

Cornwall College

Inspection report

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Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Cornwall College is a very large general further education college with sites across much of Cornwall. It is a complex, widely-dispersed college. There are two large further education campuses at St Austell and Camborne, each with a sixth form centre, and a smaller one at Saltash, in the east of the county. The land-based provision is run from Stoke Climsland in the east of the county and Rosewarne in the west. The Newquay site has a zoological/environmental focus and at Falmouth the emphasis is on marine studies.
2. Cornwall is predominantly a rural county. It has suffered from a decline in traditional industries such as mining, agriculture, and fishing. The area is characterised by low household incomes, low skills levels, and high rates of seasonal employment, although there are areas of affluence. Jobs in service industries, particularly tourism, account for a high proportion of all employment. The proportion of school leavers achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was slightly below the national average in 2009.
3. The college offers courses in all subject areas, although provision in humanities and social sciences is small. In 2008/09 there were around 30,000 enrolments on further education courses, and 7,000 on work-based learning programmes. At the time of inspection, there were around 4,000 full-time students aged 16 to 18, 1,000 adult learners on full-time courses, and over 20,000 part-time learners, mainly adults. The college also runs higher education programmes. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic heritages is small, reflecting the social composition of the county.
4. The inspection took into account all of the provision offered by the college. Provision in health, social care and public services, land-based industries, construction, visual arts and media, literacy and numeracy, and business, administration and law was inspected in depth. Additionally, the residential accommodation for younger learners was inspected.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Construction Skills (construction)
 - Building Engineering Services Training Ltd (plumbing).
6. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - BTCV (environmental conservation)
 - CMT (preparation for work and life)
 - Cornwall Care (health and social care)
 - CN4C (public services)
 - DGD Training (glass and glazing)

- Digital Peninsula Network (information and communication technology)
- Flying Start (early years)
- Kensey Foods (food manufacture)
- Lynher Training (construction)
- Newquay for Excellence Training (hospitality)
- Notter Bridge Training (construction)
- Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust (health and social care)
- Spectrum (health and social care)
- SSG Training and Consultancy (construction)
- St Austell Brewery (hospitality)
- Ultimate Training (health and social care)
- West Country Transport Training (transportation).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	1,483 part-time learners
Further education (16 to 18)	3,968 full-time learners 3,594 part-time learners
Foundation learning	2,546 full-time learners 2,568 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	932 full-time learners 20,639 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	4,520 learners 2,653 apprentices

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 1
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject areas	
Health, social care and public services	2
Land-based industries	1
Construction	2
Visual arts and media	2
Literacy and numeracy	2
Business, administration and law	3
Residential accommodation	2

Overall effectiveness

7. This is a good college with outstanding capacity to improve. Over the last three years all aspects of the provision have improved significantly, and the college is well placed to meet its ambition to be outstanding in the future. Learners' outcomes have improved rapidly and are good, with high success rates in most areas, particularly for students aged 16 to 18. Learners on employer-based provision achieve outstanding results. The contribution that learners make to the college and the communities served by it is outstanding. Learners enjoy their time at college, and the college is effective in preparing them for their futures and encouraging them to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. The quality of

provision is outstanding in land-based industries, and is good in most other subject areas. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are good. The range of provision offered by the college, and its partnership work throughout the county, are exemplary. Learners benefit from very good pastoral support, and progress is being made in monitoring their progress on their courses more assiduously.

8. College leaders have had considerable success in developing a culture at the college that is focused on raising standards and improving teaching and learning. The college's ambitious strategic priorities are both understood and subscribed to by staff, and a strong collective desire to improve further pervades the organisation. Quality assurance and self-assessment are firmly entrenched and effective in planning for improvement, although a minority of graded judgements in the self-assessment report are more reflective of the college's aspirations than its current position. The promotion of equality and diversity has improved significantly and is good. Arrangements for the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults are both comprehensive and thorough.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates have improved significantly over the last three years and are high. Students aged 16 to 18 do particularly well, with success rates well above the national average. As the college recognises, further progress is needed to improve success rates for adult learners on intermediate and advanced level courses. Learners make good progress in comparison with their prior attainment.
- Success rates on apprenticeships and Train to Gain provision are outstanding overall; they are particularly high on apprenticeships. The rate of improvement in the proportion of learners who complete their qualification in the time allocated to them has been outstanding.
- The college has made excellent progress in integrating the Every Child Matters outcomes into its work, and the extent to which students enjoy their work, and the promotion of their health, economic well-being and safety are good. Their contribution to the college and the communities served by it is outstanding.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Learners develop good practical skills and a sound grasp of underpinning theory. Most learners make good progress during their time at college and are well prepared for the next step in their futures.
- Teaching and learning are good: most lessons are good, some are outstanding, and there is very little weak teaching. Teachers receive good support from the college to develop their professional practice. Most lessons are carefully planned to provide a wide range of activities that interest and motivate learners. The college overestimates the amount of outstanding teaching and learning.

- Teaching and learning activities are effectively linked to initial and course assessments. Assessment activities and internal verification arrangements are thorough and well organised. Feedback to learners is constructive and helpful.
- The college is outstanding at meeting the needs of learners, employers and the county's wider community. It provides an impressive and broad range of courses to meet the needs of all learners from pre-entry to degree level in a widely dispersed geographical area.
- Partnership work is exemplary. The college's fruitful collaborative relationships with schools, employers, and voluntary and statutory organisations put it at the forefront of developments in education and training in the county.
- Good tutoring and effective student services arrangements ensure that students' performance is monitored closely and that students are given the necessary and timely support to succeed. Arrangements to ensure that learners are on the right course are increasingly effective. Learning support assistants are not always deployed effectively.
- Outstanding strategic leadership and governance have brought about significant improvements in outcomes for learners since the last inspection, through setting ambitious and challenging targets and rigorous monitoring of progress towards these. Staff recognise and value the profound change in culture across the college, and how this has led to improvement in most aspects of the college's work.
- The college has made significant strides in responding to its education, business and community partners and using their experience to review, plan and improve the curriculum. The learner voice is well established and a strong student union has significantly improved mechanisms for gaining students' views; the college values their input and responds appropriately.
- The promotion of equality and diversity has improved significantly, both through a range of activities outside formal lessons and, in some subject areas, through the taught curriculum. Arrangements for safeguarding young learners and vulnerable adults are thorough and comprehensive.
- Self-assessment procedures are well used and understood by staff at all levels and are leading to improvements across the provision. Managers recognise that these processes need further refinement to ensure a more evaluative approach. In particular, data analysis is not always sufficiently rigorous, and inconsistencies in the quality of provision between sites are not always fully identified.

What does Cornwall College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates for adult learners on intermediate and advanced-level college-based courses by ensuring that each learner's progress is consistently and rigorously monitored across all the college sites, and that clear and achievable targets are set for each course.
- Improve further the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that internal lesson observation procedures identify and record truly outstanding practice,

and develop strategies for disseminating and sharing such practice across the college.

- Develop more effective ways of measuring the impact of college strategies to improve aspects of provision so that inconsistencies between, and within, college sites can be identified effectively and remedied swiftly.
- Ensure that course and curriculum level self-assessment uses data analysis more effectively to provide a sharper focus on specific areas requiring improvement. Improve the impact of all forms of written self-assessment by focusing on brief critical evaluation rather than lengthy description.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the friendly, supportive atmosphere of the college
- the opportunity to have your views heard through the student representative system
- the approachable staff, who treat students as adults
- the wide variety of enrichment activities and additional qualifications available
- the fact that students feel safe and well cared for at the college
- the good teaching in most lessons
- the good practical facilities and resources
- the healthy food options available
- the opportunity to develop relevant employability skills.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the poor organisation on a small minority of courses
- some aspects of timetabling, that leave large gaps in the day
- access to computers during lessons
- the affordability, choice and quality of food
- the availability of social space at some sites.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the way the training helps businesses to develop
- the very professional service provided
- the high level of commitment from teaching staff
- the training customised to our particular organisation
- the very good support for students and good progression routes
- the flexibility of the provision and diverse range of courses

- support in the workplace for learners
- the innovative programme development.

What employers would like to see improved:

- more warning before assessors visit
- communication that could be improved in some cases
- the delivery of key skills
- more involvement with the development of courses
- more modern tractors, and better marketing of opportunities, in land-based training.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

9. Significant progress has been made in remedying all the key areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Outcomes for learners have improved rapidly, particularly so for students aged 16 to 18 and work-based learners. Self-assessment and quality assurance procedures are well understood by staff at all levels across the college and are contributing to improvements in provision and outcomes for learners. The views of learners and other users increasingly inform the evaluation of provision. Self-assessment is largely accurate, although in a few aspects the college's judgements were more generous than those of inspectors.
10. Leadership and governance are outstanding, and an ambitious strategy designed to place the quality of learners' experience, and their outcomes, at the heart of all the college's work has transformed the culture of the college. Staff at all levels display considerable passion and commitment to continuing improvement. Changes in curriculum management have been designed to bring coherency and consistency to provision across all the sites, and good progress is being made in this regard, although leaders and managers recognise there is more to do. The progress made over the last three years in all aspects of provision is secure and sustainable, and the college is well placed to meet its aspiration to be outstanding.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

11. The proportion of learners who complete their courses successfully has risen very significantly over the last three years. Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 on long courses are high, being well above the national average for similar colleges. For adult learners, success rates have risen to around the national average. As the college recognises, whilst adults do very well on courses at foundation level, there is scope for further improvement at intermediate and advanced levels. Success rates on the large number of short courses offered by the college are high. There are no significant differences between groups of learners based on their gender, ethnicity or additional learning needs.
12. As the college recognises, some inconsistencies remain in learners' achievements both within and between subject areas. Whilst outcomes are outstanding in some areas, they are no better than satisfactory in a minority. Nevertheless, inspection evidence shows that the college is making good progress in reducing these differentials.
13. Success rates on work-based learning programmes have also improved significantly, and are outstanding. The vast majority of apprentices complete their qualifications in the time allocated. Learners on Train to Gain programmes achieve well.

14. Learners make good progress in comparison with their starting points on vocational programmes. The standard of their work is good, and they develop high levels of practical skills underpinned by a sound grasp of theory. In some areas, for example, media studies and land-based courses, students produce some outstanding work. On A-level courses, students make satisfactory progress. School pupils aged 14 to 16 who take vocational options at the college make good progress.
15. Learners enjoy college and benefit from the particularly wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that are open to them. Opportunities for all students to participate in sporting activities are good, and there is a strong emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles. Good attention is paid to health and safety, and students report that they feel safe and free from any bullying. The atmosphere that pervades the college lends support to this view; it is a tolerant and respectful community. Learners are well prepared for their futures, whether they are progressing to work or further education and training. On key skills qualifications, learners achieve well, with success rates significantly above the national average. Learners make an outstanding contribution to the college and to the Cornish communities it serves. They are involved in a wide range of voluntary, community and charitable activities both within and outside the college, and are supported by a strong and energetic student union. The improved reputation of the college is at least partly attributable to learners' raised profile in projects that benefit local communities.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

16. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are carefully planned to include a thoughtful and well-balanced range of activities that interest and motivate learners. Teachers use relevant vocational activities and examples to develop learners' skills. Behaviour is good and learners enjoy their lessons. Relationships between learners and their teachers are productive and purposeful.
17. In the most effective lessons, teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies to meet the needs of different learners. Varied activities involve students effectively in lessons and help to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Well-qualified and experienced teachers use clear explanations and highly effective questioning techniques to reinforce learning and check understanding. Information and learning technologies are used imaginatively to promote learning. Teachers make highly effective use of current, industry-related examples and good resources. Learners work enthusiastically and express their ideas with confidence and maturity.
18. In the minority of weaker lessons teachers place too much emphasis on providing whole-class activities that do not effectively meet individual learning needs. In these lessons, more able learners are insufficiently challenged. Teachers use too narrow a range of teaching strategies, do not direct questioning effectively enough, and rely too much on dull paper-based resources. Lessons often take too little account of planning for differentiated

learning or for the promotion of equality and diversity. Learning support assistants provide helpful support in many lessons, but in a significant minority their deployment is ineffective.

19. Initial assessment is thorough and ensures that learners are placed on the most suitable courses for their needs, abilities and interests, and that any additional learning support needs are identified. Target setting as a result of initial assessment has improved. However, some short-term target setting is not specific enough.
20. Feedback on assessed work is thorough and constructive. The college has continued to improve its internal verification arrangements and has encouraged the development of some innovative and creative methods of on-course assessment that involve learners more. On many courses, learners are developing their self-evaluation skills very effectively. For example, in art and design and media courses good work has been done to develop innovative assessments that treat learners as partners in the assessment of their own work. Assessment feedback to learners on Train to Gain provision is accurate but does not always indicate ways in which learners might extend their learning.
21. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners, potential learners and the communities of the county is outstanding. It has developed a wide range of courses at all levels, highly relevant to learners' long term personal and educational goals, with good progression routes. Internal progression between courses at different levels has risen consistently over the last three years. The college has developed a very strong curriculum for school pupils aged 14 to 16 across a wide range of vocational areas. Progression rates from these programmes onto further education options are high. The curriculum review system is rigorous, consulting with stakeholders at every level in the community and determining what programmes will most effectively meet their requirements. The college has recently developed a gifted and talented academy to motivate more able students and raise their expectations.
22. The college's partnership work is outstanding. It works very successfully in collaboration with schools in the county. The curriculum is very responsive to changing demand from employers. The college has close, collaborative working relationships with over 2,500 small, medium and large employers in Cornwall, with whom it has devised some highly specialised and innovative training options. The college has forged strong and mutually beneficial links with many community groups and voluntary organisations, working with some of the most disadvantaged and demanding client groups in the area. The college has a well-earned reputation for flexibility and a highly developed sense of social responsibility, and makes a significant contribution to both the social well-being and the economic regeneration of the county.
23. Initial advice and guidance are good. Learner engagement teams offer a personalised service to learners and schools, coordinating events and activities for learners at all stages and levels of their decision making. The college is

increasingly adept at encouraging the sharing of information between educational providers in the county to ensure students are offered the most appropriate education and training for their needs.

24. Tutoring is good and students, parents and employers are overwhelmingly positive about the pastoral care and educational support learners receive, especially those with additional social, emotional and personal needs. Senior tutors provide an independent advocate service for learners who are at risk and support tutors in addressing their particular problems. The tutorial programme is effectively mapped around fifteen core themes that address all the Every Child Matters criteria. Students and staff engage enthusiastically with the programme which informs much of their mainstream learning. The provision and take-up of welfare and support services are good. Counselling and childcare services are also well used by a small proportion of learners.
25. Learners' progress on their course is tracked through an electronic system that is continually being refined to focus on improving student achievement and highlighting risk factors. Although this system is highly effective in some parts of the college, its use is not yet consistent. Learners are not always set achievable short-term targets that will help them to gauge their progress, and they do not have access to the electronic system themselves.
26. Additional learning support is good across the college. Each site has its own additional learning support staff and a disability officer who coordinates the work with other practitioners across college sites. Many have their own areas of expertise including audiology, sensory support and dyslexia, and others are developing their own specialisms to share across the service. The proportion of learners identified as needing support and taking up the offer is increasing. The quality of in-class support provided by a large team of learning support assistants is variable, as teachers do not always plan effectively for their deployment.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

27. Leadership and management are good. The strategic leadership provided by the senior management team and governors is outstanding. They have an excellent understanding of the college's strategic role in contributing to local, regional and national priorities, and play a key role in the development of education and training across the county. Senior leaders set ambitious and challenging targets, which have led to significant improvements in outcomes for learners, particularly for students aged 16 to 18 and work-based learners, and improved the quality of teaching and learning.
28. The restructuring of the college management has supported the building of a strong team to manage complex, multi-site provision. Staff throughout the organisation speak very positively about the major change in college culture and how well this has been communicated and managed. They are rightly proud of what has been achieved and remain ambitious for further improvement and innovation. Senior leaders with responsibility for the quality of

subject areas across the corporation are strongly committed to raising standards and are well supported by good curriculum areas managers with responsibility for different sites. However, a minority of learners expressed concerns about the quality of course-level organisation.

29. Governors bring an excellent range of expertise and skills to the college, and are highly effective in monitoring all aspects of college performance. Their ability to evaluate the college's provision and anticipate forthcoming developments in the sector have supported excellent forward planning to meet changing circumstances and priorities.
30. Safeguarding arrangements are good. The college takes its responsibilities for safeguarding very seriously and meets all current legislative requirements. All staff have Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and the maintenance of the central list is robust. For the very few who start work without CRB confirmation, appropriate risk assessments are in place. A senior manager oversees safeguarding arrangements and works particularly well with designated staff on each site. The college works closely with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, social services and other relevant agencies and is a key partner in the development of improved county-wide safeguarding procedures. Safeguarding arrangements are well understood by staff and students. The recording and monitoring of learners at risk is good. Health and safety procedures are well developed and effective.
31. The promotion of equality and diversity is good, and the college has made significant progress in ensuring that cultural diversity is integrated into many aspects of college life. Students appreciate and enjoy the wide range of events that take place on each site to celebrate diversity, local and international culture and identity. Each site has a designated equality and diversity officer to lead developments in diversity and monitor progress in implementation. The college has produced clear guidance and examples of good practice for teachers to support the integration and promotion of diversity in the curriculum and lessons, although the implementation of this is not yet consistent in all areas. Good, and sometimes innovative, approaches were observed in health and social care, arts and media and land-based curriculum areas, but promotion was insufficiently developed in construction. In some parts of the college, student feedback has been used to gauge the effectiveness of the work to promote equality and diversity, but more formal or systematic evaluation of student participation and impact has not yet been undertaken.
32. The college's analysis of the performance of different groups of students shows no significant differences in their outcomes, but managers are aware that rates of improvement have been better for students aged 16 to 18 than for adult learners. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve as well as, or better than, their peers. Managers are beginning to extend their analysis beyond success rates, by using value-added data to analyse any differences in rates of progress between male and female students.

33. The college makes excellent use of feedback from students and other users to evaluate its provision and plan for further improvements. Since the last inspection, a vibrant and active student union has been created, providing a well-organised forum for representing the students' views from course level through to the highest levels of management. Students report that senior managers and governors take their views seriously and respond appropriately to improve their experience. Employers and education partners are involved frequently in regular curriculum review and planning to ensure that provision is closely matched to local needs and priorities.
34. The college has an innovative system of college councils for each site, comprising local business and community representatives as well as staff and student members. A representative of each college council sits on the full corporation board, ensuring a strong focus on the particular circumstances and needs across different parts of the county. Feedback from education, business and community partners confirms the improving local perception and reputation of the college in the eyes of its stakeholders.
35. Self-assessment procedures are comprehensive and clearly contribute to improvement. Staff at all levels contribute to the process and managers monitor performance closely. Self-assessment is largely accurate, although in a few aspects the college's graded judgements were more generous than those of inspectors. The college recognises that curriculum level self-assessment, whilst comprehensive, could be more sharply focused and evaluative to support further improvement. The quality assurance of lesson observations has not been sufficiently rigorous to ensure consistently accurate grading and identification of the characteristics of good and better teaching and learning, and the proportion of outstanding lessons is overstated by the college.
36. Financial management and value for money are good. Senior managers and governors plan very well to maximise the use of available resources. Most accommodation is good and learning resources are well managed in curriculum areas. The college has recently employed a sustainability manager to lead on the implementation of its sustainability plans for each site. The college is making good progress in ensuring that all teachers are fully qualified.

Subject areas

Health, public services and care

Grade 2

Context

37. The college offers full- and part-time courses from foundation level to higher education in health, social care, child care and public services for 1,029 learners. Provision is offered on four campuses. Over 1,000 learners are enrolled on further education courses; a further 444 are on distance learning courses in housing studies. Work-based provision includes 74 advanced apprentices in dental nursing, and around 600 learners on Train to Gain programmes.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high on long courses for students aged 16 to 18 and are now well above the national average. Success rates for adult learners have also risen and are broadly in line with the national average. Success rates on short courses are high.
- Success rates on Train to Gain provision are high and are continuing to rise. An increasing proportion of learners are completing their qualification in the time allocated.
- The standard of learners' written work is good and learners take pride in their achievements. On Train to Gain provision, the standard of work is adequate in meeting assessment requirements.
- Good progression routes enable learners to move on to appropriate employment or to further and higher education and training. Learners' employability and their understanding of healthy living and safe working practices are enhanced by the additional qualifications that they take.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. In most lessons, learners benefit from a lively learning environment, and effective linking of theory to practice. Learners communicate well, expressing ideas and opinions with confidence and maturity. In the weaker lessons, there are too many whole-class activities and a lack of pace. The use of information and learning technology is underdeveloped.
- Training and assessment of learners on employer-based provision are satisfactory. Assessments in the workplace are effective. However, training is focused on achieving the required competences rather than stimulating learners to explore their professional practice further or to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Feedback on written work for college-based courses is comprehensive, detailed and constructive. Learners are confident in knowing how to improve in specific assignment areas and have longer-term qualitative targets at programme and personal levels. Feedback on work on Train to Gain provision is accurate but does not generally indicate ways in which learners might extend their learning.

- The provision is good at meeting the needs and interest of learners, with a wide range of courses and opportunities to progress from entry level to higher level courses. Provision is offered on a wide geographical basis. Learners and users benefit from a wide range of partnerships
- Care, guidance and support are good. Pre-course information and guidance for learners are good. Tutorial, careers guidance and welfare support are extensive and are valued highly by learners. Additional learning support in lessons for individual learners is not fully effective. Insufficient literacy and numeracy support for learners in the workplace inhibits the development of their skills.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Interesting and vibrant displays produced by learners promote awareness. Good integration of equality and diversity awareness in the curriculum promotes the discussion of both personal and professional experience and practice. The promotion of personal and professional safeguarding practices is effectively embedded in the curriculum.
- Leadership and management are good. Course teams share a common ethos and strive for continuous improvement. The performance of each course and programme is regularly monitored and evaluated at each campus. However, data on performance are not effectively combined for analysis across all the campuses. This limits the sharing of good practice to tackle weaknesses at course level.
- The emphasis on quality improvement is effective. Frequent team meetings focus on detailed monitoring of learners' progress and result in swift interventions where necessary. Self-assessment is largely accurate, although the college's lesson observation system results in over-generous grades for some sessions.

What does Cornwall College need to do to improve further?

- Develop the use of information and learning technology to support a wider range of individualised activities and assessment strategies for learners, both in college-based lessons and in the workplace.
- Improve the use of data at course and programme level to identify common areas for improvement and share good practice.
- Ensure that additional learner support staff are used effectively in lessons to support learners' progress. Develop strategies to improve literacy and numeracy support for learners in the workplace.

Land-based industries

Grade 1

Context

38. The range of courses available includes programmes in animal care, countryside management, agriculture, equine studies, horticulture and floristry from foundation to advanced level. The majority of courses are delivered across two main sites located in the east and west of the county. The large majority of the 1,017 full-time students are aged 16 to 18. A further 1,210 learners, mainly adults, follow part-time courses. Work-based learners include 233 apprentices following courses in horticulture and veterinary nursing, and 80 learners on Train to Gain programmes.

Key findings

- The proportion of learners who complete their studies successfully is high and improving. Success rates are particularly high on intermediate and advanced level courses. Other than in horticulture, there is little difference between achievements across subject areas and college sites. Many learners start college with low levels of prior attainment and go on to achieve high grades.
- Outcomes for apprentices are outstanding. Across all subjects, success rates continue to improve and are significantly above the national average. The proportion of learners who complete their qualification within the timescale allocated to them is very high.
- Learners enjoy their courses and most achieve well. The strong community ethos encourages learners to take responsibility and develop their sense of citizenship. Health, well-being and sustainability are effectively promoted and incorporated into the curriculum. Learners feel safe. They value their training, their supportive tutors and the friendly and welcoming atmosphere.
- Learners benefit from an excellent range of additional industry-specific short courses. The skills developed significantly improve learners' employability prospects and progression opportunities. Success rates on most short courses are outstanding.
- Progression across all programmes is excellent, with most learners gaining a positive outcome. Around half progress to the next level of the course and around a third of students aged 16 to 18 progress to higher education.
- Teaching and learning are good. In most lessons, interesting activities develop learning through a wide variety of resources. In the best sessions technology is used effectively to enhance learning. In work-based learning links between on- and off-the-job training are very good. In a small minority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory, there is a lack of pace and the needs of individual learners are not always met.
- The range of provision is outstanding. An excellent range of practical and academic routes meets the needs both of learners and the county's rural economy. Work-based learners benefit significantly from the highly effective links with employers.

- The college has developed extensive partnerships across the region to meet the needs of its diverse learners. A successful Rural Business School has strengthened these relationships and cascades enthusiasm and best practice across all curriculum areas.
- Initial advice and guidance are very effective in recruiting learners from across the county and beyond, and ensuring they are on appropriate courses. Tutorial provision is very effective. However, the frequency of tutorials is not standardised across the provision. Group tutorials are good and cover a wide range of topics.
- Equality and diversity are promoted very well. The participation and performance of different groups are monitored effectively. Successful positive promotion and challenges to traditional gender imbalances are productive, including recruiting females to agriculture and males to equine studies. However, on occasions, language that promotes gender stereotypes is not challenged.
- Opportunities for learners to contribute their views through questionnaires, surveys and meetings with staff are frequent. Learners' views are taken seriously, for example modifications to the timetable occurred as a result of them.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers set high expectations for improving quality. Targets are mostly met and data are used effectively to monitor performance. Courses are well organised and resources are shared across the curriculum and college sites. Staff work together well as a team and demonstrate a clear commitment to improving students' experiences.
- Input from college council members is highly effective. They are linked to curriculum areas and industry-specific curriculum forums. Representatives from the local college council sit on the wider Cornwall College board to ensure a clear voice for land-based industries.
- The self-assessment process is comprehensive, inclusive and accurate. Quality improvement procedures are thorough and have been used effectively to bring about improvement.

What does Cornwall College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning further by ensuring that good practice in meeting individual learners' needs and providing suitable pace and challenge, is shared throughout the curriculum area.

Construction

Grade 2

Context

39. Construction courses are delivered at four college sites. At the time of inspection there were 535 full-time learners of whom 383 were adults, and 152 school pupils attending increased flexibility programmes. Around 250 learners were on Train to Gain programmes, and 340 apprentices on work-based programmes in carpentry and joinery, wood machining, brick masonry and plumbing at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Twenty-eight learners were following a BTEC National Certificate programme.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high for students aged 16 to 18; they are outstanding on full-time foundation level courses. Most work-based learners complete their courses successfully. Success rates for adult learners on college-based courses, which represent around a third of provision, are satisfactory. Success rates are low on the mechanical engineering services course leading to a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2.
- The standard of learners' work is good, particularly in practical activity. In wood occupations learners are able to work independently to solve problems, and set out and construct various components, such as staircases, that are accurate, free from defects and to industrial standards. In brick masonry, learners are able to construct high quality walling in the style prevalent in Cornwall.
- Attention to health and safety is rigorous. Teachers lead by example and learners are aware of both their own safety and that of others. Learners maintain safe working areas and use the appropriate personal protective equipment at all times without being prompted by teachers. In situations where there is a higher risk to personal safety, students are clear as to what procedures are to be followed.
- Teaching and learning are good. Links between theory and practical lessons are effective. Learning technologies are used effectively, for example to provide good visual images relating to industrial settings that reflect what is being taught. In group tutorials the students were able to use the interactive whiteboard in developing a themed debate on employability. In a minority of lessons checks on learners' understanding are insufficient.
- Assessment is rigorous and well developed for all learners. Feedback is very supportive and helps learners know what they need to do to improve. Learners' progress is monitored rigorously. However, the setting of short-term goals is insufficiently developed.
- Support and guidance for learners are good. Initial advice and guidance are effective in ensuring learners are on the right course. Learners are well supported by teachers and specialist additional learning support staff.

- A good range of provision is offered across the county to meet the needs and interests of learners and employers, and the curriculum is responsive to changes in demand. Links with employers are highly effective.
- Equality and diversity are insufficiently promoted. Although aspects of equality and diversity have been developed by teachers through lesson planning, this has not yet had a full impact in lessons. On-site progress reviews for work-based learners do not allow for contextualised themes around equality and diversity to be explored.
- Leadership and management are good. Communication between the four college campuses where construction is delivered is highly effective. There is a clear drive for further improvements. Self-assessment is rigorous and accurate, and in-year course reviews are effective in monitoring progress. Managers seek the views of learners to improve the provision. Resources are well managed and maintained.

What does Cornwall College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates in the mechanical engineering services at NVQ level 2 by ensuring that each learner's progress is carefully monitored and each learner is closely supported so that completion rates rise.
- Extend the work already undertaken to ensure greater promotion of contextualised equality and diversity in lessons.
- Improve target setting to ensure a greater emphasis on short-term goals so that learners know exactly what they need to do to improve.

Visual arts and media

Grade 2

Context

40. The college offers a wide range of full- and part-time courses in visual arts and media studies at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Courses, which include first and national diplomas in media and art and design and A-levels in media studies and art, are run principally at the St Austell and Camborne centres. At the time of inspection over 600 learners were enrolled, just under half of whom were aged 16 to 18.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good, although they are inconsistent between media studies and art and design. Success rates are very high in media studies. For example, the success rate in the national diploma in media studies was outstanding in 2009, and A-level results are above national averages. On art and design courses, success rates are satisfactory, although inspection evidence suggests that they are likely to improve.
- The standard of learners' work is good and often outstanding. On the national diploma in media studies, students produced a humorous and touching film of professional quality. In art and design, students make good progress in developing a range of practical skills, although there is scope for improving the development of their drawing skills.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. All lessons are carefully planned, and in most lessons teachers are confident, enthusiastic and often inspirational. Lessons have good pace to ensure that appropriate challenges are set. Information and learning technology is used effectively in many lessons. Teachers use their professional expertise to enhance learning and employ a good range of teaching methods.
- Learners are encouraged to become partners in their own assessment in art and design through the regular use of records of progress and agreed action plans. In media studies, constant formative assessment and plenary questioning are highly effective. Assessment materials and assignment briefs are of a high quality and motivate learners through their frequent reference to contemporary technologies.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides coherent routes of progression for students in both art and design and media. However, there is a lack of flexibility in the mix and match of vocational and academic qualifications. Progression rates are high.
- Enrichment opportunities are outstanding and extensively used by students. Arts and media students have recently traveled to Los Angeles and Zanzibar on exchange programmes. In addition, a four-day residential trip to London visiting professional television and recording studios is offered to media students. Final exhibitions at both campuses are well attended by members of the public.

- Support for students is very good. Students value the levels of support they receive from teachers who in turn applaud the easy referral system to specialist advice and guidance when required. Additional learning support is particularly effective in supporting students with health problems.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. From wall displays of folk tales from Asia, to first year assignments in which art students must design a logo for an Indian foods chain, cultural diversity is celebrated at every opportunity.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Course review and evaluation are thorough and take full notice of learners' views. Learners are able to point to specific examples of actions taken in response to their views. The rigorous system of internal verification is far reaching and not only assures the quality of assignment briefs and assessment but also the coherence of schemes of work.
- The self-assessment report is thorough and largely accurate. All staff are involved in evaluating the quality of provision both within their own courses and across the curriculum area. As managers recognise, self-assessment would benefit from sharper analysis of data in some respects.

What does Cornwall College need to do to improve further?

- On art and design courses, strengthen the focus on the development of learners' drawing skills to improve their fluency and improve further the quality of their work.
- Develop clearer strategies to share ideas and good practice between practitioners in media studies and in art and design.

Literacy and numeracy

Grade 2

Context

41. Currently 249 adult learners and 84 students aged 16 to 18 attend literacy and numeracy courses in six centres and community and workplace locations across the county. In addition 1,396 students aged 16 to 18 undertake communication and application of number key skills. Nearly 300 learners are taking functional skills in English and mathematics in addition to their vocational course, and a further 335 are working towards adult literacy and/or numeracy qualifications as part of their main programme of study.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high on most courses. Success rates for key skills application of number and communication at levels 1 and 2 are particularly high; they have risen over the past three years and are significantly above the national average.
- Learners develop good personal and social skills in tandem with their improvements in literacy and numeracy. They increase their confidence in working with others and contributing to group discussions and shared activities. They enjoy the challenge of learning new skills, develop new interests, and improve their employability through well-organised work experience in the workplace or community organisations.
- Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are well planned with a balance of practical activities and theoretical input. A variety of teaching methods helps maintain the interest of learners and fosters positive attitudes. Teachers use relevant, vocational activities to develop skills in a meaningful context.
- In the best lessons, learners work enthusiastically on a range of practical activities. Tutors use clear explanations to encourage learning and use very effective questioning techniques to check understanding and challenge learners to think through problems. Learners develop their confidence as they attempt new skills. The standard of learners' work in observed lessons is satisfactory.
- In less effective lessons, tutors use a narrow range of teaching strategies and rely too much on whole-group verbal explanations and dull and uninspiring paper-based activities. Checking of learning is insufficiently developed. Teachers give good verbal feedback but do not always give sufficient written, constructive feedback to inform learners on how to improve.
- Outcomes from diagnostic assessments are not always used to fully develop learners' individual plans nor used to set meaningful, relevant targets. In lessons learners often work on identical tasks despite clearly identified differing needs and skill gaps. They have few opportunities to monitor and evaluate their own progress.
- The college offers a well-designed, responsive range of literacy and numeracy provision from pre-entry to intermediate level. New foundation credit learning programmes have been effectively designed to address the needs of disaffected

young and vulnerable learners. Adult provision has been developed successfully in a range of community and workplace settings to attract those with few formal qualifications back into learning and refresh their study skills in preparation for progress to further study or employment.

- Partnership working is outstanding. The college responds promptly and flexibly to provide bespoke provision to meet the needs of employers, partners and learners very successfully. The college has gained national recognition for a range of innovative, collaborative projects.
- Tutorial and enrichment activities are well designed to incorporate the Every Child Matters themes into the curriculum and lunchtime activities. Residential trips enhance learners' social skills and confidence. Equality and diversity are well promoted to learners during induction and as issues arise in lessons.
- Teachers are dedicated and enthusiastic and provide good individual support for learners. However, in some cases they do not plan lessons in sufficient detail to fully use the learning support practitioners in supporting learners' progress in lessons.
- Leadership and management are good. The area has a clear strategic focus on widening participation and curriculum development to meet the changing needs of the local areas and national initiatives. Very effective use is made of a range of funding streams to secure and extend the provision internally as well as into community and workplace settings.
- The self-assessment process is comprehensive and the management team has a clear focus on performance to improve learners' outcomes. However, curriculum reviews are insufficiently evaluative. Quality improvement action plans are not sufficiently precise or measurable to promote improvement and support managers in sharing and implementing good practice in all provision.

What does Cornwall College need to do to improve further?

- Make better use of initial assessment to set clear specific measurable targets for the development of individuals' literacy and numeracy skills. Involve learners in recognising, recording and evaluating their own progress and setting new specific targets.
- Ensure that all lessons use a range of learning activities to challenge the varying levels of learner abilities.
- Plan in detail to optimise the use of learning support practitioners in lessons.
- Ensure action plans are more precise and measurable so that progress can be much more tightly monitored to support managers in sharing and implementing good practice.

Business, administration and law

Grade 3

Context

42. The college offers a range of vocational and academic courses in business, administration, secretarial studies, accountancy, law and management from intermediate level to higher education. At the time of inspection there were 1,999 learners, of whom around a quarter were aged 16 to 18. Around two thirds of learners are female.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Whilst success rates are high on some courses, they are low on others. For example, students do particularly well in AS- and A-level law, on accounting at advanced level, and on NVQ in customer service at intermediate level. However, results were poor in 2008/09 on AS-level business studies, and NVQ accounting at intermediate level.
- The standard of learners' work is improving and in lessons observed during the inspection it was good. On the national diploma in business, learners' skills are developed well through the focus on enterprise and employability in lessons. Learners make satisfactory progress in comparison with their prior attainment.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. The better lessons are well planned with clear measurable learning outcomes that are assessed during the lesson; teachers use a variety of learning activities to engage students' interest and use questioning effectively. The weaker lessons lack these qualities. Planning for the needs of individual students is not always sufficiently detailed.
- Teachers make insufficient use of information and learning technology in sessions; too often it is only used for presentations. The virtual learning environment is mainly used as a repository for paper-based learning materials rather than as an interactive tool for learning.
- Assessment of learners' work is satisfactory. Tutors return learners' work promptly, and the quality of written feedback is constructive and helps learners know what they need to do to improve.
- The range of provision is good and meets the needs and interests of learners, many of whom are in employment and are developing their professional qualifications. Full-time students often take useful additional qualifications. Many students take advantage of the wide range of enrichment activities that the college offers. They particularly enjoy contributing to enterprise week and celebration of success events.
- Good use is made of the wide range of partnerships to develop the business provision, especially to provide guest speakers and to develop students' employability and enterprise skills.
- Students receive satisfactory guidance and support. Students who have additional learning support succeed better than those who do not. Group tutorials are good. In one, the students were very honest in grading their own

life skills through a card activity and in another the students were planning how their course could be timetabled better next year. However, formal individual monitoring of progress is insufficiently frequent to benefit the students.

- Leadership and management are good. Managers have set a realistic agenda for improvement and are monitoring progress and performance targets effectively. Teachers are set appraisal targets based on improvements in success rates. Many improvements have been made as a result of learners' feedback.
- Self-assessment is comprehensive and accurate in identifying strengths and areas for improvement at course level, centre level and area level. Action plans reflect the areas for improvement well and are used to monitor progress by all levels of management. However, data are not analysed sufficiently rigorously to support judgements.
- The area demonstrates good capacity to improve. Teachers have been supported well to improve their effectiveness in class. Some of the positive developments from the quality improvement plan and the support for teaching and learning are recent; therefore it is too early to measure fully their impact.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Further work is needed to embed planning for the needs of individuals and for the promotion of equality and diversity in lessons.

What does Cornwall College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of learners' achievement by enabling the best practice to be shared on all courses in order to raise the success rates on underperforming courses.
- Ensure that lesson planning involves the setting of clear measurable learning outcomes, which are assessed during the lesson and reviewed by students.
- Develop the resources on the virtual learning environment and support teachers to use information and technology appropriately to enhance learning.
- Ensure more clarity in the use of data in course reviews and self-assessment to identify and secure improvement.

Residential accommodation

Grade 2

Context

43. Residential accommodation is provided at the Stoke Climsland campus in a combination of halls of residence, managed houses and lodgings. There are currently 59 students under the age of 18 accommodated in the halls of residence. These include 13 equine or agriculture learners who only reside when they have early or late duties. Other young learners are accommodated in a warden-managed house close by the campus, or in lodgings. In St Austell there are 10 overseas learners under 18 years of age accommodated with host families under full-board lodgings arrangements.

Key findings

- The arrangements made by the college to meet the welfare needs of learners and their accommodation arrangements are good. Arrangements for the personal support of learners and the quality of relations between staff and learners are outstanding.
- The arrangements for meeting resident learners' health and welfare needs are good. Students are well supported by staff. Arrangements with local health services are very good. Learners have a good choice of meals of appropriate quality from a range of outlets or are provided with meals by their host families. Catering arrangements meet dietary requirements and promote healthy options.
- The residential catering facility at Stoke Climsland needs major revision in order to comply with food safety requirements. The college plans to remedy this and it is anticipated work will be completed by the end of the summer.
- Arrangements for assuring learners' safety are good. Resident learners feel safe and secure. Staff and learners understand and implement the college's policies on countering bullying and harassment. The fire safety risk assessment is reviewed regularly and regular testing of fire detection and fire fighting equipment takes place. Residents are fully aware of the emergency evacuation procedures and participate in full fire drills and evacuations.
- The safeguarding of learners and vulnerable adults is managed effectively. The college's responses to allegations or suspicions of abuse meet the Local Safeguarding Children Board's guidance. College staff, contracted staff and adults resident on site are cleared through the CRB process. There are additional vetting procedures for regular contractors and visitors.
- Learners make a strong contribution to the development of the residential services. The college values and encourages their involvement and they have confidence action will be taken. Learners know how to make a complaint and feel that their comments would be considered fairly. Complaints are well processed by staff but there is not a clear chronology of steps taken or compilation of evidence in one place to act as an audit trail.

- Learners receive outstanding personal support and guidance. They can access trained and experienced staff, including wardens, student services staff, a chaplain and a counsellor. Learners are confident they will receive prompt, friendly and appropriate responses.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff make very effective arrangements to meet the needs of individual learners. Cultural themes are followed and significant alternative cultural calendar days are celebrated.
- Induction arrangements are excellent and include 'buddying' and learner ambassadors to assist learners to settle in quickly. Learners receive good advice and support when they leave college.
- Wardens are deployed well and in sufficient number to provide a good level of supervision for residents. Wardens are visible around the campus. The hostels have suitable overnight supervision. The use of closed circuit television systems enhances the level of supervision, without compromising learners' privacy.
- Residential accommodation is reserved for the sole use of residential learners. This varies in quality but is generally acceptable. Halls of residence have had upgrades to the showers and toilet facilities but their appearance is tired and worn. The standard of individual bedroom fittings varies; in older units fixtures and fittings are worn but functional.
- Wardens are well informed and supported in their residential duties. Staff development is good but documented training was not always dated. All staff now have an annual appraisal.
- The college's residential policies and procedures are comprehensive and clearly written. The college provides clear information regarding the provision of residential accommodation and learners' support services to prospective learners and their advisers. The learner handbook is well written and provides useful and relevant information. The college maintains a robust reporting system for the leadership team's overview of risk management strategies, disciplinary actions and accidents within the college.

What does Cornwall College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the complaints policy and the associated recording procedures comply with the national minimum standards.
- Improve the quality of residential accommodation to ensure that all learners have appropriate study space and quality furniture and fittings.
- Address the requirements of the food safety authority inspection in respect of the residential catering facility.

Information about the inspection

44. Five of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and ten additional inspectors, assisted by the college's deputy chief executive, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.
45. 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)
Cornwall 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	5,665		4,341	1,324	
Part-time learners	21,764	1,634	1,368	14,688	4,074
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	1
Capacity to improve	1				
Outcomes for learners	2	2	1	3	1
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2				
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	1				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	1
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	1
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	1				
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?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
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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