

South Worcestershire College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130709

Name of lead inspector: Lindsay Hebditch HMI

Last day of inspection: 29 January 2010

Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. South Worcestershire College is a small general further education college serving the south of the county of Worcestershire. The two campuses are both located close to their respective town centres; the main site in Evesham and a second campus, which is predominately an adult education centre, in Malvern. The six secondary schools in the Evesham and Malvern area all have sixth forms. Five further education colleges operate within a 16-mile radius of the college.
2. The college provides mainly vocational courses in 12 subject areas from entry level to advanced level with the majority of learners following courses at foundation level and intermediate level in preparation for life and work, hairdressing and beauty therapy and engineering. Most full-time learners are aged 16 to 18. Pupils from local schools attend the college as part of their school Key Stage 4 programme. Train to Gain programmes are offered mostly in health and social care and apprenticeships are available in engineering and business and finance.
3. The area served by the college has no significant levels of deprivation and levels of unemployment are low. Some 12% of learners are of minority ethnic heritage, which is well above the proportion in the local population. The number of Year 11 pupils who achieve five A*-C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, in Worcestershire is close to the national average. All provision funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for Herefordshire and Worcestershire was covered by the inspection, and three subject areas, engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy and literacy and numeracy, were inspected in depth.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2007/08
Provision for young learners: 14 to16	180 part-time learners
Further education (16 to18)	578 full-time learners 106 part-time learners
Foundation learning	64 full-time learners 6 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	238 full-time learners 2239 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	186 learners 108 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	
Engineering	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	3
Literacy and numeracy	4

Overall effectiveness

4. The college's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Learners' achievements in 2008/09 were not as good as in previous years; however, learners make satisfactory progress, and those who find learning difficult make good progress. The improvement in the college's employer responsive provision is a strong feature. Employers speak highly of the skills that their employees develop with the college's help. The college is a safe, welcoming place to study and despite the low attendance, the vast majority of learners say they are happy there.
5. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in engineering and in beauty therapy. Key skills lessons often fail to interest learners sufficiently and learners sometimes make inadequate progress in them. A significant minority of learners who need additional help with their literacy and numeracy do not take up the support that is offered. The college provides a broad range of vocational courses and works well in partnership with schools and employers to make sure that it is offering education and training that is matched to local needs. Individual tutorials provide learners with satisfactory opportunities to discuss their progress but neither learners nor inspectors were clear about the purpose

of group tutorials. Learners who require additional specialist care, such as those with acquired brain injuries, are very well catered for.

6. The college principal and newly appointed senior management team have a clear vision for the college but some of the plans and targets they have produced to help them turn this vision into reality are not challenging enough. There are early signs that the quality of provision is improving but staff at all levels in the college require more training to help them discharge their new responsibilities fully. The college's self-assessment is not accurate enough, particularly in respect of judgements about the quality of teaching and learning, and leadership and management. The college has implemented effective procedures to ensure that learners' views are listened to, and acted upon. Arrangements for safeguarding young people are good. Governors have helped ensure that the college has maintained a secure financial position but have not always provided sufficient challenge to senior managers about how they intend to improve learners' achievements.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. After a period of steady improvement, success rates declined in 2008/09 but they remain close to the national average. Learners on employer responsive provision develop their specialist vocational skills well and success rates are good. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The college has yet to develop sufficient ways to identify learners' starting points and measure their subsequent progress.
- Students feel safe at the college and behave well. They make a good contribution to the community and take their responsibilities, such as membership of the student council, very seriously.
- Attendance varies between subject areas but is low overall.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory but the proportion of good lessons is low in foundation and advanced level courses. The best lessons are planned carefully and executed skilfully. Teaching staff do not always have high enough expectations of their learners so that learners' particular learning needs are not met and they do not fulfil their potential. A significant minority of learners who are identified as requiring additional learning support do not take it up.
- Quality assurance procedures to support improvements in teaching and learning are underdeveloped. Lesson observations are insufficiently rigorous and good practice is not shared effectively.
- Provision to meet users' needs is good. The college offers a broad range of vocational courses which meet local demands well and provide good opportunities for progression.
- Partnership working is good. The college has effective arrangements for collaborating with its education and training partners. Pupils from local schools, including those at risk of dropping out of education, have a wide range of opportunities to study at the college. Liaison with local employers is good.

- Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners with specific learning needs, including those with acquired brain injuries, receive effective support which helps them make progress. Learners receive effective guidance on progression into higher education but insufficient impartial careers advice. Group tutorials lack a clear purpose and structure.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is the capacity to improve. The college's strategic direction is clear but implementation plans do not always contain actions or targets which are specific or challenging enough to support improvement.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. The college is rigorous in ensuring that appropriate checks are carried out on relevant staff. Child protection training for staff is thorough.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. No group of learners underperforms on the basis of their ethnicity, gender or disability. However, equality and diversity are not promoted sufficiently in all subject areas.
- Self-assessment procedures are insufficiently rigorous. The self-assessment report overstates the college's strengths and does not identify some significant areas for improvement in teaching and learning and in leadership and management.
- Most staff are well-qualified and experienced but they require further training to perform their roles as managers, tutors and teachers more effectively.
- Learners do not make sufficient progress in improving their standards of literacy and numeracy through key skills. The college has yet to produce a coherent 'Skills for Life' strategy for improving standards of literacy and numeracy or prepare sufficiently for the introduction of functional skills.

What does South Worcestershire College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates in learner responsive provision by measuring and monitoring learners' progress more effectively.
- Raise attendance by ensuring that teachers have high expectations of learners' attendance, setting challenging attendance targets and taking prompt action to rectify non-attendance.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons by improving the accuracy of lesson observations, sharing good practice more effectively, providing more challenge in lessons and making better use of information on learners' progress so that lessons match more closely the needs of individual learners.
- Improve the literacy and numeracy of current learners and prepare for the introduction of functional skills in September 2010 by revising the 'Skills for life' strategy and identifying clearly the improvements which need to be made.
- Provide more effective careers guidance so that learners who are uncertain of their next steps in learning are better informed about their choices.

- Ensure that development plans identify challenging targets and focus sharply on how to achieve the college's strategic aims.
- Revise self-assessment procedures to provide a rigorous and accurate statement of the college's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Provide further staff development opportunities so that teachers, tutors and managers may improve their job performance.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the safe and friendly environment
- the opportunities to take responsibility
- the good facilities for developing practical skills
- being treated as an adult
- the good opportunities for work experience
- the helpful teachers.

What learners would like to see improved:

- impartial careers advice and guidance
- the cost of healthy food options in the refectory
- the lack of social areas at Evesham
- the organisation of key skills
- the restrictions on the use of the internet.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good working relationships with the college
- the good involvement in assessment and review
- the regular contact with the college through assessors
- the high quality of training that learners receive
- the highly skilled assessors with up-to-date knowledge of their subjects.

What employers would like to see improved:

- a regular forum for employers' views
- more information about recruitment procedures onto apprenticeship programmes.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

7. The college is recovering from a period of turbulence during which a new principal was appointed and major changes were made to the management structure of the college. These changes have yet to become embedded fully and, although there are ambitious plans to improve the quality of provision, there has not yet been sufficient time for many of the new ideas to be translated into clear actions for improvement. Although outcomes for learners declined in 2008/09, success rates on the majority of learner responsive provision have improved since the last inspection to be close to the national average. Success rates on employer responsive provision have improved significantly and are now good. The college has not made as much progress in rectifying other areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. For example, the take-up of learning support and the effectiveness of quality assurance remain areas for improvement. The new senior management team judged correctly that self-assessment procedures were contributing to an overly optimistic view of the quality of provision. Very recent changes have resulted in a more self-critical approach to self-assessment, although this is only partially reflected in the final report. The newly introduced course audit system provides a more reliable basis for self-assessment. The principal and new senior management team enjoy the full confidence of the staff and morale is good.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

8. Following a period of steady improvement in outcomes for learners, success rates declined in 2008/09 to the national average. This decline resulted from falls in both pass and retention rates. Some significant differences exist between the performance of learners on courses at different levels. For learners aged 16 to 18, success rates on intermediate courses improved but remain close to the national average. At advanced level, success rates have shown little improvement over three years and remain below the national average. Success rates on courses for adult learners declined in 2008/09 and are now close to the national average. Learners aged 14 to 16 achieve very well and the majority progress to full-time courses at the college. Learners on apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships achieve high success rates and complete their qualifications in good time.
9. The college recognises that the lack of a system for measuring the progress of learners, compared to their starting points, reduces the accuracy of its assessment of how much progress learners make. Inspectors found that, in most lessons learners made satisfactory progress, but they made good progress in engineering and in beauty therapy. Learners develop good vocational skills and employers say how much they value the skills and good work habits their employees develop. There are no significant differences in the outcomes of learners according to their gender or ethnicity, but students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well. Attendance

has improved slightly, but remains low overall. Inspectors found that attendance varies widely between different subject areas.

10. Learners of all ages say they enjoy coming to college and feel they are valued as individuals. The development of economic and social well-being is satisfactory. Learners have good opportunities to follow vocational programmes or participate in work experience. However, the low achievements in key skills for the majority of learners demonstrate that they are not improving their standards of literacy and numeracy as quickly as they should. Learners say they feel safe in the college and are free from bullying and discrimination. They have a very good understanding of potential risks and demonstrate safe working practices, including those relating to the internet, in their studies and employment. The college provides a good range of information about health and well-being. Participation in sports activities is good but many learners do not take advantage of the healthy food options available in the refectory. Learners make a good contribution to the community through a wide range of charity events. The student council provides an excellent forum for airing learners' concerns and course representatives take their responsibilities very seriously.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

11. Inspectors judged the quality of teaching and learning to be satisfactory, which is lower than the college's judgement in its self-assessment report. The college recognises that its lesson observations last year provided an overly optimistic assessment of teaching and learning and is in the process of establishing a more robust system for observing and assessing lessons this year. The quality of lessons varies considerably across subject areas and course levels. Teaching and learning are good in engineering but satisfactory, and sometimes inadequate, in key skills. The best teaching is on intermediate level courses and corresponds with the more successful outcomes achieved at this level. Lessons on foundation and advanced level courses, although satisfactory, are less inspiring and the proportion of good lessons is lower.
12. The best lessons are planned carefully, provide a good range of activities to keep learners interested and promote good progress. Teaching staff in these lessons use questions well to ensure that learners understand, rather than merely repeat, what they have been taught. Teaching staff are particularly good at encouraging the development of practical skills but are less successful when developing learners' understanding of theory. In a significant minority of lessons, and particularly on advanced level courses, inspectors found that teaching staff had low expectations of learners' capabilities and learners were not stretched sufficiently by the assigned tasks. Often, the concentration on routine work such as information gathering and note-taking left insufficient time to promote effective learning through more stimulating activities. Teaching staff make satisfactory use of information and learning technologies (ILT) to encourage learning and in engineering ILT is used creatively and well.

13. Initial and diagnostic assessments provide an appropriate basis for identifying learners' additional learning needs but, as at the previous inspection, more than one-third of learners who are identified as requiring support do not take up the offer. Learners who receive additional learning support value it, and make better progress than learners who fail to take up the support offered.
14. The assessment of learners' practical skills and coursework both in the college and the workplace are good. Most written work is marked accurately and returned promptly with helpful suggestions on how to make further improvements. Assessment is linked closely to target setting and most learners know and understand what their targets are from their individual learning plans. However, the lack of sufficiently detailed information on learners' prior attainment makes some learners' academic targets insufficiently challenging. The college has worked hard to improve the monitoring of learners' progress. The tracking documents which are displayed prominently in classrooms and workshops give learners a good visual summary of how well they are doing in relation to course requirements.
15. The college offers a good range of courses from entry level to advanced level, providing learners with good progression opportunities. Since the last inspection the college has continued to expand its vocational provision to match the needs of the local economy whilst also providing courses, for example in land based service engineering, which recruit nationally. Full-time learners benefit from a good range of enrichment activities which are provided through the academies, but at present there is insufficient monitoring of learners' participation in enrichment.
16. Partnership working is good. The college plays a key role in local 14-19 curriculum developments and has responded to the needs of local schools well by developing a good range of vocational courses for pupils aged 14-16. A new course designed for learners who are at risk of dropping out of education and training has been successful, providing pupils with increased self-confidence and the motivation to progress to full-time courses at the college. The college works well with primary schools to help parents improve their literacy and numeracy through family learning programmes. Employers value the college's willingness to respond to their requests for training and say they are kept well-informed about how their employees are progressing. A few employers say that they are unsure about the process of recruiting learners to work based learning vacancies and would welcome an opportunity to engage collectively with the college in regular discussions about future local training requirements.
17. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The college provides an appropriate range of marketing materials and effective induction arrangements ensuring learners are following the right courses and are able to settle into college life quickly. Course tutors provide good advice on progression opportunities in their specialist subjects but learners say, and inspectors agree that, although guidance on entry to higher education is effective, learners do not receive sufficient careers advice. The college has good arrangements to provide support for learners with specific needs. A specialist centre at the

college provides high quality education and training programmes for learners with acquired brain injuries. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support and this helps them enjoy their time at college and make good progress. The quality of tutorials is variable. A significant minority of learners say that they do not understand the purpose of group tutorials. Individual tutorials are more effective but tutors have insufficient training in identifying and dealing with learners' personal and social issues or providing the careers guidance that their role requires.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

18. The principal and his new senior management team provide clear strategic direction through the revised college mission and vision. The new strategic plan is divided into four key themes which mainly provide a sound framework for subsequent planning. However, implementation plans do not always identify precisely the actions and targets required for the college to achieve its mission. For example, no effective strategy is in place to support learners in improving and accrediting their literacy and numeracy skills, and to ensure the successful introduction of functional skills qualifications next year. There are encouraging signs that outcomes for learners will improve this year. In-year retention figures are higher than at the same time last year, leading the college to predict with some confidence an improvement in the overall retention rate. Staff confirm that communication has improved significantly as a result of recent changes implemented by the principal.
19. The experienced governing body has been involved fully in shaping the college's new mission. However, until recently their scrutiny of the college has focused on financial and accommodation issues, with insufficient challenge relating to the decline in learner outcomes in 2008/09.
20. Arrangements for the safeguarding of learners are good. All staff have received enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks on their suitability to work with young people. Detailed policies and procedures for safeguarding young learners and vulnerable adults are in place and both staff and learners are fully aware of the procedures for reporting any concerns they may have. Staff, governors and the college's four designated child protection officers have received appropriate training. The college has good links with relevant agencies and is a member of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The health and safety management system is good.
21. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The college recruits learners from diverse backgrounds successfully and there is a much higher proportion of learners from minority ethnic heritages at the college than within the local community. Policies and procedures to promote equality and diversity are thorough but the college has been slow to undertake equality impact assessments. The analysis of information about the participation and performance of different groups of learners is underdeveloped, but inspectors found no significant differences in achievement between different groups of learners on the basis of ethnicity or gender. Learners with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities achieve higher success rates than other learners. The college celebrates diversity adequately and promotes respect and tolerance successfully. However, teaching staff have had insufficient opportunities to attend development activities to improve their practice and the promotion of equality of equality and diversity through teaching, learning and assessment is not sufficiently promoted in all areas.

22. The college has a comprehensive learner engagement strategy. Effective processes are in place to gather feedback from learners and the college takes prompt action to respond to their concerns. Learners say that their opinions are listened to and acted upon and value the high profile that the student council enjoys within the college. Engagement with external stakeholders and employers is strong.
23. The college is aware of weaknesses in its self-assessment and has very recently begun to review its procedures in order to provide a more accurate view of strengths and areas for improvement. Judgements in the current report overstate the college's strengths, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management. Course review procedures have been strengthened. The newly introduced course audits focus appropriately on the monitoring of attendance, retention and the performance of learners who are at risk of leaving to support improvements in learners' outcomes. The sharing of good practice in teaching and learning is underdeveloped.
24. The college provides satisfactory value for money. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Most staff are well-qualified and experienced but say that they would appreciate more staff development opportunities to help them meet the college's expectations. Financial management and planning are good. The finance and resources strategy is comprehensive, and is supported by a well developed implementation plan.

Subject areas

Engineering

Grade 2

Context

25. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in motor vehicle engineering, mechanical engineering and land-based engineering from foundation level to advanced level. Of the 229 learners currently enrolled on learner responsive provision, 32 are adults, 94 are aged 16 to 18 and 103 are aged 14 to 16. There are 126 learners following full-time courses of which 52 are studying at foundation level, 46 at intermediate level and 28 at advanced level. Some 85 learners are enrolled on engineering apprenticeship programmes.

Key findings

- Learners achieve well. Success rates on most learner responsive courses are high. Work-based learners achieve very high success rates and complete their apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship frameworks within the agreed time. Learners develop good practical skills that prepare them well for work. Key skill success rates are very low for full-time learners but are high for work-based learners who understand that key skills are an essential component of their studies.
- Arrangements for assuring the health and safety of learners are good. Regular safety reviews are carried out on all programmes and equipment is well-maintained. Learners receive good training in health and safety and make safe working a priority in the workplace.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teaching staff plan their lessons well and use a variety of activities to make learning interesting. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not use questioning to check the understanding and measure the progress of individuals or groups of learners sufficiently. ILT is used well in lessons but staff make insufficient use of the college's virtual learning environment to provide additional resources for learning.
- Additional learning support is good. The learning development officer who provides the support is also a skilled practitioner in motor vehicle engineering. Learners like this arrangement. They say, and inspectors agree, that the additional support is making them more confident and helping them to achieve their qualifications.
- Assessment is rigorous and fair. Learners receive constructive feedback on their work and know what they need to do to improve. Progress is monitored carefully and discussed with learners during their regular individual reviews. Learners understand their targets and work hard to achieve them.
- Provision meets the needs of learners and employers well. A broad range of courses is offered, including unique provision in land based service engineering. Employers say that they are pleased with the willingness of the college to make changes that reflect trends in the engineering sector; in motor vehicle engineering a unit of the course was removed to reflect the change in current

professional practice from repair to replacement. Learners on full-time courses have insufficient opportunities to extend their experience of different settings through work experience.

- The 'Young Apprenticeship Scheme' has strengthened links between the college and local schools and an increasing number of pupils aged 14 to 16 are participating.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Staff are very careful to ensure that all learners are following an appropriate course. The well-trained team of assessors provide work-based learners with excellent support in the workplace.
- Leadership and management are good. New management responsibilities provide a clear focus on improving the quality of provision. The self-assessment report provides a mainly accurate evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement.
- Accommodation is good but resources for engineering need urgent updating to meet current industry standards.

What does South Worcestershire College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use of questioning in lessons to encourage learners to develop their own ideas, check their understanding more thoroughly and measure their progress more accurately.
- Provide more opportunities for full-time learners to extend their range of vocational skills through work experience.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Grade 3

Context

26. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy from foundation level to advanced level. Of the 313 learners currently enrolled on learner responsive provision, 174 are adults and 139 are aged 16 to 18. There are 190 learners following full-time courses and 123 following part-time courses. In total, there are 30 learners at foundation level, 172 learners at intermediate level and 111 learners at advanced level. Courses are provided at both the Evesham and Malvern campuses, with the majority of learners attending at Evesham.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates on beauty therapy courses are high but are low on the two-year NVQ level 2 hairdressing course and declining in NVQ level 1 hairdressing. Pupils aged 14 to 16 achieve well and the majority of them progress to full-time courses at the college.
- In practical lessons most learners work confidently and are able to demonstrate a good level of skills development, particularly in beauty therapy. Learners give a high priority to good client care and working safely.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but too few lessons are good or better. In the best lessons teachers use questioning techniques skilfully to develop and check learning. However, in a significant minority of lessons learners do not receive this level of challenge and they make slow progress. Checks on learning are usually undertaken by the teacher with too few opportunities for self-assessment and peer-assessment.
- Learners say, and inspectors agree, that there are insufficient clients for them to work on in practical sessions. Where possible learners provide their own clients but this is not always feasible. In these circumstances teaching staff provide other useful tasks for learners, but the lack of clients reduces learners' enjoyment and slows their progress.
- The range of provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy is good but the two year NVQ programme in hairdressing which combines level 1 and level 2 has low success rates. Courses for pupils aged 14 to 16 are popular and recruit well. Enrichment is good. Teaching staff organise visits, invite visiting speakers to the college and enter learners for competitions. Learners also receive training from product manufacturers.
- Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners complete diagnostic assessments promptly and these are used well to ensure that they join a course at the correct level. Progress is monitored carefully through individual tutorials but the effectiveness of individual learning plans is reduced by some poorly written and imprecise targets.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory but the lack of co-ordination between subjects and sites hinders the college's drive to improve. The

implementation plan is a superficial document which does not provide a robust framework for rectifying weaknesses and securing improvements in the subject area.

- Facilities and accommodation are satisfactory. At the Evesham campus the college has refurbished workshops to accommodate the growth in learner numbers. The reception area is not of industry standard so does not allow learners to gain experience of a full commercial setting. Provision at Malvern is located in refurbished discrete accommodation. Rooms are well-equipped and provide learners with a welcoming environment.

What does South Worcestershire College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rate on NVQ level 2 hairdressing by reviewing the effectiveness of the current combined level 1 and level 2 two-year programme, particularly in relation to the monitoring of learners' progress and attendance.
- Provide more challenge in lessons by ensuring that planned activities are suitably demanding for learners of all abilities and that questioning is used more effectively to promote learning.
- Improve the co-ordination of leadership and management by providing a stronger collective focus on improvement and sharing good practice. Ensure that the implementation plan is comprehensive, accurate and understood fully by all staff.

Literacy and numeracy

Grade 4

Context

27. The college offers full-time and part-time courses from entry level to intermediate level in literacy and numeracy. Of the 335 learners currently enrolled, 224 are adults and 111 are aged 16 to 18. Full-time learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities study literacy and numeracy within their programmes. The majority of learners on full-time vocational programmes study key skills in literacy and numeracy. The college also provides in-class and individual support for literacy and numeracy. Provision for speakers of other languages (ESOL) was not inspected.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are inadequate. Success rates in literacy and numeracy for adult learners on part-time courses are low. Success rates in key skills at level 1 in communication and application of number for learners on full-time courses declined in 2008/09 and are low. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on full-time programmes achieve well; their success rates in literacy at foundation level are good.
- The quality of learners' progress varies considerably. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enjoy learning, behave well and make good progress. Adult learners on part-time courses generally make satisfactory

progress. Full-time learners in key skills make insufficient progress. Learners' behaviour in key skills lessons is sometimes unsatisfactory and attendance at many key skills lessons is low.

- Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but the quality of individual lessons is inconsistent. The best lessons are located primarily in the literacy and numeracy provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In these lessons, teaching staff plan an interesting range of activities, pay good attention to meeting individual needs, provide effective opportunities for learners to work in large and small groups and make good use of ILT.
- In less successful lessons, located primarily in the key skills provision, teaching and learning is not structured or planned sufficiently. Learners are left for too long working alone on assignments, regardless of their ability levels or specific learning needs.
- Learners benefit greatly from individual teaching in the part-time adult provision at the Evesham and Malvern drop-in centres. However, teaching staff do not always plan a sufficient variety of activities for individual learners within lessons.
- The range of provision is satisfactory. Full-time programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enable learners to build on what they have already achieved and to extend the development of their knowledge and skills. Part-time provision for adult learners is only available at the Malvern and Evesham open-access centres, with no provision currently available in the evenings.
- Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The use of initial and diagnostic assessment for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and part-time adult learners is effective. Learners work to appropriate targets, with regular reviews of their progress. However, learners do not have sufficient ownership of their individual learning plans and have too few opportunities to record their own progress. In key skills, the recording and monitoring of learners' progress is insufficient.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Planning to secure improvements in literacy, numeracy and key skills, and to prepare effectively for the introduction of functional skills is insufficient. The college is not implementing an effective 'Skills for Life' strategy. Quality assurance is inadequate. Processes for monitoring and evaluating course performance and securing improvements lack rigour. Literacy, numeracy and key skills teachers do not receive sufficient feedback on their teaching to enable them to improve their work with learners. The sharing of good practice is weak.
- Too few staff have subject qualifications in literacy and numeracy, with no coherent plan in place to increase it. Key skills teachers do not all have the necessary expertise or training to enable them to teach key skills more effectively.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity is good in lessons for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with very effective attention to meeting

their individual and sometimes complex needs. The promotion of cultural diversity is underdeveloped.

What does South Worcestershire College need to do to improve further?

- Further develop staff expertise in teaching and learning, through feedback and action planning from lesson observations, focused training and development and the regular sharing of good practice.
- Implement an effective 'Skills for Life' strategy to direct developments in literacy, numeracy and key skills and prepare for the introduction of functional skills.
- Revise the arrangements for quality assurance and improvement planning to provide a more carefully considered assessment of the quality of provision and a clearer identification of the actions which are required to secure improvement.
- Ensure that teachers in literacy, and numeracy and key and functional skills are appropriately qualified and skilled.

Information about the inspection

28. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's vice principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
29. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

South Worcestershire College

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	816	0	578	238	0
Part-time learners	2819	180	106	2239	294
Overall effectiveness	3	2	3	3	2
Capacity to improve	3				
Outcomes for learners	3	2	3	3	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
How well do learners progress?	3				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3				
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2				
Quality of provision	3	2	3	3	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3				
Leadership and management	3	2	3	3	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	3				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	4				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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