

Leicester College

General Further Education College

Inspection dates

5–8 December 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good	Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Senior leaders and managers have effectively tackled the most significant areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- The large majority of students make good progress because their teachers plan challenging and stimulating learning that enables them to acquire a good level of subject knowledge, and apply relevant theory well.
- Apprentices develop good work-related skills, which employers value.
- The introduction of work experience on study programmes has been very effective; most students benefit from access to high-quality work placements, internships and well-considered enrichment activities.
- Support for students is good, particularly for those with high needs and those who are vulnerable.
- Students and apprentices learn well, gain good independent thinking and learning skills and contribute well to group discussions.
- Students and apprentices receive good impartial careers advice and guidance.
- Governors, senior leaders and managers have forged very strong partnerships with a range of key stakeholders across the city; they skilfully use these links to ensure that the curriculum meets local economic priorities.
- Students' attendance across the college still requires improvement, and on a small minority of courses, punctuality is not yet consistently good.
- The quality of short-term target setting for students and the quality of feedback provided by a small minority of teachers on marked work is not to a consistently high standard.
- Leaders and managers do not monitor closely enough the destination of students when they leave the college.
- Too few apprentices complete their qualifications within the agreed timescales.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The college has three main sites and operates from a number of community venues across the city of Leicester. It offers a wide range of educational and vocational training from entry level and above for school leavers, adults and apprentices, and specialist provision for students with high needs.
- The achievement of GCSEs in English and mathematics at grade 4 or above for young people leaving schools across the city is below both regional and national averages. The proportion of local residents qualified at NVQ level 1 and above is lower than that for the East Midlands and nationally. Leicester is a large, ethnically diverse city, where less than half of its residents describe themselves as White British and just over a third as Asian British. Just under one fifth of households have no family member who speaks English as their main language, compared with less than one twentieth nationally.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' attendance at lessons so that it is good across all areas of the college, through the rigorous and consistent implementation of the college's existing strategies; ensure that teachers routinely challenge all students who are not on time for their classes.
- Teachers should ensure that all students routinely benefit from sharply focused and detailed feedback that enables them to understand clearly how to improve their work and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Ensure that leaders and managers have access to timely, robust and accurate management information in order to:
 - improve their understanding of the extent to which all apprentices are making secure progress and are on track to achieve within the planned timescale; also, implement swift and effective action for those apprentices who are falling behind in their studies
 - improve the number of apprentices who progress on to a higher level of learning after they complete their programme
 - identify to a greater degree of precision the destinations of students who leave the college.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The Principal, governors and senior managers have worked tirelessly to establish an organisation-wide culture of high expectations. Leaders' unwavering determination to improve the quality of learning for students has brought about significant progress in almost all the areas identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection. As a result of the sharply focused actions taken by leaders and managers to improve the quality of provision, students now routinely benefit from good teaching, learning and assessment.
- Senior leaders and governors have set a clear strategic direction to provide opportunities for local people to realise their talents and ambitions. They have a strong commitment to, and are ambitious for, their students. With the support of key strategic partners, leaders have invested in high-quality teaching and learning resources that benefit students and apprentices. Leaders and managers have prioritised well and invested significantly in specialist resources at the college and in the community. Students and apprentices benefit from industry-standard resources in hospitality and catering, engineering and construction.
- Leaders have developed productive links with the local elected mayor, regional local enterprise partnerships, schools and employers, to ensure that clear routes to apprenticeships and employment are in place. Managers have developed suitable provision to meet the growing number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds to learn and develop essential skills for employment. For example, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses link closely to opportunities leading to employment in health, retail and professional services.
- Following the last inspection, leaders commissioned a number of external reviews that helped them identify key areas for intervention, and took swift and effective action at all levels of the college to bring about rapid improvement. Teachers now routinely benefit from targeted support provided during weekly team meetings and dedicated professional development to improve their confidence in the delivery of high-quality lessons, and in how to embed English and mathematics skilfully into their classroom practice. As a result, students' performance in English and mathematics has rapidly improved and is now good.
- Leaders, managers and governors use college performance information well to review the comprehensive targets set across most aspects of the provision. They have prioritised the update of college management systems to provide better access to reliable and timely information; managers can now monitor progress routinely and take rapid action to remedy underperformance. However, leaders' understanding of students' destinations when they leave the college is underdeveloped.
- Managers have not developed sufficiently the monitoring and reporting of apprenticeship performance to inform senior leaders and governors. Newly introduced apprentice tracking systems are not yet routinely well used by staff or sufficiently reliable. Additionally, leaders have not yet set challenging key performance targets covering all aspects of the apprenticeship provision. For example, no target has been set regarding the proportion of apprentices who should complete within the planned time, or the number of apprentices who are expected to progress on to the next level of learning.

- As a result of comprehensive quality assurance and a broadly accurate self-assessment process, leaders, managers and governors have a good understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. They have accurately identified appropriate improvement actions to remedy areas of underperformance across most parts of the college, and have clear targets to monitor improvement at monthly quality assurance meetings. However, in a few cases, leaders' actions lack focus and do not bring about the desired improvement.
- Leaders and governors are actively involved in the student liaison committee. They monitor carefully students' views and use their feedback to improve continually the college environment and the quality of provision.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now good. Leaders and managers have introduced effective improvement strategies, including a new teaching, learning and assessment observation process and a teachers' 'scorecard' which summarises individual teachers' performance against indicators relating to outcomes for students. They also gather information gained from 'learning walks', the scrutiny of students' marked work, students' progress and their attendance rates to identify areas for improvement and to provide strategies to improve teachers' practice further.
- Managers and observers make appropriate judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, most teachers receive rapid support and the majority improve their practice quickly. In a very small minority of cases, observers focus too heavily on teachers' techniques, rather than on how well teaching and learning activities enable students to make steady progress during planned learning activities. Teachers who have received the substantial and individualised support, but are not able to improve their teaching practice quickly enough, swiftly leave the organisation.

The governance of the provider

- Governors are knowledgeable and highly experienced, and use their professional skills well in the best interests of the college and students. They contribute fully to developing the college's strategic priorities and ensure that the college is able to play a full role at the heart of its community.
- Governors use the detailed and mostly accurate information they receive to hold leaders and managers to account for underperforming provision. They have an accurate assessment of the key areas of concern and monitor these carefully. Where the pace of change is not quick enough, governors have intervened and robustly challenged senior leaders to take assertive action.
- Governors develop a good understanding of how well students in each curriculum area perform as a result of their active involvement in a range of college activities such as curriculum quality assurance meetings and visiting lessons. They take great interest in students' progress and challenge leaders to remedy identified areas for improvement quickly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and comprehensive.

- Managers responsible for overseeing the college's statutory duty for safeguarding, including safer recruitment, keep detailed records and monitor these thoroughly. All staff, including governors, have completed safeguarding training.
- As a result of increased referrals of students in relation to mental health and self-harm, leaders and managers have developed strong relations with local health and social care providers to ensure that students receive the support they need. Consequently, most of these students remain at college, achieve and progress to their intended next steps.
- Managers have embedded a wide range of training for staff and students, raising their awareness of cyber bullying, child sexual exploitation, and the threat posed by extremist activity. Students benefit from a well-designed tutorial programme and demonstrate a good understanding of how to stay safe and protect themselves from the threat of radicalisation and extremism, and when using online social media sites.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The large majority of students on study programmes and adult learning courses make good progress because their teachers set high expectations and challenge them to produce work of a high standard. Apprentices acquire highly relevant vocational skills, which employers value greatly. Most students and apprentices enjoy their lessons and are actively engaged in developing the skills that enable them to succeed.
- In the large majority of subjects, enthusiastic teachers use their good vocational knowledge and industrial experience very well to teach inspiring and interesting lessons with highly relevant content. Students acquire suitable knowledge and develop good practical skills. For example, in a level 3 travel and tourism lesson, students confidently used a specialist tour operator website to research travel and accommodation options based on a client briefing. The teacher skilfully provided more able students with a more demanding task that involved them researching and taking into account the needs of customers who had limited mobility. Students worked purposefully to make good use of their time in the lesson, enabling them to practise and acquire confidently the specialist skills and knowledge required for the retail travel industry.
- Teachers and assessors use a good variety of assessment methods to evaluate accurately the progress their students and apprentices are making. They use direct questions well to check students' knowledge and understanding, with probing follow-up questions to ensure that learning is at a demanding pace and to inform the planning of further work. Teachers' assessment and marking of students' work in the classroom is thorough and accurate.
- The quality of short-term targets set for students in a small minority of lessons, and of the targets set for apprentices during workplace reviews, is too cursory and therefore they receive insufficient challenge to ensure consistently good progress.
- Support for students is good. Most teachers accurately identify students' and apprentices' initial starting points and any support or additional learning needs at the start of their programmes. They then plan appropriately challenging learning activities that result in most students enjoying their lessons and developing the skills required to be successful in their learning. Students and apprentices in need of additional support benefit from effective one-to-one coaching from specialist staff who support them in lessons, so that

they progress at least as well as expected, and develop the skills to achieve their personal goals. In a few cases, teachers do not consistently use the information collected at initial assessment to set appropriately challenging and personalised learning targets for more able students; as a result, these students do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- Staff identify and meet the needs of students with complex additional learning support needs thoroughly and effectively. Specialist staff liaise closely with parents, carers, schools and other external agencies to ensure that students who need it receive highly individualised support from the start. Staff closely monitor the progress of these students and ensure that they confidently develop their independence and communication skills, and are prepared well for transition into adult life and the next stage of their learning.
- The majority of teachers successfully use a range of stimulating learning resources and activities such as presentations, handouts and videos which help engage students in their learning and bring topics to life. Teachers make effective use of the college's internet-based virtual learning environment (VLE) to develop students' knowledge, and extend their learning and understanding both inside and outside the classroom. Students confidently use the college's VLE to improve their learning, catch up on any missed work, revise for assessments and submit assignments.
- Teachers on adult learning programmes skilfully plan lessons to meet the diverse needs of students, many of whom do not speak English as their first language or have been away from learning for many years. Students on foundation English and mathematics courses and programmes for the unemployed enjoy their learning, because teachers understand well their anxieties and problems which inhibit learning. Teachers use their good knowledge and experience to support adult students well. As a result, they develop relevant presentation, communication and writing skills in preparation for employment or progression to the next level of learning.
- Students use the college's well-equipped workshop and teaching areas effectively to develop their practical and technical skills confidently. For example, in engineering, motor vehicle and construction trades, students confidently use an extensive range of specialist industry-standard resources that enable them to acquire good technical skills and produce work to exacting standards. In construction, teachers and instructors use short demonstrations very effectively to show bricklaying students how to use a trowel correctly when applying and removing excess mortar from a row of bricks, so as to create an attractive appearance when building a wall. Students confidently replicate these skills, mirroring workplace practices.
- In hairdressing, beauty therapy, hospitality and catering, students benefit from access to high-quality commercial learning environments. Students routinely rise to the challenge of producing work that is of a good commercial standard. For example, they confidently colour clients' hair, provide customers with therapies such as body massage and aromatherapy, and cook and serve freshly prepared food.
- Since the previous inspection, the teaching of English and mathematics has improved and is now good, particularly at GCSE level. As a result, a large number of students, both 16- to 19-year-olds and adults, now successfully pass their courses with high grades. Similarly, the teaching of functional skills in English and mathematics is improving, as shown by recent results in examinations, but is not yet consistently good at all levels.

- In most vocational classes, teachers help students to develop and improve their use of English and mathematics through the use of high-quality activities that build on students' previous knowledge in these essential skills. Teachers on discrete adult learning courses place a strong emphasis on the importance of these skills in everyday relevant contexts. Adult students become more confident in their use of English and mathematics and understand how these skills support their long-term career ambitions.
- Across the college, many students now use specialist glossaries well to raise and further develop their knowledge and use of subject-specific language. Most teachers now routinely check students' work for spelling and grammatical errors and promote the importance of high standards in their hand-written work. In vocational subjects such as carpentry and joinery, catering, computing and health and social care, students develop good numeracy skills because teachers integrate mathematical concepts well into their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Students and apprentices enjoy college life. They enthusiastically participate in learning, respond well to their teachers' high expectations throughout their programmes, and as a result become more self-confident. They follow teachers' instructions closely in lessons and support one another in learning sessions to understand and develop new concepts and skills. Their good behaviour in lessons enables them to make rapid progress in improving their vocational, technical and academic skills, and they routinely complete learning tasks to a high standard. Students' behaviour around the college sites and in social spaces is good. They show respect for each other's views and opinions, as well as their environment, which is clean and well kept.
- Students benefit from a good range of work-related activities that broaden their learning across the college and in subject areas. For example, they develop good personal and social skills by taking part in competitions, external projects and enterprise challenges which help them to develop valuable skills such as time management and team working. Students, including those with high needs, routinely take part in a wide range of social, sporting, volunteering and charity events which help them to gain a greater understanding of their local communities. Enrichment activities and tutorials develop students' understanding of healthy lifestyles and staying safe, for example through sessions on drug awareness, online safety and safe relationships.
- The attendance of 16- to 19-year-olds and adult students has improved since the last inspection but is still below the college target. Most students and apprentices attend college regularly and are on time for lessons. Teachers monitor attendance well and challenge lateness effectively. However, a very small minority of students are late for lessons, which disrupts the learning of those who make every effort to arrive on time. Students' attendance rates at English and mathematics lessons have sharply improved and are now similar to that recorded for vocational lessons.
- The development of students' skills in English and mathematics is good. Teachers provide helpful, relevant contexts that illustrate the value of these essential skills. Students develop their skills in English well, because teachers promote the use of good technical language and the importance of correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written course work.

- Learning for employment is strong. Since the last inspection, the quantity of work experience placements for students on the 16 to 19 study programmes has increased significantly and is now good. Most students improve their employability skills such as timekeeping, teamwork and communication through participation in good-quality work placements with a wide range of local employers. Students with high levels of need benefit from well-considered and effectively organised work placements and internships, and from participating in social enterprise projects such as selling produce at local craft fairs and farmers' markets.
- Adult students seeking work, many of whom have little self-confidence, quickly develop good skills for employment through well-planned preparation for work activities such as how to send out and receive emails; write a curriculum vitae (CV) setting out their skills, experience and qualifications; and conduct online searches for jobs in the locality. As a result, a small minority of adult students successfully progress into employment.
- In the workplace, apprentices contribute very well to their employers' businesses. They understand well what they need to do to meet the standards required at work and quickly become valued members of staff. Assessors effectively promote apprentices' understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace.
- Students and apprentices benefit from good impartial advice both before and throughout their time at the college. Regular visits to local businesses and presentations from industry-related external speakers help to inspire students, and ensure that they have a good understanding of expectations of work in their chosen careers. As they near the end of their courses, students and apprentices benefit from good careers advice provided by well-qualified guidance staff about how to progress into appropriate employment or to the next level of learning.
- Students learn in an atmosphere of mutual respect and have a good awareness of the diverse society and the communities in which they study, live and work. All staff ensure that students and apprentices extend their understanding of inclusion, tolerance and respect through well-designed learning activities and materials. They quickly develop a good level of understanding of the values that underpin British society and how these principles apply to them individually and to others.
- Students and apprentices feel safe. They have good levels of awareness of how to raise concerns if they experience harassment or bullying, including when online, or have concerns about the safety and welfare of others. Students discuss the 'Prevent' duty following presentations in tutorials and lessons; tutors revisit topics throughout the year to refresh and consolidate students' knowledge and awareness. In the workplace, apprentices develop a good understanding of how to stay safe at work. They apply well the essential elements of health and safety in the workplace, such as wearing appropriate protective clothing and using hand and power tools confidently and safely.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the proportion of students who complete their courses and successfully gain their qualifications has improved. In most areas of the college, the vast majority of students now make the expected progress, relative to their standards and qualifications on entry.

- On classroom-based courses, students aged 16 to 19, who make up around one third of students at the college, now perform in line with their peers nationally. The proportion of adult students who successfully complete their qualifications continues to improve and is now around the rate for similar providers.
- At level 2, achievement rates for students aged 16 to 19 and adults are high. More students aged 16 to 19 on level 3 study programmes are achieving the grades expected of them based on their prior attainment. Adult students on access to higher education courses achieve well and most progress to their chosen universities.
- Overall apprenticeship achievement rates have increased slightly over three years, and are above the rate for similar providers; however, significant variations exist in achievement when analysed by age, level and subject. In 2016/17, overall achievement was below the national rate for apprentices aged 16 to 18, particularly on intermediate apprenticeships, and in construction, engineering and retail.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of apprentices who completed their training within the expected timescale has declined to around the national rate. In-year college data indicates that the large majority of current apprentices are making good progress; an increasing number are now on track to complete within the planned time. The very few apprentices on higher-level apprenticeship courses achieve particularly well; almost all complete their apprenticeship frameworks and do so within agreed timescales.
- Most apprentices confidently develop new skills which support their employers' businesses, and current apprentices are making assured progress. Employers are very positive about the contribution that apprentices make to the success of their businesses.
- The proportion of students aged 16 to 19 and also adults who achieve high grades in both GCSE English and mathematics is much improved, and well above that reported nationally. The achievement of functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics is good for students on 16 to 19 study programmes. The performance of adult students in these subjects is still inconsistent over time; they achieve at below the national rate for English at level 2, and for mathematics at levels 1 and 2.
- No significant differences exist between the performance of any group of students and their peers in relation to ethnicity or gender. Students aged 16 to 19 in receipt of learning support achieve less well than other students, and this gap is increasing over time. Similarly, the very small minority of apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve less well than other apprentices or their peer group nationally.
- The small number of students from vulnerable groups, including those who have high needs and the few who are children looked after, make good progress and achieve against the challenging targets set in their education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- Too many of the destinations for students on classroom-based courses are unknown. While most apprentices successfully move into sustained employment when they complete their training, only a very small minority progress to the next level of learning.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The college offers study programmes for approximately 3,400 students across a wide range of vocational programmes including business and computing, childcare, health and social care, construction, creative and performing arts, engineering and sports and service enterprises.
- Since the last inspection, managers have successfully implemented effective strategies to improve teaching and learning across all study programmes, including the integration of English and mathematics learning into all subjects. Students now benefit from more frequent and closer monitoring of their progress and a much enhanced work experience offer. As a result, the vast majority of students learn well and successfully complete their academic and vocational qualifications.
- Students are confident, have high aspirations and enjoy their learning. Staff promote high expectations to students and want them to do well and achieve; their attitude motivates students well. Students enjoy their programmes and are keen to complete their qualifications. They greatly increase their self-esteem and confidence and they have strong aspirations for their future careers. The large majority of students attend well and their retention rates are improving. However, a small minority of students need to improve their punctuality to lessons.
- Students develop a wide range of employability skills which prepare them well for the workplace. They attend dedicated training sessions and receive ongoing coaching by highly experienced staff, developing many of the skills required to be successful at work. Students present themselves professionally, complete job applications and CVs, and practise and develop effective interview techniques. Students are more confident and appropriately prepared for external work placements and the demands they will face in a work setting.
- Students confidently develop a wide range of practical and employability skills appropriate for their intended careers. Many work on realistic or 'live' projects as part of their programmes, and gain a thorough understanding of the demands of working in particular industries.
- Students benefit from working in well-resourced classrooms and training workshops are closely aligned with the standards of their chosen career. For example, on catering programmes, students competently work in the college's commercial kitchen preparing a wide range of tasty meals for external and internal visitors to the college's award-winning restaurants. In construction, students hone their practical skills renovating a local community building, while students on beauty courses provide a range of treatments to external clients in the college's professionally equipped commercial salon.
- In most theory sessions, students make steady progress in their learning because teachers plan learning well, including activities that motivate and retain students' interest in learning. Teachers skilfully link vocational theory to practice and make good use of everyday contexts that students are familiar with, such as music, football and shopping. This helps make the learning more relevant and fun.

- Tutors assess students' progress frequently and provide sharply focused feedback to help them understand the progress they are making and the areas they need to improve further. In the classroom, teachers check students' learning frequently by using directed questions to check their knowledge and understanding before moving on to a new topic. However, teachers' written feedback to students is often too brief and generic to help them reflect on their individual performance and what they could do better.
- Students benefit from receiving a wide range of careers information, advice and guidance which helps them make informed decisions about their future career choices. Vocational staff provide students with a wealth of helpful knowledge and information about the wide variety of roles available within particular industries. Students benefit from attendance at careers events, informative talks provided by guest speakers and from visits to local companies. This experience, together with the advice available from the college's student support team, ensures that they have a good level of understanding regarding their careers and next step options.
- Most students benefit from well-planned individualised work experience that supports their development of work-related values such as being courteous, polite, respectful and supportive of others. Level 1 students participate in social and community-based work-related projects before they undertake a more extensive and demanding work experience. Work placements for students are plentiful and carefully matched to their career aspirations.
- Students improve their English and mathematics skills well in vocational sessions. Teachers skilfully plan learning activities and tasks that develop students' literacy and numeracy skills well. For example, childcare students develop their oracy skills through participating in lively discussions regarding the importance of play and story time to young children's learning and development. Students in construction, plastering and plumbing confidently use mathematics when costing supply services to a customer.
- Students feel safe and know how to stay safe and healthy. They benefit from an extensive tutorial programme where they develop a clear understanding of how they can protect themselves from the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism. Students know where to seek advice or report concerns about their health, welfare and personal safety, including when online.
- A small minority of students receive insufficient challenge to develop their skills to their full potential as teachers do not always plan learning to take account of students' individual starting points. In some lessons, students complete the same task at the same pace and teachers do not challenge the more able students to make good progress in line with their identified ability. Questioning and coaching by a small number of teachers does not encourage students to extend their answers to broaden or deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Short-term target setting often lacks the detail needed to enable students to make more rapid progress. The majority of tutors do not provide sufficient information and guidance to enable students to work through bite-size blocks of learning towards their longer-term aim. Targets are often generic and unspecific or refer to completing the whole task and as a result, not all students make the best progress possible.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- Adult programmes account for two thirds of the college's classroom-based provision. At the time of inspection, just over 7,000 adult students were enrolled at the college, the large majority of whom study in discrete adult provision. The largest group of students study on ESOL courses or have progressed from these courses to adult English and mathematics studies in functional skills or at GCSE level. Smaller numbers of adults study on access to higher education courses. The remainder study on a wide range of vocational courses.
- The large majority of students on adult programmes achieve well on their individualised learning programmes, as reflected in their improving success rates. Teachers prepare lessons well, ensuring that pace is appropriate, which enables students to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to be successful.
- Most adult students make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. On access programmes, students develop their numeracy well, for example when interpreting statistical data regarding the frequency and prevalence of chromosome disorders within the general population. During resulting class discussions they use precise and specialist terminology accurately, for example recognising the differences in emphasis between the terms 'assimilation' and 'integration'. In functional skills lessons, teachers enliven learning through skilfully using students' everyday experiences as a starting point for class discussions.
- The large number of students on ESOL courses develop high levels of confidence in using their speaking and listening skills, and identify the significant impact their learning has on their life.
- Teachers use their industrial and vocational experience well to help inspire students and ensure that they develop a strong understanding of how the skills they are gaining relate to the workplace. For example, in a level 2 accounting class, the teacher displayed up-to-date knowledge and experience gained within the financial service sector to demonstrate how students could accurately calculate value added tax and analyse business cash flow using advanced spreadsheet calculations. In catering and hospitality, students gained from their teacher's extensive industrial experience when planning and preparing a Christmas meal.
- The large majority of students receive frequent and helpful feedback that enables them to improve and make good progress in their learning. Most teachers routinely use a broad range of effective assessment strategies including questioning, online quizzes and homework tasks to check students' understanding and confirm their progress. Teachers have improved their marking and the quality of feedback provided to students. The correction of spelling and grammar on marked work, which was identified as an area for improvement in the last inspection, is now good.
- In the large majority of lessons, students' attendance is high. Teachers use good starter activities effectively to check prior learning and to interest students quickly. They use praise and encouragement well to build students' confidence so that they are able to ask questions and explore solutions. As a result, students are cooperative, show an excellent attitude to their learning and take a great pride in their work, routinely producing assignments that are of a high standard. Students, particularly those who study on

distance learning courses, like and make good use of the online resources which enable them to see how well they have done and on which topics they need to improve.

- In a small minority of lessons, the checking of students' understanding is too superficial and rushed, with teachers' feedback limited to providing the correct answer and not explaining to students what it is they need to improve.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers link learning well to students' future careers and ambitions. They provide good support that helps students overcome personal and academic barriers to learning and improve their confidence.
- Teachers foster a safe and supportive environment in which students from diverse backgrounds work collaboratively to express ideas in an open and supportive manner. As a result, students show respect for and tolerance of each other's beliefs, faiths and values. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, students confidently provide treatments to a wide range of clients with sensitivity and tact. In community-based ESOL classes, students work well together and learn from each other's differing cultural backgrounds and experiences.
- Students quickly develop a good understanding of British values. For example, in an access lesson, students confidently discussed the importance of political accountability through critically reviewing the work undertaken by parliamentary select committees in holding public institutions and organisations to regular account.

Apprenticeships

Good

- The college offers apprenticeships in a wide range of subjects in response to demand from local employers for skilled employees. At the time of inspection, there were 1,194 apprentices. The largest subject areas were construction, engineering, business and hairdressing. Around half of all apprentices are aged 16 to 18. Some 139 apprentices are working towards the new apprenticeship standards.
- Employers engage well in programmes by contributing to the development of apprentices' skills and knowledge in the workplace. As a result, the majority of apprentices develop good vocational skills. For example, an engineering apprentice at a local university was involved in making high tolerance components for satellites and space exploration.
- Apprentices benefit from good off-the-job training in college. Teachers use their subject knowledge and industrial experience to present interesting lessons that engage apprentices in purposeful learning. However, a minority of teachers do not routinely check apprentices' understanding well enough before moving on to a new topic. In a small minority of lessons, teachers allow more vocal apprentices to dominate the responses to the questions they pose. In the majority of lessons, apprentices make good progress and demonstrate the knowledge and skills expected.
- Assessment is fair and accurate. Assessors use their skills and experience well in making clear judgements about the standard of apprentices' technical abilities. They are increasingly making good use of technology such as voice recorders, to gather evidence and support timely assessment decisions.
- The majority of feedback to apprentices on the quality of their work is useful and helps them to improve. Where written work is not of the correct standard, teachers and assessors routinely provide detailed feedback on the improvements required in order to

meet vocational standards for the framework qualification. In a minority of examples, teachers and assessors too readily describe the meaning of new technical words with apprentices instead of encouraging them to carry out their own research. Feedback to apprentices on their functional skills work is detailed and contributes to improvements in the standard of their English and mathematics over time.

- The college has made good progress in promoting British values to apprentices and helping them to understand the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism and how they can protect themselves. During regular reviews in the workplace, the majority of assessors confidently discuss topics such as employees' rights and responsibilities, respect, tolerance and individual liberty. They successfully encourage apprentices to relate these aspects to their work environment and themselves personally. However, a minority of assessors lack the confidence to do this well. In addition, a few apprentices who are due to complete soon do not have a comprehensive understanding of these topics.
- Apprentices are safe. An understanding of health and safety is promoted and reinforced well both at college and in the workplace. Apprentices know to whom they should report concerns or incidents, and are confident that a member of staff will act on them.
- College managers have approached the implementation of the new apprenticeship standards with integrity, and have created an appropriate model to support its delivery in the workplace. Recently introduced new apprenticeship programmes have well-defined schedules that precisely set out the off-the-job training apprentices will receive in preparation for end-point assessment. Around 140 apprentices are working towards new apprenticeship standards. However, it is too early to assess the effectiveness of these programmes.
- The large majority of current apprentices are making the progress expected of them. However, around 13% of apprentices have already passed their planned end date and have not yet completed because of previous weaknesses in programme management. Leaders and managers now have realistic action plans to ensure these apprentices complete as soon as possible.
- A minority of assessors do not promote good progress sufficiently well in progress reviews. Their discussions with apprentices and employers do not focus well enough on how well apprentices are progressing against all elements of their apprenticeship. The targets they agree do not help apprentices and employers to plan work between reviews, as too many are vague and unhelpful. Where apprentices are behind target the frequency of reviews is increased, but this does not always assist in helping apprentices to catch up.
- The proportion of apprentices completing their functional skills qualifications has improved and is currently high. However, too few apprentices achieve these in a timely manner. Apprentices achieve the English and mathematics qualifications needed for their apprenticeships. However, assessors and teachers do not help apprentices to develop the technical language and numeracy skills required to perform beyond their current job role.
- Curriculum managers have an improving range of information to help them understand the quality and effectiveness of the apprenticeship programme. The introduction of new systems to track and monitor apprentices is helping managers target improvements where needed, although in this transitional period the existence of more than one system inhibits staff's ability to gather accurate performance information.

Provision for students with high needs

Good

- The college has 81 students in receipt of high needs funding from three local authorities, all of whom have appropriate education, health and care (EHC) plans in place. Most are following discrete programmes, known as supported learning. The college offers provision in three distinct programme areas according to level of need.
- Leaders and managers have high ambitions for students with high needs, and use the funding allocated for these students to support their learning well. Leaders have invested in good-quality resources that enable students to participate in a wide range of work-related activities and work placements that prepare them well for further learning and life after college.
- Students on vocational programmes receive good support. Teachers and inclusion workers (IWs) plan learning well in most sessions and as a result, most students make at least the expected level of progress. A small minority exceed their personal targets. Students benefit from good access to specialist therapies, including speech and language and occupational health, as well as counsellors who support them with their learning and development. Students confidently develop their communication skills and use assistive technology well. 'Communication passports' for students give detailed strategies to support students' language development. Teachers and IWs use these effectively to help students make progress.
- In a minority of sessions, teachers and IWs do not fully engage students in planning activities and, as a result, the planned activities are too long and students lose interest and focus. In a very small minority of instances, feedback from teachers and IWs to students is too basic and insufficiently individualised. Staff do not precisely identify what the student has achieved and what they need to improve upon.
- Students benefit from high-quality work placements and develop good skills that prepare them well for employment. Twenty students on supported internships working with employers across the city, including a local hospital and the local authority, are confidently developing a range of useful employability and personal skills. A similar number of students with more intensive support needs benefit from more structured placements across the college. These include working in the newly opened café, or with local charities where they produce preserves and jams made from fruit grown on a local allotment for sale at farmers' markets and college fairs. As a result of such activities students gain valuable insights and develop transferable skills for employment, which include money handling, stocktaking, food preparation and cleaning.
- Students develop a very good understanding of how to be safe and keep safe while in college, out on placement or in the workplace. Teachers prepare detailed risk assessments and closely monitor students' health, safety and welfare. In workshop areas, students benefit from clear instruction and guidance from teachers when using drills and wire cutters to make reindeer models and wreaths for sale at the annual Christmas fayre. Teachers develop activities effectively to demonstrate British values. For example, students voted to choose between two Christmas celebration options in a ballot, and the top two options were selected.
- Teachers and other staff within the supported learning team work closely with other providers to ensure that transition arrangements for students with complex needs are well

planned and effective. College staff visit local schools early in the academic year and work closely with designated special educational needs coordinators and parents to ensure accurate assessment of students' specialist support needs before they start their course at the college. Staff ensure that the students' views and wishes closely inform the development of their learning plans. Teachers work well with local statutory and voluntary organisations to support students moving on to more independent living, further work-related opportunities or to further or higher education. Staff provide students with good, impartial information, advice and guidance.

Provider details

Unique reference number	131863
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of students	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all students over the previous full contract year	17,654
Principal/CEO	Verity Hancock
Telephone number	0116 224 2000
Website	http://leicestercollege.ac.uk/

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
Total number of students (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	646	2,181	1,230	3,360	1,480	921	46	549
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	464	478	137	343	2	21		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	2		4		6			
Number of students aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of students for which the provider receives high-needs funding	81							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, employer engagement, commercial and international, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Victor Reid, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Deane	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bob Hamp	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Baber	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Ofsted Inspector
Nicholas Sanders	Ofsted Inspector
Rhys Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Norris	Ofsted Inspector
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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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