

Waltham Forest College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130456

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Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Waltham Forest College is a large general further education college within the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The borough is very diverse, with areas of relative prosperity and with other wards among the 10% most deprived in the country. Around 227,000 people live in Waltham Forest. The population is relatively young, with over a third of the population aged under 25, which is higher than the United Kingdom average. Some 44% of residents are from a minority ethnic background and the figure is higher for school pupils at 65%. Black Caribbean is the largest minority ethnic group in the borough, followed by Pakistani and Black African. In 2008/09, the proportion of Year 11 learners who achieved five or more GCSE grade C or above including English and mathematics was below national figures at 46%.
2. Education and training programmes are offered in all but one sector subject area and at all levels, from foundation level to higher education, with the highest proportion of learners at foundation level. Over 60% of learners take programmes in preparation for life and work. The college employs over 420 staff, plus temporary teachers and other staff supporting learners. In 2008/09, the college had a total budget of £21.5m.
3. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - DV8
 - Middlesex University.
4. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - Adult Training Network
 - Care First training
 - Chase Park 2000
 - Construction Training Partnership
 - DTK Training Centre
 - Ebenzer Community Learning
 - First Childcare Training
 - Learning Works
 - MTC Learning
 - St Mary Magdalene
 - Threshold Training.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	118 full-time learners 309 part-time learners
Further education (16 to18)	1,321 full-time learners 446 part-time learners
Foundation learning	675 full-time learners 229 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	1,145 full-time learners 4,455 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	549 learners

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 3
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

Subject Areas	Grade
Health, public services and care	2
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	3
Preparation for life and work	2
Business, administration and law	3

Overall effectiveness

5. The college's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The college has improved since the last inspection, but at too slow a rate. Overall success rates have increased steadily, but they are still below the national average for similar colleges for long courses, particularly for learners aged 16 to 18 on intermediate programmes. The attendance of learners in some subjects is poor and some teachers do not provide sufficient challenge to learners to ensure attendance is both regular and punctual.
6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in some subjects, such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and health, public services and care. The better lessons grab the interest of learners and help them to produce high standards of work. Practical sessions are particularly enjoyed by learners. Less successful lessons have a narrow range of activities that fail to meet the needs of all learners. College observations of teaching and learning

are over-generous in their judgements and teachers receive development plans that are often too general to help bring about the improvements required.

7. Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are improved by the effective support they receive in workshops, and this is reflected partly by the large increase in key skills qualifications gained last year. Additional support provided in workshops is good, but not always when provided during lessons. Too often teachers and support workers fail to sufficiently coordinate their work. A wide range of services are available to protect the welfare of learners. Tutorial provision is good, but individual progress targets agreed with learners are often too vague to be useful. The college has developed strong partnerships and the range of provision is good.
8. Senior managers and governors have a clear vision for the college. Procedures for safeguarding learners are good. The college has a welcoming and friendly atmosphere in which learners feel safe. Arrangements to gather the views of learners are good. Equality and diversity is promoted well and no specific group of learners underperforms compared to the rest. Self-assessment and quality assurance processes are satisfactory, but improvement targets are not sufficiently challenging or well-defined. The college offers satisfactory value for money.

Main findings

- Success rates for short courses are good, but success rates are below national averages for long courses, particularly for learners aged from 16 to 18. Key skills and Train to Gain achievement rates are now satisfactory. Attendance rates are low for some subjects and this was an issue highlighted at the previous inspection.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory and good in ESOL and health, public services and care. In the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of activities, with practical lessons and discussions particularly well managed. Less effective lessons focus insufficiently on meeting the needs of individual learners.
- The college's lesson observation system is insufficiently thorough and some lessons are graded too high. Plans for teachers to improve the quality of their lessons are not always comprehensive and lack specific targets.
- Literacy and numeracy workshops provide good support for learners, but the quality of in-class learning support is inconsistent, often because of insufficient liaison between teachers and support workers.
- Care, guidance and support are good. High quality, well-organised tutorials prepare learners well for progression to other courses, university or employment. However, too many learners have individual learning plans with targets that are vague and too general.
- The college has extensive partnerships with a wide range of employers, training providers and schools that are used well to develop the curriculum. It has good

links with specialist welfare, guidance and community organisations to support the diverse needs of learners.

- A broad range of courses meet the needs of learners very well. Enrichment activities are varied and many learners take part in them. Provision for employers is planned carefully and well delivered. High quality programmes are in place for school pupils aged 14 to 16.
- Governors and senior managers provide a clear strategic direction for the college and communicate this well to staff. Management information is used effectively. A continuous and thorough performance review process monitors the progress of courses, but improvement targets do not provide enough challenge.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good, with a strong focus given to health and safety procedures. The college has a friendly ethos and learners feel safe.
- The promotion of equality and diversity matters is good. The attainment of learners is analysed thoroughly by ethnicity and gender and there is no significant underperformance by any particular group. Arrangements to gather the views of learners and employers are good.
- Curriculum management is satisfactory. The self-assessment process involves all staff well, but is over-generous in its grading. The link between self-assessment judgements and quality improvement targets is not always clear, with vague targets that provide insufficient challenge.
- The college provides satisfactory value for money. Financial management is robust and the financial health of the college is good.
- The college has improved the quality of provision in preparation for life and work since the previous inspection and other areas have remained the same. The rate of improvement is slow, but the college has satisfactory capacity to make and sustain improvements.

What does Waltham Forest College need to do to improve further?

- Increase success rates, particularly for learners aged 16 to 18, by consistently agreeing specific and challenging learning targets for individual learners that are reviewed regularly.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring the procedures for observing teachers are moderated thoroughly and lead to accurate judgements, and that appropriate staff development is provided to improve all identified areas of weakness.
- Improve the literacy and numeracy skills of learners by identifying the role of learning support assistants and involving them more clearly in the planning and delivery of lessons.
- Improve the accuracy and effectiveness of the self-assessment process to identify and drive forward improvements at a faster rate and set more specific and challenging improvement targets which are monitored regularly.

- Improve learners' punctuality and attendance by making sure all staff provide sufficient challenge to learners to ensure good timekeeping and attendance.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the diverse nature of the college, where people from different cultures and religions feel comfortable and welcome
- the wide range of courses offered
- the help and support with progression, particularly to university
- teachers who help with coursework and challenge them to succeed
- the English and maths learning centre, where they get great support
- lessons where they improve their confidence, knowledge and skills
- the willingness of the college to arrange lessons to be held on certain days, rather than spreading them across the week
- the friendly, but firm, security staff who make the college safe.

What learners would like to see improved:

- provision of GCSE English and maths courses, so these subjects can be re-taken
- the way teachers deal with learners who are late or noisy in class
- the length of opening hours for facilities like the canteen, common room and library
- the number of computers and how fast they work
- knowledge that teachers have about the content of their courses, as some teachers make them do extra work that is not relevant.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the very professional staff who identify the needs of employers, learners and assessors very well
- the reliable assessors who are flexible in timing their visits and explain everything very clearly to learners
- the increased levels of confidence, understanding and skills that employees have in their jobs as a result of taking qualifications
- the improvement in their employees' customer service skills, which has helped achieve industry awards
- the good working relationship with college staff that is based on trust and respect.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the range of courses offered in subjects, like computer hardware and sales
- the marketing of courses so employers know what programmes are available.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

9. The college has addressed successfully some of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, but progress has been slow for others. Performance in key skills qualifications has increased significantly. The unsatisfactory provision in hospitality is now satisfactory. Overall success rates have improved steadily, but they decreased for long courses in 2008/09 and these are below national rates for learners aged 16 to 18, particularly at intermediate level. Opportunities for learners to participate in work-related activities are still limited in some subject areas. Learners' attendance and punctuality are still poor in some subjects.
10. Performance monitoring and reviews of subject areas are thorough. However, the overall approach to setting targets for improvement, at both a strategic and curriculum level, is not sufficiently challenging or focused to ensure rapid and sustained improvement. Self-assessment is comprehensive and involves all staff. It identifies the college's strengths, but is less effective at identifying all areas for improvement and grading is over-generous.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

11. Overall success rates for learners of all ages, on all courses, have increased significantly since the previous inspection to above the national figure, with high success rates for short courses. However, most of the college's provision comprises long courses and success rates for these programmes, for learners of all ages, decreased in 2008/09. Success rates are comparable to national averages for adult learners, but for those aged 16 to 18 they are below at all levels, particularly at intermediate level. Current in-year retention rates have improved and indicate an improvement for 2009/10.
12. The timely and overall success rates for Train to Gain learners are satisfactory. Timely success rates in the spectator safety programme are particularly high. The progress of work-based learners is satisfactory overall, though slow for learners on the rail engineering NVQ programme.
13. Staff analyse the attainment of learners thoroughly by age, gender, ethnicity and disability. There is no significant under-performance by learners from any specific minority ethnic group. However, learners declaring a disability are less successful than other learners. Success rates for key skills qualifications have improved from a very low base and these are now satisfactory. Outcomes for students aged 14-16 are good.
14. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Written work is generally well presented and shows good progress in standard during the year. Inspectors observed very effective presentations by learners. Learners with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in vocational skills such as catering.

15. The development of learners' personal skills is good. Learners significantly improve their knowledge and grow in self-confidence. They feel safe, demonstrate safe working practices and have a satisfactory understanding of health and safety issues. Citizenship courses give positive outcomes for learners wishing to live and work in this country.
16. Learners make a good positive contribution to society. For example, fund-raising events for charities have benefited a local children's hospice. Work-based learners improve their job skills, deal with customers better and improve their employment prospects. However, not all learners have sufficient opportunities to develop skills and confidence through completing a work-related curriculum and work placements. This area for improvement is acknowledged in the self-assessment report.
17. Attendance rates have not improved for the past three years and these remain low in some subject areas, particularly for learners aged 14 to 16. Learning is also disrupted by a lack of punctuality by too many learners. These were both identified as areas for development at the last inspection. Despite strong efforts by many staff to establish better timekeeping and attendance, some staff provide insufficient challenge to their learners to encourage better attendance.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

18. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although they were judged to be good by inspectors observing lessons in ESOL, numeracy, and health, public service and care courses. Teachers often employ a wide range of activities to interest learners and to meet their particular needs. Practical lessons and discussions are particularly well managed. Teachers pose questions effectively to extend the understanding of learners. Information and learning technology (ILT) is used well. Learners enjoy their time in college. Learning resources are satisfactory, and excellent for motor vehicle learners. Less effective lessons consist of general tasks that are not adapted according to the abilities of individual learners. Teachers do not deal adequately with the challenging behaviour of learners within their groups. At worst, lessons are dull and uninspiring.
19. The teaching and learning improvement team analyse and monitor the results of lesson observations comprehensively. They provide good informal support for teachers, but insufficient time is allocated to enable them to bring about significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.
20. Initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy skills is effective. Learners attending literacy and numeracy workshops receive good support, but where this support is provided by learning support assistants (LSAs) within lessons, the quality of support is variable. Teachers and LSAs do not always liaise closely enough to plan their work. Work-based learners and those learning away from

the main college campus do not always receive additional learning support where their learning takes place. Often they are required to travel to the main campus, and this inconvenience reduces the take-up of support sessions.

21. More teachers and learners are using technology for learning, target setting and assessment. Some teachers use technology very innovatively and learners value the swift on-line feedback they receive from teachers about how they can improve their work. Learners use this feedback to improve their grades. However, the setting of personal learning targets is poor in some subjects. Targets are vague and neither personal to the learner nor focused on how learners will achieve their longer-term goals. Also, reviews of learners' progress towards achieving their targets are not always carried out regularly. Work-based learners do not hold copies of their individual learning plans.
22. The range of programmes provided by the college is good. Well-planned progression routes provide opportunities for learners to proceed from foundation to advanced levels. The college plays an influential role in the borough's 14 to 19 strategic group, helping to plan the nature of provision for learners in this age group. The quality of programmes for school pupils attending the college is good. Provision for local employers is planned carefully and delivered well. Many learners participate enthusiastically in the extensive range of enrichment activities that are provided.
23. Partnership working is good. The college has strong links with local schools and community organisations, successfully encouraging many 14 to 16-year-olds at risk of dropping out of education to continue attending school and college. Close collaboration with franchise partners enables learners of literacy, numeracy and ESOL to learn in their local community. Learners are well supported by the college's collaboration with specialist welfare providers.
24. College staff have developed innovative projects with local services and organisations, including the police, the primary care trust and the armed services, through which learners gain valuable experience of work. Employers' needs are particularly well met through tailored courses and the flexible approach to learning and assessment taken by college staff. Employers value the way college staff have linked their own in-house training to accredited qualifications.
25. Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners feel cared for and supported. The college offers a wide range of support services, including an educational psychologist, specialist dyslexia support, welfare services, counselling and a mentoring support service for disaffected learners aged 14 to 16. Practical welfare support provided for young people and vulnerable students is good. Support for learners with additional needs, such as sensory and mobility impairments, is well developed. A variety of approaches are in place to ensure learners receive appropriate advice and career guidance about their next steps.

26. Tutorial provision is well organised and of good quality. Specialist tutors liaise effectively with curriculum staff and meet regularly to share learning materials and existing good practice. Topics covered in group tutorials are relevant and of interest to learners. Tutorial schemes of work cover and promote the 'Every Child Matters' themes very well. The quality of tutorial provision is monitored through observations and a recent audit of provision has led to an action plan to further improve them.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

27. The senior leadership and management team set a clear vision and strategic direction for the college and these are communicated well to curriculum management teams. Curriculum staff work closely and cooperatively with the senior team within a well-structured framework of regular meetings. Senior managers review the performance of subject areas thoroughly and regularly. However, many of the improvement targets and actions agreed at these meetings, particularly for raising learners' success rates, are insufficiently challenging, specific or time-bound.
28. Curriculum management is satisfactory. The range and quality of performance data are much improved since the last inspection and data are now available to curriculum staff and mostly used well by them to monitor progress of courses. However, the use of value-added measures to monitor the progress of learners and evaluate the success of courses is underdeveloped. Staff have good opportunities for professional development within a well-planned and structured programme. All staff are qualified teachers or working towards relevant qualifications. Leadership and management of provision for students aged 14-16 year are good.
29. The college's procedures for observing teaching and learning are insufficiently thorough and some lessons are graded too high. Moderation processes are underdeveloped and at times ineffective in rectifying inconsistencies in lesson observation reports. Teachers receive good informal support from managers and the teaching and learning improvement team, but development action plans are often superficial and fail to specify how the quality of their teaching could be improved.
30. The governing body provides satisfactory support and challenge to the college. Governors bring a broad range of commercial skills, community links and experience of vocational training to their work. The standard of clerking is good. The governing body meets monthly and receives very detailed information to monitor the college's progress and performance. Minutes of meetings, however, primarily note the content of papers or proposed strategy and rarely include specific action points.
31. Safeguarding procedures for young people and vulnerable adults are good. Safeguarding has a high priority in the college and procedures are managed and communicated very effectively to staff and learners. Policies and procedures are thorough and updated regularly in response to changes in

legislation. The governing body receives detailed safeguarding reports each term, including an outline of all safeguarding cases. All staff undergo an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check and all but a few have undertaken mandatory training for safeguarding. The college works closely with a wide range of partner agencies and makes referrals when appropriate. The large majority of learners consider the college to be safe. The college has a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, not least because of the good work by security staff, who have a firm but sympathetic approach to learners and the problems they may be experiencing. Appropriate health and safety assessments are made to safeguard learners in workshops and work placements.

32. The college has good arrangements to promote equality and diversity. Comprehensive policies and procedures meet statutory duties in respect of gender, race and disability. The diverse body of learners generates an ethos of cooperation and tolerance. Equality and diversity matters are promoted well at staff and learners' induction, but they are not reinforced sufficiently during apprentices' reviews. All college staff have undertaken relevant training recently. Complaints are managed well, evaluated routinely and reported to the governing body. Appropriate adjustments and supportive aids have been made to college sites to meet the needs of disabled learners.
33. Staff analyse learners' performance by ethnicity and gender very thoroughly and there is no significant underperformance by any specific group of learners. Effective strategies to improve learners' success rates are identified at curriculum level, although action planning, target setting and monitoring of progress are not always sufficiently rigorous. Currently, no overall coordinating management group has specific responsibility for equality and diversity issues, although the college has plans to set-up such a group. Despite strenuous efforts to rebalance the ethnic mix of staff, the majority are white, which does not reflect the ethnic profile of learners.
34. The college has a high profile in the local community and community cohesion is promoted actively. It identifies and works effectively with community groups, providing tailored projects to meet individual and community needs. This widens the participation of many groups of learners who traditionally do not engage in education and training. Equality and diversity are promoted through a broad range of events throughout the year. For example, engineering learners undertook a research project during Black History month to identify engineers of minority ethnic heritage. Cultural influences are incorporated less routinely in teaching and learning at other times.
35. The college has good arrangements to gather the views of learners, employers and parents. Their views are collated by on-line surveys, focus groups and telephone calls at key points throughout the year. Findings are analysed thoroughly and this has led to changes in practice. Learner representatives attend some course team meetings to give their views on a range of issues. The college recognises it needs to build more extensive partnerships with employers, although it has some very good relationships with key employers in and around the borough.

36. Self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. The self-assessment process involves curriculum staff well during the year in a well-planned cycle of meetings. Judgements from curriculum teams, however, are not always challenged or moderated sufficiently to ensure that managers have a realistic idea of strengths and areas for improvement. The self-assessment report is accurate in its grading of subject areas, but over-generous for many cross-college grades, with a stronger focus on strengths rather than areas for improvement. The link between the self-assessment report and quality improvement action planning is weak, with identified actions and targets insufficiently specific, measurable or time-bound.
37. The college provides satisfactory value for money. Financial management and controls are good. Resources for learning are satisfactory. Accommodation, though tired and shabby in places, is utilised efficiently.

Subject areas

Health, public services and care

Grade 2

Context

38. Early years, and health and social care programmes are provided from foundation to advanced levels. Access to higher education and pre-access courses offer progression to university in nursing, midwifery and social work. Public services programmes are available at intermediate and advanced levels. Overall, there are 242 full-time and 12 part-time learners aged 16 to 18, and 217 full-time and 106 part-time adult learners. The majority of learners are of Black or Black British heritage, followed by White British. Early years and health and social care courses attract predominantly female learners.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates for most courses are above the national averages. However, they are low for the CACHE diploma in childcare and education at intermediate level and for the diploma in pre-school practice. Timely success rates for Train to Gain learners in health and social care are satisfactory.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Written work is well presented, with evidence of reflection and good acquisition of knowledge, particularly in the written work of learners on access to higher education courses. Learners have a high standard of oral skills and give effective presentations.
- Learners acquire good vocational skills and improve their self-confidence and self-esteem. Early years and health and social care learners develop work-related skills to help them progress into employment. They learn how to bath babies, make up formula feeds and use wheel chairs correctly, and they are well able to put these skills into practice during work placements.
- Learners feel safe in college and know what actions to take if they experience bullying or harassment. A strong emphasis is placed on keeping themselves and others safe. Early years learners appreciate the importance of security and risk assessment in schools and nurseries. Public service learners extend their knowledge of environmental issues and sustainable development through their participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.
- Overall, teaching and learning are good, and some outstanding and innovative lessons were observed by inspectors. Teachers used quizzes to test learners' understanding of childcare theory and an excellent presentation was given by public services learners celebrating their Duke of Edinburgh award achievements. Exemplary management of behaviour was seen in all lessons. Questioning by teachers is probing and extends learners' understanding.
- The quality of assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress are inconsistent. Most tutors provide learners with prompt feedback containing evaluative comment indicating clearly what learners should do in order to

improve. However, this is not always the case. Many individual learning plans have specific targets for learners which are monitored regularly, but some targets are too general and provide insufficient guidance.

- The range of provision is good. Programmes offer suitable progression routes and some childcare learners have progressed from foundation to advanced level courses. Progression is good for access to higher education learners to study midwifery and nursing at university. The wide variety of enrichment activities includes visits to museums, exhibitions and a trip to Lockerbie by public service learners to study major incident planning.
- Partnership working is good. Health and social care learners worked with staff of the Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust to investigate access to health services for the public, and this led to a General Practitioners drop-in service being established. Public services learners work with the fire and police services and attend weekend training with the Army.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Learners with medical problems, including mental health issues and physical disabilities, are supported to remain on their courses. Although learners receive advice on progression, this guidance is insufficiently specific to enable learners to make informed choices about employment. The role of LSAs is not always identified in lesson planning or during lessons, and in-class support is not always effective.
- Confident, competent and enthusiastic managers provide good leadership and management. Staff contribute fully to the self-assessment process through team meetings and the views of learners and employers are considered fully. Staff are aware of key challenges and targets for improvement. There is good sharing of practice between staff both formally and informally. Continuous professional development is recorded systematically and enables staff to keep updated in their vocational areas.
- Staff use data effectively to monitor learners' retention and success rates. No groups of learners are underachieving. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. More male teachers are employed in subject areas traditionally dominated by females as a way of combating the stereotype and encouraging the recruitment of male learners. Safeguarding procedures are embedded strongly in courses.

What does Waltham Forest College need to do to improve further?

- Increase the success rates of all courses by setting targets for individual learners that are rigorous and clearly identify what learners must do to achieve their qualification.
- Further improve teaching and learning by ensuring that LSAs are more involved with teachers in planning lessons and that LSAs have a clearly defined role in the classroom.
- Develop the guidance and advice offered to learners through the tutorial system to enable them to be better informed about employment choices.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 3

Context

39. Engineering and manufacturing technology provision covers vehicle maintenance and repair, motorcycle maintenance, manufacturing, engineering technician and electro-technical programmes. Courses range from foundation to advanced levels, with the majority at intermediate level. Currently, there are 347 mainly full-time learners, 138 learners aged 14 to 16 attending school link provision and 50 learners on Train to Gain manufacturing programmes. Across all programmes, 6% of learners are female and 240 learners have minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates are high on the performing engineering operations foundation level and the vehicle body and paint operations advanced level courses. They are low, however, on the majority of programmes at intermediate level. Current in-year retention rates have improved significantly, except for the electro-technical technology course, which has performed poorly for the past three years. Success rates are high on programmes for learners aged 14 to 16.
- The development of learners' practical skills is good. Learners progressively develop specific trade skills towards industry standards. Train to Gain learners further develop their skills in the workplace and progress well.
- The promotion of health and safety is good. Risk assessments are thorough and the importance of safe working practices is reinforced to learners constantly. A wide range of personal protective equipment is available to ensure learners operate safely within the workshop environment.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Practical sessions are taught well, with learners discussing and agreeing their own targets for the session and making good progress towards these goals. Links are made well between theory and practical work. However, too many theory lessons employ a limited range of teaching and learning strategies to engage learners and insufficient attention is paid to meeting the needs of individual learners.
- Learners develop good vocational and transferable skills that prepare them for employment. Their progress is monitored well in all sessions. Opportunities for work experience and work-related visits are very limited.
- Assessment practice and internal verification are satisfactory. Tutors provide regular, supportive feedback on tasks across all programmes, indicating how learners could improve.
- Resources for mechanical, electrical and vehicle courses are satisfactory and those supporting motorcycle provision are outstanding.

- Learners benefit from sponsorship arrangements with national companies which provide tools and equipment. Vehicle engineering staff work closely with eight local schools, delivering vocationally relevant training at foundation and intermediate levels. These programmes contribute towards the borough's strategy to engage with learners at risk of educational exclusion.
- Tutors have a good understanding of learners' pastoral needs. Referral of learners to external agencies, when required, is effective. Tutorials, especially one-to-one tutorials, are good. Target setting, the monitoring of learners' progress and action planning all lead to improved outcomes.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication among the motor vehicle course team is good, but there is insufficient sharing of the existing good practice between course teams. Key performance indicators for courses are not monitored and acted upon quickly enough by curriculum managers and course teams.
- Improvements in the quality of provision have been slow since the previous inspection. Recent management changes to fill a vacant post have resulted in a clearer focus to raise and improve success rates. Learner representatives are in place for each course and staff respond positively to issues they raise. Learners are very positive about the college, its staff and the support they receive.

What does Waltham Forest College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates on underperforming programmes and drive forward improvements at a faster rate to raise performance above the current satisfactory level, by ensuring vacant management posts are filled promptly and key performance indicators and improvement targets are monitored and acted upon regularly.
- Develop the range of teaching strategies, especially in theory lessons, by extending the sharing of good practice among staff.
- Increase the employability skills of learners and broaden their experience of industry by extending the range of work-related visits and increasing opportunities for work experience placements.

Preparation for life and work

Grade 2

Context

40. Provision in key skills, life skills, ESOL and literacy and numeracy courses has enrolled 5,192 learners in the current academic year, some 172 fewer than in 2008/09. Of these, 193 learners are aged 14 to 16, 1,262 learners are aged 16 to 18 and 3,737 are adult learners. Female learners account for 60% of the learners. Courses are provided at foundation and intermediate levels on the main college site, a subsidiary site and at ten community venues.

Key findings

- Learners' outcomes are good. Success rates in literacy and numeracy at levels 1 and 2 are high at 93%, with 1,387 qualifications gained. Pass rates at entry level in the certificate in ESOL skills for life and in speaking and listening units are high. Success rates for the award for progression at entry level and level 2 are high for the 126 full-time learners aged 16 to 18.
- Teaching and learning focus strongly on helping learners achieve. This has led to a significant improvement in success rates in key skills in communications and the application of number, which have improved from a very low base to around national averages. Success rates, however, are falling for the certificate for progression at level 1 and the diploma for progression at level 2.
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have high attendance rates, but attendance rates are low for learners on many other courses, particularly for learners aged 14 to 16. In some cases, the expectation of staff regarding attendance is too lenient to ensure high rates are sustained.
- Learners make good progress and enjoy learning. The overall standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Good progress is made in developing listening and speaking skills by learners on ESOL courses. Enrichment activities and a wide range of vocational options improve significantly the confidence and skills of full-time learners aged 14 to 19. Learners progress well from foundation level courses to those at intermediate levels.
- The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in ESOL and numeracy lessons. Teachers plan carefully, using a range of active learning strategies, to engage the whole class and ensure the needs of individual learners are met. In weaker lessons across all areas, the conclusion of lessons can be rushed, with insufficient time given to recapping what has been learnt. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often make good progress in practical skills, but opportunities are missed in vocational lessons to extend their literacy and numeracy skills.
- LSAs provide valuable support for many learners, enabling additional informal assessment and tracking of learner progress to take place, but in some cases they are not well directed by the teacher and their impact is less effective.

- Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Initial assessment is used effectively to ensure that learners are placed on the right courses, but the information gained from this assessment is not used routinely to inform teaching.
- The range of provision is good. Full-time programmes for learners aged 14 to 19, including ESOL and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have a broad vocational appeal and learners can choose to base their studies in a number of vocational areas. However, not all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have access to real-work experience opportunities to prepare them properly for life and work. The range of enrichment activities available to learners is good.
- The college works very effectively with a number of partners. There are well-developed links with local schools and partners to provide a broad range of valuable learning experiences. The use of franchise partners to widen the scope of provision has enabled ESOL learners, many of whom are new to learning, to embark successfully on an educational pathway.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Tutors provide clear and helpful guidance to learners. They are sensitive to the needs of vulnerable learners and they generate a supportive classroom environment. Work-based learners, however, do not receive enough information about the support available to them in the college.
- Curriculum management is satisfactory overall, with particularly good management in ESOL. Quality assurance procedures are very effective for franchised provision. Improvements in the standard of teaching in ESOL were made through the effective use of ILT in lessons and a review of agency staffing. Robust systems are not always in place to ensure that learners receive appropriate tuition should staff absence occur.
- Communication within course teams is good, but there are few opportunities to share good practice between teams. A strategic approach to the whole preparation for life and work curriculum area is underdeveloped.
- Good attention is paid to equality and diversity across the curriculum area. Staff and learners are confident about safeguarding issues and these are managed appropriately. The self-assessment process is satisfactory.

What does Waltham Forest College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure sound strategic management of the whole area to enable good practice in teaching, learning and quality assurance procedures to be developed across all course teams.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in all areas, particularly by ensuring that LSAs are involved fully in the planning and delivery of lessons.
- Continue to develop high quality vocational options for all learners and, in particular, ensure that all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have access to work experience opportunities to prepare them properly for life and work.

- Ensure learners aged 14 to 16 receive full educational benefit through rigorous staff action to increase rates of attendance.

Business, administration and law

Grade 3

Context

41. Vocational courses are available from foundation to advanced levels in business and accountancy, NVQs in business administration and customer service, and access to higher education in business and law. Of the 457 students, 193 are aged 16 to 18 and 264 are adults. Just over half the learners are female and almost one third are white, with the rest from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates are high on access to higher education in business and law courses, where the quality of learners' work is good. Train to Gain learners are working to a good standard. The standard of work on full-time courses is satisfactory.
- Success rates are low on the national certificate for business course and achievement is low on NVQ in accounting at intermediate level. Progress is poor generally for learners on full-time intermediate level courses this year where they have fallen behind with their work.
- Progressions rates within further education and onto higher education are good. For example, 80% of intermediate level learners progress to advanced courses and 88% of access to higher education learners gained a place at university in 2008/09.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use a variety of learning activities to engage learners' interest and use questioning effectively. Lessons have clear, measurable learning outcomes which are assessed during the lesson. Teachers take into account the needs of individual learners well. They use ILT satisfactorily to support learning, with many resources available on the college's virtual learning environment (VLE).
- Assessment of learners' work is satisfactory. All learners upload their assignments onto the VLE where it is marked promptly. Teachers provide constructive feedback for assignments, but do not focus sufficiently on improving learners' literacy.
- The promotion of literacy and numeracy for work-based learners is insufficient. However, off-the-job training for Train to Gain learners completing the technical certificate is organised well.
- The range of provision satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of learners. A wide range of interesting enrichment activities is organised. Learners have the opportunity to develop an understanding of work and careers from employers who are invited to the college as guest speakers.
- Learners receive satisfactory care, guidance and support. The quality of weekly group tutorials is good. However, termly tutorials for individual learners do not

support the learners adequately, as individual target setting is weak and does not fully promote or monitor progress. Individual learning plans are poor for work-based learners, with insufficient formal reviews of progress.

- Leadership and management are satisfactory, although the rate of improvement since the last inspection has been slow. Self-assessment is mainly accurate, but staff use and analyse data insufficiently. Course reviews are detailed and evaluative and their action plans are monitored by course teams. However, the overall action plan lacks sufficient detail to make the necessary improvements and action taken is not monitored closely enough.
- All staff are qualified teachers and continuous professional development is satisfactory. Judgements on the quality of teaching and learning arising from observing lessons are overly generous. Strengths and areas for development identified by observers are too general and the development needs of teachers are not highlighted sufficiently.
- Arrangements for equality and diversity are satisfactory. The needs of individual learners are identified and met well, but there is insufficient promotion of equality and diversity matters in lessons. The promotion of safeguarding procedures is satisfactory.

What does Waltham Forest College need to do to improve further?

- Raise and improve the consistency of learners' achievement by setting specific improvement targets for individual learners.
- Speed up the rate of improvement of the quality of provision by using data and information more effectively in self-assessment and formulating quality improvement action plans that are monitored frequently.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by improving the accuracy of lesson observation grades and providing relevant staff development for identified areas of weakness.
- Improve the standard of learners' work by strengthening the focus on spelling and grammar in assignments and reports.

Information about the inspection

42. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the college's vice principal, curriculum, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from 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.
43. 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)
Waltham Forest 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	2,695	109	1,300	1,245	41
Part-time learners	6,178	285	402	4,959	532
Overall effectiveness	3	2	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3				
Outcomes for learners	3	2	3	3	3
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?	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?	2				
Quality of provision	3	2	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	3	2	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?	3				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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