019
Main subcontractors	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal (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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