

City College Coventry

Inspection report

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Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. In January 2009, as part of the biggest urban regeneration project in Coventry, City College Coventry completed its relocation from its three previous sites to a new purpose built site in Swanswell in the Hillfields area of the city. Hillfields is an area of very high deprivation with higher than average unemployment rates. Approximately 16% of Coventry's population are from a minority ethnic heritage; within the college a greater proportion of approximately 28% of learners are from a minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils in Coventry gaining more than five high grades at GCSE including English and mathematics in 2009 was below the national average.
2. The college has provision within 14 of the 15 subject areas, which is funded by the Learning and Skills Council. The college provides work-based learning across six subject areas and workforce training through employment-based Train to Gain courses. In addition to its main site, the college uses more than seven locations across the city for training purposes. The largest number of enrolments are in courses in preparation for working life, information and communication technology and arts, media and publishing.
3. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in most of the subject areas the college offers and inspected four subjects in depth. College-based provision was graded in hairdressing and beauty therapy and business administration and law; and both employment and college-based provision were graded in health, social care and early years as well as in engineering and motor vehicle.
4. The college is a sponsor of the new Sidney Stringer Academy which is being built adjacent to the college's new site. Coventry Adult Education Service uses the college's site to deliver part of its provision.
5. The following organisations provides training on behalf of the college:
 - JBC Computers Ltd
 - Skills for Security

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to16	142 part-time learners
Further education (16 to18)	1,726 full-time learners 411 part-time learners
Foundation learning (included in the above)	81 full-time learners 69 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	565 full-time learners 2894 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	513 learners 809 apprentices

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3

Subject Areas	Grade
Health, social care and early years	3
Engineering and motor vehicle	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Business administration and law	3

Overall effectiveness

- City College Coventry is a satisfactory and improving college where learners' success is supported increasingly by good quality provision. The principal and senior managers have overseen a significant building project and relocation to a new site highly effectively alongside improving the quality of the majority of aspects of the college's work. Learners feel safe and enjoy studying at college; their retention and attendance rates have increased year on year and are now above average.
- Learners' success rates have increased notably from a low base over the last three years and are just above the average for similar colleges. Success rates for adults have increased particularly well. Success rates for learners on the majority of employment-based programmes are high. Learners make at least satisfactory progress and often make good progress on vocational courses compared to their prior attainment. They develop good practical skills and make satisfactory progress in preparing for their future economic and social well-

being. Too few learners are successful in improving their key skills at intermediate level. The college is promoting the development of healthy lifestyles vigorously but much of this work is at an early stage.

8. Teaching has improved and is good. A broad range of provision offers useful progression routes for learners. The links with employers are highly productive in curriculum development. Personal care for learners is a key strength of the college's work but some aspects of support for learning, such as target setting, are underdeveloped.
9. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve further through its track record of implementing actions for improvement successfully. Self-assessment provides a realistic evaluation of the college's work although some aspects, such as the analysis of data to inform judgements, are in need of further development. Governance is good. The college has satisfactory safeguarding arrangements and promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory overall.

Main findings

- Success rates on long courses are increasing and are just above the average for similar colleges. Rates are high for adults on intermediate courses but below average for learners aged 16 to 18 on foundation and advanced courses. Retention rates have improved but pass rates have remained static. Learners develop good practical skills. Success rates on the majority of employment-based provision are high. Key skills success rates are high at foundation level but low at intermediate level.
- Learners enjoy coming to college and most attend well. They work safely and develop confidence; almost all make at least satisfactory progress and an increasing number make good progress compared to their prior attainment. Learners gain satisfactory skill levels to support their future economic well-being. Their knowledge of healthy lifestyles is increasing and the college is promoting activities to support this vigorously. Learners contribute well to community life.
- The gap between the achievement of male and female adults has narrowed but has widened between male and female learners aged 16 to 18 and between learners in receipt of additional learning support and their peers. Actions are in place to reduce these gaps but are at an early stage.
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and use a wide range of learning activities. In the most effective lessons, learners are challenged and inspired. They are well motivated, confident and extend their knowledge and understanding. In the fewer less effective lessons, learners make slower progress.
- The assessment of learners' work is constructive and provides good feedback on the quality of their work and how they can improve. Target setting to support and promote the progress of learners is too often ineffective in helping them meet their full potential. A review of success in meeting previously set targets is not always included as part of the monitoring and review process.

- The promotion of equality and diversity in learning, teaching and training are underdeveloped. The college has recognised this and is working towards identifying and improving the representation of equality and diversity themes in lessons.
- The range of provision is good. Partnerships with employers and schools are good and support curriculum development. The use of work experience over and above mandatory requirements is underdeveloped. A varied enrichment programme with a renewed focus on engaging learners in sports and recreational activities is in place.
- Learners value the high levels of personal care they receive. Tutorials are beginning to provide a sound basis for supporting learners' personal and social development, but individual tutorials are often ineffective in supporting learning fully. The monitoring of learners' attendance is good. The involvement of parents and carers in supporting learners' progress is too informal and unsystematic.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has a clear strategy, well understood by staff with key performance indicators that are well monitored. Communications are good throughout the college. Governance is good.
- The promotion of equality and support for diversity are satisfactory. The college is inclusive and has good initiatives to widen participation. Recruitment of minority ethnic learners has increased and the proportion of these learners attending college is higher than that within the local community. The analysis of success rates by different groups is more thorough at whole college level than at curriculum level or for employment-based learners. The college has been too slow in carrying out impact assessments.
- The college's learner involvement strategy is well established but does not engage learners sufficiently in quality improvement, nor ensure that enough learners participate in decision making forums. Employers are involved well in course development but are less involved in evaluating provision.
- Self-assessment is accurate and reliable, but judgements are better supported at whole college level than at curriculum level. The use of data to inform judgements is underdeveloped in a few respects and the quality of action plans varies considerably between curriculum areas.

What does City College Coventry need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the progress of learners aged 16 to 18 towards completing all the assessments for their courses successfully is monitored rigorously and in a timely way, particularly at foundation and advanced level.
- Use the effective strategies and teaching approaches that exist to develop key skills at foundation level fully and rigorously at intermediate ensuring that success rates at these levels increase.

- Improve the use of target setting to support the progress of learners to meet their full potential and ensure that previously set targets are reviewed and that learners are clear about the progress they have made.
- Ensure that the promotion of equality and diversity is emphasised in lesson plans. Maximise the opportunities during teaching activities to integrate, promote and reinforce the relevant equality and diversity themes.
- Increase the opportunities for work experience placements for college-based learners in order to develop their vocational and employability skills further.
- Support all teachers in adapting and using tutorial schemes of work and tutorial resources to meet the differing needs of learners, to ensure full coverage of important health topics and to put in place consistently sound support for learning.
- Develop and formalise the arrangements to involve parents and carers systematically in supporting learners to achieve their full potential.
- Ensure that learners and employers have opportunities to contribute fully to the college's quality assurance arrangements to improve provision.
- Ensure that all self-assessment reports use data consistently, including data on the performance of different groups and are accompanied by detailed action plans that lead to improvements to learners' outcomes.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the support received from teachers and staff
- learning new things and making new friends
- being treated as individuals and as adults
- the choice of subjects available at the college
- the flexible curriculum
- the good range of equipment and facilities
- clean and tidy college buildings
- the interesting trips and visits arranged.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the limited availability of places to go at break times
- the slow pace of some lessons
- the quality and price of food at the college
- the overcrowded library
- the amount of smoking outside the college entrance
- the few opportunities to participate in sport activities

- insufficient capacity within student services to deal with requests at busy times
- not always enough help in finding work placements.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the courses offered that meet the needs of employees and company requirements well
- the provision of good residential accommodation for learners on public service vehicle courses
- the availability of highly specialist provision
- good communications with the college and the assessor
- the quality of the college's learners
- employers' involvement in learners' progress reviews.

What employers would like to see improved:

- not knowing about which optional units are used in qualifications for Train to Gain learners
- insufficient notification of when some learners have completed their programme.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

10. The principal and managers have a clear and well focussed strategy to raise standards through setting challenging targets. Staff are motivated to improve outcomes for learners. Success rates have risen at a faster rate than that seen nationally in the past three years. The college has resolved many of the issues identified at the last inspection. The self-assessment process involves staff well and the resulting report is accurate and reliable, particularly at whole college level. The quality of teaching and learning has improved substantially in the last year, supported by detailed and thorough action plans, targeted professional development and the sharing of good practice in most aspects. The quality assurance arrangements such as mini inspections and lesson observations along with targeted interventions are proving increasingly effective in improving underperforming provision. Very strong financial management and excellent learning resources support learning well.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

11. Long course success rates have increased notably since the last inspection, particularly for adult learners, and are just above the average for similar colleges. The number of learners who complete their courses has increased markedly over this period to be above average; but the rate of increase in pass rates is slower with no increase between 2008 and 2009. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are above average at intermediate level but remain below average at foundation and advanced level. Success rates for adults are high at intermediate level and above average at foundation and advanced level. In the majority of curriculum areas, success rates are above average. Learners show high standards of practical skill in almost all vocational curriculum areas.
12. Success rates for adults on short courses increased to above average in 2008/09, following a marked decline in 2007/08. Short course success rates are below average for learners aged 16 to 18 and did not improve between 2007 and 2009. Learners taking qualifications in key skills at foundation level achieve high success rates in the application of number and communication studies. Success rates are low on key skills qualifications at intermediate level. Success rates are high in the majority of qualifications taken by pupils aged 14 to 16 who attend the college part-time.
13. The gap between the higher success rates of female learners aged 16 to 18 compared to males in the same age range widened in 2009, because of underperformance of males at advanced level. The gap between the higher success rates of adult male learners and female adults narrowed in 2009. Learners with additional learning needs are retained at a higher level than their peers but their pass rates are lower than their peers. There were no significant differences in the performance of groups of learners from different minority ethnic heritages between 2006 and 2009.

14. The achievement of employment-based learners shows an improving trend between 2006 and 2009. The majority of these learners achieve high success rates within the time allowed for the completion of their qualification. The level of success varies considerably between different subjects. Success rates on public service vehicle and early years apprenticeships are high but are low on construction and light engineering apprenticeships. Learners on Train to Gain courses achieve well.
15. Learners feel safe, mostly use safe practices during lessons; enjoy their studies and most attend well. Accidents and incidents are few in number. Almost all learners make satisfactory progress compared to their often below average prior attainment and learners on advanced level vocational courses often make good progress in their learning. Very few learners, however, attain high grades in their qualifications.
16. Learners develop confidence and a satisfactory range of skills to support their future economic well-being, although too few make enough improvement in their literacy and numeracy skills at intermediate level. The college does not evaluate data showing progression between levels or the destinations of learners on leaving college at whole college level. The progression rate from foundation to intermediate level is high. The number of learners progressing to higher education is increasing and about half of learners aged 16 to 18 move on into higher level courses in further or education on leaving college. The destinations of too many other learners are not sufficiently accurately recorded.
17. The college provides workshops on a wide range of relevant health topics but not all learners receive these, limiting their knowledge and understanding. The opportunities to take part in sports and fitness related activities are increasing. The college is promoting these opportunities with renewed vigour in order to increase the level of participation. Actions to promote the uptake of healthy food choices are underway, partly in response to learners' requests.
18. Learners contribute to community life productively in many ways. Performing arts learners visit local primary schools to give performances and construction learners are involved in building repair work at a local cricket ground. While course representatives are active in reviewing their courses, the work of the students' union is under developed and the union executive is currently unrepresentative of male learners across the college. Only a few learners are involved in college committees; however, two student governors take an active part in corporation meetings.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

19. The effectiveness of teaching and learning has improved considerably and is good. Initial assessment is thorough and used effectively to develop detailed individual learner profiles which are used well in planning learning. Learning support assistants provide additional learning support in a sensitive and timely manner.

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20. Teachers plan their lessons well and use a wide range of strategies. In the most effective lessons learners are challenged, inspired and well motivated; they develop confidence and extend their knowledge and understanding. A small minority of lessons are less effective because the pace is slow, opportunities are missed to develop and extend learning and learners are unclear as to what is expected of them. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory and the college has identified areas for improvement accurately. Actions have been implemented but it is too soon to evaluate their impact.
 21. In many lessons the frequent use of information and learning technology (ILT) works well. Teaching areas are well resourced and teachers develop very good working relationships with learners.
 22. The assessment of learners' work is thorough. Feedback is constructive and includes guidance on how learners can improve their work. Most teachers use regular and effective question and answer techniques to assess learners' knowledge and understanding.
 23. The college has identified rightly that target setting does not support learners' success consistently in achieving their fullest potential. Too often targets set for learners refer only to meeting deadlines for assignment work rather than focusing on the development of skills and knowledge. In many cases, targets set previously are insufficiently reviewed and the process is not yet robust enough to bring about consistent improvements.
 24. Equality and diversity themes are being increasingly integrated into learning in various ways but their promotion in the majority of curriculum areas is under developed. Opportunities for the promotion and reinforcement of these themes in lessons and reviews are often missed.
 25. The college is good at meeting the needs and interests of learners. It provides a wide range of full and part-time courses from entry to advanced level, with good internal progression opportunities. Courses are also offered at various community venues. The employment-based curriculum is a strong feature with a wide range of relevant provision.
 26. The enrichment programme is satisfactory with a mixture of subject-based and cross-college activities. The college works with external agencies such as the Youth Service to offer programmes aimed at retaining vulnerable learners aged 16 to 18. The 'Chill Out' project is successful in retaining these learners through their attendance at an interesting programme of activities during vacation periods.
 27. The college has made good progress in securing the availability of a range of sports and recreational facilities for learners and promoting learners' participation, including through a full-time sports coordinator. Opportunities for learners to participate in clubs or activities with a creative or cultural theme are too limited.

28. Learners' views about the quality of provision are collected effectively in a wide variety of ways. Learners and local groups were strongly involved in the planning phase of the new college buildings and, where possible, their views were taken into account in the final design.
29. Links with employers are strong and the college takes an active part in a wide range of local and regional partnerships and initiatives. Work experience placement opportunities are strong in vocational areas where this is a mandatory element but are too limited in other areas. Collaborative arrangements with local employers contribute to the college's responsiveness to employer training needs and local skills demand. This has led to the college offering some specialist courses supported by employer resources.
30. Care, guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Learners are well supported personally through the college's good working relationships with a number of external agencies. Course entry requirements have been revised to ensure that learners are placed on the right course. The information, advice and guidance available to learners before starting their programme is effective and detailed. Induction activities are well designed; engage learners quickly and help them settle in to college life.
31. Additional support needs are identified promptly at the start of learners' courses and support plans are put in place in a timely manner. Regular additional support review meetings monitor progress against targets. The additional support ensures that learners are retained at a higher rate than their peers; however its impact on learners' pass rates is declining, an area for improvement noted in the self-assessment report.
32. Individual and group tutorials vary in quality and impact. A revised and comprehensive tutorial curriculum programme has been introduced. Adoption of this curriculum is at an early stage and the impact is too variable. Some important elements are not yet mandatory. Some teachers use and adapt the curriculum effectively to meet their learners needs; but others lack confidence and experience in delivery. Learners' attendance is mostly monitored closely, with early intervention measures in place.
33. The involvement of parents and carers in supporting learning is at an early stage of development. A guide, a progress report and consultation evenings are in place but are not yet fully effective or comprehensive enough. Concerns tend to be dealt with informally rather than systematically.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

34. The principal and managers have managed the relocation to the new site successfully, including working closely and effectively with the local community, whilst continuing to improve provision. Success rates have risen overall, although the rate of improvement between 2008 and 2009 is modest for learners aged 16 to 18, whose success rates remain below average. Some

major changes have been made to key aspects of the college's work, including revising its quality assurance framework and several aspects of curriculum management. Whilst progress in implementing these revisions is good, full implementation is not yet complete.

35. The principal and governors provide clear strategic leadership. A five-year strategy has been developed recently, which includes challenging, yet realistic and comprehensive key performance indicators. The targets are well understood by staff and monitored closely by managers, although not all targets were met in 2008/09. College wide management training is promoting an ambition for improvement. New college values are included in the strategic plan and reflected in the appraisal system and performance management procedures. Not all staff were appraised in previous years but this process is on track to be completed in the current year. Good communications are supported by a new meetings structure. Staff morale is high.
36. Governance is good. Governors reflect the local community well and bring a mix of skills and experience to the board. They have a good awareness of the quality of provision. Governors have an increased focus on the college's strategy since the completed relocation. Whilst re-establishing formal links between governors and curriculum areas they remain very aware of the demarcation between governance and management. Student governors make a valuable contribution and are well supported in their role. Governors challenge and support the principal and senior managers effectively.
37. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. The college's policies and procedures for safeguarding are appropriate. A single central register of mandatory checks is in place but the college has only introduced recently a robust risk assessment approach for all other staff as part of its safeguarding measures. In-house training for staff and governors has been provided recently, and gaps in coverage are being rectified swiftly. Designated child protection officers have received enhanced training. The college has seen an increase in the number of safeguarding referrals and takes swift and effective action to address incidents. It has good links with external agencies including the local children's safeguarding board. It acts appropriately to ensure employers are aware of safeguarding by outlining their responsibilities in an employers' handbook. Safe working practices in curriculum areas are at least satisfactory.
38. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The college has an appropriate equality and diversity policy, with implementation plans for race, gender and disability which refer to current legislation. The policy refers to the process for carrying out equality impact assessments but progress has been too slow in completing these. The college analyses data by different groups and reports high-level outcomes to governors in relation to college-based provision. However, curriculum area analysis of outcomes by different groups is less well developed and is not always reflected in curriculum self-assessment reports. Outcomes for employment-based learners are not analysed sufficiently by difference. The college has an inclusive ethos and celebrates diversity well. However, the promotion of equality and diversity within the curriculum is

underdeveloped. Complaints and harassment are dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

39. The college has an established learner involvement policy. Learner forums are in place and course representatives are involved in course reviews, with examples of changes made as a result of learners' feedback. Employer forums are held for work-based learning providers. Regular surveys are carried out for learners at various points in the year. However, the formal involvement of both learners and employers in improving the quality of provision is underdeveloped.
40. Self-assessment is broadly accurate and evaluative making appropriate use of data about the majority of aspects of the college's provision. In a few cases, data, such as progression and destination rates, are insufficiently analysed. At curriculum level, self-assessment reports do not always distinguish college-based learners' issues from those of employment-based learners adequately. The use of evidence and data to support judgements varies considerably from highly evaluative to insufficient. Some actions plans are insufficiently specific. The self-assessment process involves staff well but does not engage learners or employers sufficiently. The moderation of reports has rightly been extended to involve more staff and external representatives.
41. Financial management is very strong. The college has excellent learning facilities. Classrooms are very well equipped. Managers are held to greater account using key performance indicators constructively. Staff and space utilisation are efficient. The relocation project was managed well to ensure maximum benefit for all. The college's value for money is good.

Subject areas

Health, social care and early years

Grade 3

Context

42. Approximately 437 learners are on college-based courses from foundation to advanced level in health, care and early years, of whom 269 are aged 16 to 18 and 168 are adults. Three-quarters of learners study full time. Most learners are female and just over a third are of minority ethnic heritage. Of the 118 part-time learners on work-based courses, 97 learners are on Train to Gain courses and 21 are apprentices. Most employment-based learners are female and just under a third are from a minority ethnic heritage.

Key findings

- Success rates are high on courses in early years and on apprenticeships, and are around the average for similar colleges on care courses. Success rates for key skills qualifications are average. Progression between levels of study or to employment is high. Learners develop good personal and work-place skills and participate actively on committees and in charitable fund raising activities. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Their portfolios are well organised and they are confident in using professional language and concepts. Assessment feedback is effective in helping learners to improve their performance. Assessors are effective and visit the workplace frequently, although the arrangements for work-based assessments are often insufficiently linked to workplace practice.
- Teaching and learning are good on college-based courses. Good lesson planning and classroom management; effective use of ILT and clear direction from teachers, using tasks and activities designed to stretch learners of different abilities well, are features of the large majority of lessons. Learners are motivated and engaged and work well both individually and in groups.
- In the minority of less effective lessons, insufficient attention is given to accurate matching of tasks to the level and stage of course and opportunities to extend learning are missed. Training for work-based learners is too reliant on standard texts and lacks challenge. Practical work and relevant examples are not used enough in theory lessons. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.
- College-based learners benefit from well established links with social care agencies and local employers. These links include work placements, talks and visits. Communication with employers supporting work-based learners is often less effective often resulting in theory being taught in isolation from workplace practice. Optional units within work-based courses are not linked to employers' specific training needs.

- Target setting and reviews of individual action plans vary too much in their effectiveness. Targets often do not cover all parts of a learner's programme and many are too general or simply focus on meeting deadlines. Reviews do not ensure that actions are followed through to completion.
- Pastoral support is good. Learners value the highly supportive approach of teachers and assessors that builds their confidence and self esteem and helps them to resolve personal concerns. Learners receiving additional learning support contribute confidently in lessons. This support is effective and provided in a sensitive manner.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication is good. Regular staff meetings to discuss the progress of individual learners are used effectively to ensure the provision of intervention and support as needed for the majority of learners. The college recognises the need to ensure more consistency in these processes.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are good and widely understood by learners and placement providers. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively through the curriculum and in the respectful and supportive relationships that exist within the diverse group of care learners. Insufficient attention is given to developing strategies to support the recruitment of under-represented groups.
- The self-assessment report is broadly accurate in its main findings and grade. Actions taken to improve teaching and learning have had a positive effect on the learners' experience. Self-assessment reports at course and programme area level lack rigour and are often overly descriptive. They pay insufficient attention to measuring the impact of actions on learners and the associated action plans lack a sharp focus and do not specify accountability sufficiently.

What does City College Coventry need to do to improve further?

- Insist on high attendance and good punctuality by using the college's procedure for taking action rigorously where these are a concern.
- Implement a rigorous and systematic process of setting specific, time limited targets and monitoring progress through reviewing targets fully across all parts of learners' programme to ensure improvements in success rates, particularly on care courses and key skills qualifications.
- Share existing good practice in lesson planning across all subject areas within the curriculum area to ensure that the range of tasks and activities is well matched to learners' ability and interests and that theory is linked clearly to practical lessons or practical activities in the workplace.
- Improve communication about assessment schedules and the mix of optional units with employers to ensure work-based learners experience a coherent and integrated training and assessment programme.
- Ensure that actions plans arising from the programme area and course self-assessments contain specific, measurable actions with clear lines of accountability identified and focused on improvements in outcomes.

Engineering and motor vehicle

Grade 2

Context

43. Courses are offered in motor vehicle and public service vehicle repair and maintenance, vehicle body repair, welding and fabrication, and electrical engineering from foundation to advanced level. Of 391 college-based learners just under two-thirds are aged 16 to 18. Very few learners are female. A quarter of learners are from a minority ethnic heritage. Of the 324 work-based learners, 41 are on Train to Gain courses and there are 283 apprentices. Many work-based learners are working in transport operations and maintenance at locations throughout England.

Key findings

- Most success rates on college-based courses are high. The success rates on advanced level courses and specialist courses in body vehicle repair are particularly high. Success rates decreased slightly in 2008/09 compared to 2007/08 mainly because some learners lost their jobs due to the economic downturn and were unable to continue with their courses. College data suggest that the retention of current learners has improved.
- The overall and timely success rates on the public service vehicle advanced apprenticeships have been consistently high over the last three years. The Train to Gain community transport courses overall and timely success rates were outstanding in 2008/09. However, these rates on the vehicle maintenance and repair apprenticeship have been low over the last three years.
- All learners and apprentices develop good practical skills and work safely to high standards. Apprentices develop useful personal skills including through regular contacts with customers and parts suppliers. Adult learners on the Train to Gain courses gain in confidence and develop a better understanding of their work procedures.
- Learners say they felt safe in the college and in the work-place. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of health and well-being related topics such as sexual health, drugs and alcohol. On and off-the-job training gives learners a good understanding of the importance of disability and discrimination legislation.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well structured, using varied activities and good learning resources. Teachers plan carefully to meet learners' different abilities. Teaching areas are well equipped and there is good use of information and communication technology. There are outstanding specialist workshops and modern equipment for vehicle maintenance and repair, and vehicle body repair.
- Most teachers are patient and supportive of learners. A very few make ineffective use of questions to test knowledge and understanding. In a few

lessons, classroom management is weak, theoretical subjects are insufficiently linked to practice and there is too much reliance on handouts.

- Assessment practices are well understood, varied and well planned. Assessment is linked carefully to teaching and training. The standard of assessed work is mostly high but feedback following assessment lacks detail and is satisfactory rather than good. Assessments of vocational practice, such as analysing vehicle fuel consumption, are used productively as key skills portfolio evidence.
- The college has a very good range of specialist programmes and progression routes. The partnership with employers is very strong in public service vehicle training and brings many benefits including specialist equipment and work experience opportunities. College-based learners, however, have insufficient work experience opportunities. Links with local schools are good and productive.
- Learners are well supported both personally and in relation to their course of study. The provision of additional learning support is good, particularly in relation to key skills development. Comprehensively trained and supportive workplace mentors have been introduced. The arrangements to support apprentices living away from home are good.
- Managers are highly effective in supporting improvement in success rates and in teaching and training. Courses are well organised. Internal communications are effective and staff work well together. Appropriate actions have been taken to improve the success rates on the vehicle maintenance and repair apprenticeships. Staff develop and update their knowledge through close industrial links.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is underdeveloped. Learners' awareness of equality and diversity issues is satisfactory although very occasionally some inappropriate language by learners is uncorrected. Equality and diversity issues are discussed during work-based reviews but the outcomes are not recorded formally. There are insufficient strategies to widen participation by under-represented groups.
- Self assessment is accurate and all key improvement actions needed have been identified. Plans to improve the quality of provision are clear and include regular monitoring. Staff involvement in self-assessment and quality improvement is good. However, although the views of learners are gathered, these are not used to inform self-assessment. Employer's views are not used enough to inform improvements.

What does City College Coventry need to do to improve further?

- Monitor the progress of apprentices on vehicle maintenance and repair courses closely at both curriculum area and school level to ensure they achieve fully within the time allowed.
- Support teachers to make more effective use of question and answer techniques and handouts and, within lessons, to create and use more references to equality and diversity topics.

- Increase the opportunities for work experience placements for college-based learners in order for them to develop their vocational skills and employment opportunities.
- Make more use in self assessment of both learners' and employers' views to improve provision and provide more feedback on the actions taken as a result of these views.
- Develop a range of strategies to encourage and support wider participation, including from under represented groups of learners, in engineering and manufacturing technologies courses.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Grade 2

Context

44. Of 219 learners, around three quarters study full time on courses including national vocational qualifications (NVQ) from levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing, levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy and level 3 in nail services. Sixty two learners are following programmes for vocational related qualifications (VRQ) in hairdressing at intermediate and advanced level and in beauty therapy, nail technology and holistic therapies at intermediate level. Some 49 school pupils are on a salon services or diploma in hairdressing course. Seven learners are on apprenticeship programmes in hairdressing. A very small number of learners are from a minority heritage and a very few are male.

Key findings

- Success rates on most courses have increased between 2007 and 2009 and are above or well above average. Success rates are high on NVQ levels 1 and 3 in hairdressing and on beauty therapy and nail services at level 2. Success rates on NVQ level 2 courses are at the average for similar colleges. Success rates on holistic therapy courses, whilst improving, are below average.
- Learners make good progress in their learning. Learners are well motivated and enjoy learning. They display good levels of confidence in their practical work. Learners' progress is well monitored and most meet their targets within or earlier than the agreed timescale.
- The standards of practical work in hairdressing and beauty therapy are high. Learners perform salon treatments in a professional manner, some showing skill above the level expected. They develop social and personal skills well and demonstrate very good client care in practical lessons. Learners' written work is satisfactory.
- Most teaching is good or better. Teachers are adept at challenging and inspiring learners. Planning is thorough and takes account of individual learners' needs effectively. Questioning techniques are used very well to explore learners' understanding and extend their knowledge. Learners receive excellent feedback on their progress and how to improve. Plenaries are used very effectively to recap and consolidate learning.
- Learning resources and accommodation are good. ILT is used very effectively to enhance learning. Learners benefit from some excellent resources on the college's virtual learning environment. However, not all courses have developed a sufficient range of these resources.
- The range of provision is satisfactory. Provision from foundation to advanced level provides good progression routes for learners. The newly introduced VRQ courses are a useful addition to develop the skills of less confident learners. However, learners do not fully understand the difference between a VRQ and

NVQ programme or the progression route needed to develop skills to obtain employment.

- Learners benefit from an extensive enrichment programme. Events include trips abroad, careers talks from high profile national employers and additional short courses showcasing fashionable salon treatments and services. Work experience to develop beauty therapy learners' employability skills is insufficient.
- The involvement of employers to inform curriculum planning to meet industry and learners needs is insufficient. The college recognises the need to increase employer involvement to inform the planning of future provision more effectively.
- Learners receive good guidance and support. At recruitment, initial assessment and guidance is thorough and provides learners with a realistic view of their chosen course. Those with identified additional learning needs receive appropriate support. Pastoral support and guidance are good.
- Managers have taken effective action to increase success rates to above average on the majority of courses. An effective strategy to improve teaching and learning, led by advanced practitioners, has had a significant impact on the quality of experience that learners receive.
- The college's approach to equality and diversity is good. Learners feel safe and report that they are treated with respect. Staff provide a supportive and inclusive environment that values learners' differences and promotes respect and team work. Equality and diversity are themes included in most lesson plans, however, not all staff use naturally occurring situations in lessons to promote equality and diversity successfully.

What does City College Coventry need to do to improve further?

- Provide a range of work experience opportunities for beauty therapy learners to meet their individual requirements and increase their employability skills and experience of their chosen industry.
- Develop clear guidance for learners on VRQ courses to ensure they understand fully the potential progression routes available to obtain the skills and qualifications needed for employment.
- Increase the level of engagement with employers and use their skills and expertise to inform curriculum planning to ensure provision meets industry needs.
- Support teachers to use all opportunities that occur in lessons to promote and develop understanding of equality and diversity themes.

Business administration and law

Grade 3

Context

45. Courses are offered from foundation to advanced level in business, accounting and business administration courses. GCE AS and A levels are offered in business studies and law. Part-time evening courses are available in book keeping at foundation level and accounting at intermediate and advanced level. Most of the 213 learners aged 16 to 18 study full time; whereas the large majority of the 189 adult learners study part time. Just over half of learners are female and just under half are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key findings

- Success rates are broadly average having improved considerably since 2008. Retention rates are improving, particularly in the current year. Success rates are high on foundation level courses but rates have declined and are low on GCE AS and A level courses, largely because of low pass rates. Current learners on these courses are making improved progress.
- The quality of learners' work is satisfactory. They develop relevant business skills; enjoy studying and most are well motivated to succeed. Overall, attendance and punctuality are good but attendance is poor on the second year of the national diploma in business course. Learners show mutual respect in class and value the college's ethnic diversity and the opportunities for interaction between different cultures.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is satisfactory. In the most effective lessons teachers employ a variety of learning activities to engage learners' interest. Effective use is made of ILT to enhance learning. However, a minority of lessons are over directed by the teacher with insufficient opportunities for collaborative learning. Too often the pace of learning is too slow.
- The assessment of learners' work is satisfactory. Tutors return learners' work promptly and the quality of feedback is good with constructive feedback for learners to be able to improve their performance. Internal verification is well-planned and robust. Monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory overall but underdeveloped on GCE AS and A level provision.
- Teaching accommodation is good but few rooms contain examples of learners' work or business-related wall displays and do not encourage learners' pride and ownership of their work. The provision of information and communication technology has increased with additional resources made available in the current year. The learning resource centre provides a good study environment.
- A good range of provision is available which is relevant to learners' personal career and employment goals. Links with the local business community are satisfactory. All business administration learners have a work placement; but

there is insufficient work experience provided for other business learners although visits and guest speakers contribute to the curriculum.

- Learners receive satisfactory guidance and support. Good in-class support is available for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Managers have raised expectations and put in place demanding targets and actions for improvement. Progress towards the full achievement of qualifications and increased retention rates has improved considerably over the last year. Staff attend staff development events regularly and are motivated and enthusiastic.
- Communications with staff are good with considerable informal communication at programme level and a culture of mutual support. Managers' regular meetings are productive with good levels of liaison between managers, teachers and the college's advanced teaching practitioners to promote further improvement in teaching and learning.
- The self-assessment report is comprehensive and realistic. The resulting quality improvement plan is reviewed regularly. Staff contribute well to the self-assessment process through the course review process and feel a sense of ownership of the outcomes.

What does City College Coventry need to do to improve further?

- Monitor the progress of learners on GCE AS and A level courses in business and law rigorously by reviewing records of completed assessments regularly, including marks awarded, and the timeliness of submission of work; take prompt action to support learners who are at risk of underperformance or who have low attendance on these courses.
- Ensure that lessons are challenging, with a wide variety of appropriate learning activities, in order to maintain learners' interest, challenge them to learn quickly and effectively as well as providing opportunities for learners to work collaboratively.
- Develop effective links with the local business community in order to enhance the business curriculum, enrich learners' experience and assist their application of concepts to current business practice.
- Improve the ambience of teaching rooms by creating business-related displays to enrich the learning environment, provide learners with opportunities to celebrate their learning and create a sense of learners' ownership of the subject and study materials.
- Enforce attendance requirements rigorously on those programmes with poor attendance records in order to maximise learners' prospects of success.

Information about the inspection

46. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and eight 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) or other funding bodies, 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.
47. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at the questionnaires that learners and employers had completed recently related to the college. They also observed learning lessons, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from courses across the subject areas that the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

City College Coventry

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	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	5459	2004	590	744
Full-time learners	2121	194	1927	0
Part-time learners				
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	2			
Outcomes for learners	3	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	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2			
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	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2			
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	2			
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3			
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?	3			
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3			
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2			

*where applicable to the type of provision

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