

City of Bristol College

General further education college

Inspection dates

16–19 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good across the college.
- Leaders and managers have improved the previously poor levels of attendance of learners, but these are not yet high enough.
- Managers do not monitor the destinations of adults or learners on study programmes well enough. As a result, managers do not know if provision matches the needs of local learners and employers fully.
- Not enough of the most able learners are reaching their full potential or achieving the higher grades of which they are capable, because teachers and assessors do not challenge them to excel sufficiently.
- The proportion of learners and apprentices who have remained on their courses and are working towards achieving their qualifications, has improved, but is not high enough.
- The progression of learners and apprentices from one level of course to another, especially from level 2 to level 3, is low.

The provider has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have recruited specialist managers and staff with relevant skills and experience. This has led to improvements in the quality of provision for learners and a positive change in the expectations of staff and learners.
- Staff have strong links with a wide range of partners. These partners provide learners with good work-experience opportunities and good resources, which prepare them well for employment.
- A wide range of services provide strong support to learners with additional learning needs so that they remain on their courses and make expected or better progress. This support is especially good for learners with high needs.
- The provision for adults and learners with high needs is good.

Full report

Information about the provider

City of Bristol College is a large college with four main campuses across Bristol, including in the city centre and in the north and south of the city. Approximately 3,000 learners aged 16 to 18 are on study programmes and 3,775 adult learners are on full- or part-time courses. The college has 1,450 apprentices. A small number of learners are enrolled with subcontractors; these are mostly apprentices and adult learners.

Most learners at the college live in the city of Bristol or nearby. Bristol is the largest city in the South-West, with a population of approximately 450,000. Bristol is one of the least deprived English Core Cities, although approximately one sixth of its residents live in some of the most deprived areas in England. Unemployment for males is higher than the regional or national rates; it is significantly lower for females. The proportion of school leavers who achieve five A* to C grades at GCSE, or the new attainment measure of eight GCSEs or vocational subjects, is below the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that lessons and workshops are demanding enough to challenge learners and apprentices to develop a deeper understanding and, for those who are capable, to attain higher grades in their qualifications
 - improving the English and mathematics skills of learners and apprentices by providing activities for them to practise these skills in vocational and academic sessions
 - assessing learners' and apprentices' understanding more effectively and helping them to apply previous learning to new concepts and situations.
- Raise the attendance of all learners further, especially in English and mathematics lessons, so that they develop the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their qualifications and the relevant employability skills.
- Improve the achievement and progression rates for apprentices, adults and learners on study programmes by:
 - improving the scheduling and teaching of functional skills for apprentices
 - improving assessors' progress reviews of apprentices so that they set and monitor appropriate targets to challenge apprentices to make swifter progress
 - identifying why more learners do not progress to higher levels of learning within the college and developing action plans to increase the number of learners progressing to the next level.
- Monitor the destinations of all learners and apprentices and compare these with intended destinations. Identify trends and patterns where these do not match, and develop actions to ensure that the curriculum meets local needs effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- At the time of the previous inspection, the college was in a precarious financial situation. The principal was new, the senior leadership team was incomplete and governance was ineffective at securing sustained improvement. Staff expectations were low, too many learners did not achieve their qualifications and the reputation of the college was at risk. Since then, senior leaders and governors have secured a better financial position, halted the decline in poor achievement rates and driven forward improvements in the quality of provision across the college. However, despite measurable improvements across the college, not enough learners are in provision which is good.
- The principal and senior managers provide strong visible leadership. They reinforce a culture of high expectations and ambition continually and most staff and learners respond positively to this. Leaders and managers have a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and are involved in observations of teaching and learning, which is beginning to raise standards.
- Leaders and managers have introduced comprehensive quality improvement initiatives, with detailed reports, which they monitor closely. Staff now have much better access to reliable information, which allows them to monitor closely the progress of learners and identify earlier those at risk, resulting in improvements in attendance and retention in the current year. However, while changes to quality arrangements and observations have led to improvements, they have not yet ensured that the quality of provision is uniformly good across the college.
- Managers subject subcontractors to the same quality improvement arrangements as college courses, resulting in similar improvements in subcontractors' provision. Managers have also introduced a new system to monitor the progress of apprentices, which is beginning to reduce the number of apprentices who take too long to complete their qualifications.
- Managers have used a post-inspection action plan as the main tool to address the key weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. While managers have made improvements against all of the weaknesses, further improvement is required, particularly in relation to attendance, the teaching of English and mathematics and the tracking of learners' destinations.
- Performance management arrangements are now strong. The new observation of teaching and learning system introduced this year links effectively with the performance management of teaching and training staff. Managers provide effective support for staff who do not meet expectations, with the majority improving their teaching and assessment practice. Managers have not yet incorporated these new arrangements into staff appraisals.
- The senior leadership team and managers have established strong collaborative partnerships with locally based organisations, agencies and employers – including multi-national corporations – which enhance the provision of learning for local people. The curriculum is aligned well to local enterprise partnership (LEP) priorities in engineering and construction. A new extension to the engineering centre, opening later in the year,

has been funded by the LEP.

- The college is a welcoming environment with an inclusive and respectful culture. Staff prepare learners well for living in a diverse society. Managers monitor closely the performance of different groups and take actions to address any gaps in achievement. Managers have enhanced the college's expertise in equality and diversity with a recent appointment of a new equalities officer.

The governance of the provider

- Changes to the governing body identified at the previous inspection are ongoing. Seven of the 12 current governors are new. A new chair has been appointed and a wider range of expertise has been added, including local authority representation and educational and business expertise.
- Governors now receive simple and regular reports, which measure the ongoing financial and academic performance against key performance indicators. This enables them to question senior post-holders in detail and hold them to account better.
- Governors were involved fully with senior managers in revising the college's mission and values and restructuring the management and staffing across the college. However, it is too early to gauge the full impact of these changes on the college's provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding arrangements are well established and appropriate. Managers responsible for overseeing the college's duty for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults are well trained and effective in carrying out their duties.
- Safeguarding officers have good links with specialist agencies, including the local children's safeguarding board, the 'Prevent' regional coordinator and the police, whom they use well to refer learners and to access appropriate training. Managers deal with safeguarding incidents appropriately and swiftly.
- All staff receive annual updated training in safeguarding and 'Prevent'. Learners receive training in the 'Prevent' duty and fundamental British values. Managers have a good understanding of the specific social vulnerabilities faced by young people in the region and address them effectively through tutorials and training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistently good across the provision. Teachers and assessors do not consistently have high enough expectations for all learners. They do not provide learning which takes into account the wide range of needs and abilities of their learners, particularly the most able. Not enough staff set work which is demanding enough to challenge learners and apprentices to make progress quickly. They do not monitor learners' progress against challenging targets sufficiently to help them reach higher grades. For example, all learners on level 3 health and social care courses complete the same assessment activities to the 'pass' criteria and adult learners

on foundation art complete the same brief for projects. As a result, not enough learners make rapid progress or are on track to achieve their qualifications at the level of which they are capable based on their starting points.

- Most teachers and assessors use a range of assessment activities effectively to evaluate learners' progress. However, not enough staff ask detailed or probing questions, or set more difficult work, to fully test learners' and apprentices' understanding or help them think more deeply or apply their knowledge to new learning effectively.
- Teachers on study programmes provide useful, effective feedback which helps learners know what to do to improve their work. For example, detailed feedback in GCSE English helps learners develop strategies for self-correction which improve their writing skills. Feedback for a minority of adult learners and apprentices is less effective in helping them to develop their skills fully and make the speed and level of progress of which they are capable.
- Learners on study programmes and adult learners do not develop their English and mathematics skills well in vocational lessons because teachers do not provide activities for them to develop these skills. Learners make better progress in discrete English and mathematics lessons, especially GCSE English. Learners' attendance at GCSE and functional skills lessons has improved from the previous very low rates, but is not high enough. Most engineering and construction apprentices improve their mathematics skills as part of their courses, although improvements in their English skills are less good.
- Staff across the college use their occupational and academic knowledge, experience and high-quality practical resources well. Most provide effective and interesting learning activities so that vocational learners gain valuable industry-standard skills for their chosen career path. For example, learners work confidently and competently in hairdressing salons and in the college restaurants, where they practise their newly learned skills and develop their customer care skills. Most learners on academic programmes develop effective independent study skills, which prepare them for university or further study well.
- Learners benefit well from very effective additional learning support. Staff identify learners' individual needs well at the start of their courses to put the right support in place. Learning support assistants, and activities provided by the Study Plus programme, help learners overcome any barriers they may face to stay on their courses. As a result, learners receiving this support make, and often exceed, the progress expected of them.
- Learners with high needs funding are provided with very good individual support. As a result, they develop a good range of skills, including those for employment, enjoy their learning and make good progress. Support staff help learners develop independence well. Learners develop their social skills effectively and feel more confident in managing a variety of social situations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- As a result of a range of successful actions taken by all staff, most learners now recognise the importance of attending college and arriving on time for their lessons. This has led to marked improvements in attendance and punctuality. Learners with high needs continue to attend well. However, overall attendance is not yet high enough across all sites.
- Learners and apprentices feel safe and know what to do if they have concerns about their

safety. Learners on college-based courses benefit from much-improved tutorials following the introduction of study coaches in September 2016. Regular tutorials successfully broaden study programme learners' awareness and understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. These learners also benefit from a good-quality online course which uses examples from Bristol to bring local context to the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Despite this, the large majority of learners and apprentices have only a basic awareness of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation and their wider role in the 'Prevent' agenda.

- Learners and apprentices take pride in their work, and the vast majority have a positive approach to their learning. They enjoy learning in an inclusive and supportive environment. They respect their teaching and support staff and work harmoniously with their peers. The good conduct of the vast majority of learners reflects the high expectations placed on them by leaders and all staff at college.
- Learners benefit from appropriate work-related learning through work placements or through a wide range of work-linked activities which are well matched to their interests and potential. Managers have excellent links with employers regionally, and successful work-experience programmes have led to employment for learners. For example, three quarters of learners on level 3 aviation-related courses were employed by a local airport on leaving college.
- Teaching and support staff help learners develop their confidence and the skills necessary to continue their studies in their own time through a range of research strategies. The wide range of learning materials available through the college virtual learning environment enable learners to work by themselves effectively.
- Learners develop their broader social, personal and employment-related skills well through a range of additional events that take place as part of their courses. For example, public services learners take part in caving and canoeing trips. A 'sports-maker' post funded through Sport England encourages learners to take part in a range of sporting activities which suit learners of all levels of ability and levels of fitness.
- Opportunities for learners to explore personal, social and ethical issues are more limited. A calendar of events covering a broad range of these issues is in place, but opportunities for learners to participate in clubs and activities are few. Managers have recently appointed a learner engagement officer to expand the programme of additional activities in consultation with learners, although it is too early to assess the impact.
- Staff organised a good range of activities during the recent mental health awareness week, which raised learners' understanding of related issues very effectively. Study programme learners benefit from tutorials which explore a wide range of topics, including healthy living, exercise, financial and health well-being and keeping safe. Teachers ensure that learners with high needs learn about the importance of healthy living and maintaining fitness.
- The learning services team provides learners with high-quality information, advice and guidance to help them choose the right courses. This advice and guidance is available throughout courses and most learners are clear about the range of options to help them move into their chosen careers. Newly appointed skills advisers provide apprentices with appropriate information, advice and guidance. Frequent referrals to a national careers service adviser ensure that learners have access to good-quality, independent careers

advice.

- The large majority of learners arrive on time for their lessons and most are ready to learn. Punctuality is well monitored and most learners who are late are appropriately challenged by staff.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- The proportion of learners on study programmes, apprenticeships and adult courses who stayed on their courses and achieved their qualifications in 2015/16 remained very low and below the rate of other providers nationally. However, managers successfully prevented further decline in overall achievement from previous years.
- On specific types of courses, such as full level 2 and 3 qualifications, the achievement of learners improved from the previous year, although it was not high. The small number of adult learners at level 4, and apprentices on accounting and hospitality and catering, achieved at a higher rate than their peers at other providers. Most learners on A-level courses achieved their expected grades based on their starting points, and those on English language A- and AS-level courses achieved higher grades than expected. However, learners on level 3 vocational courses did less well.
- A higher proportion of learners and apprentices have remained on their courses this year than in recent years, and the large majority are making at least expected progress. Learners in receipt of high needs funding make good progress in developing confidence and skills to enable them to become more independent.
- Adult learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and access to higher education (HE) courses are making good progress and most have either achieved their qualifications or are on track to do so. The vast majority of apprentices learn new vocational skills well, which benefit their employers' businesses. Most learners remaining on study programmes are on target to achieve their qualifications.
- Managers monitor the progress of learners on apprenticeships and study programmes particularly closely, especially those who may be at risk of not achieving their qualifications this year. Interventions are appropriate and mostly successful. Forecasts based on this, and the improved retention of learners, indicate that the proportion of learners on these programmes who will attain their qualifications, including English and mathematics, has improved from the previous low base, although it is not yet high.
- A very small proportion of 16–18 study programme learners, who started college with grade D or below, achieved a grade C or above in English and/or mathematics in 2015/16. The proportion of adults achieving these grades was greater, although still below the national rates. Not enough learners in either age group achieved their functional skills in English or mathematics.
- Most learners on functional skills courses and GCSE English are making appropriate progress in developing the skills they need. However, many teachers do not develop the English or mathematics skills of learners well in vocational or academic settings, and learners in mixed-level functional skills groups do not always complete work at the right level for them. Apprentices on technical programmes develop good mathematics skills which they apply well at work. For example, carpentry apprentices identified the essential equipment required for small jobs and compiled a budget using the most cost-effective

suppliers.

- Managers of apprenticeship provision have successfully closed the gaps in achievement between groups of learners such as gender, age and learners with difficulties and/or disabilities. Managers of study programmes closely monitor the progress of learners who are looked after by the local authority or from other disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result, few of these learners are at risk of falling behind. This is less well monitored for adults.
- A higher proportion of apprentices have entered sustained employment this year than in previous years, although this is still not high enough. The proportion of apprentices who progress to higher levels of apprenticeship is low. A larger proportion of apprentices have achieved their English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) qualifications this year than previously, and a higher proportion have already completed their apprenticeships than in recent years. However, this proportion remains lower than at other providers, and too few are on track to complete on time.
- Managers do not know the destinations of the vast majority of study programme learners, or of many adults. As a consequence, they do not know how well courses prepare these learners for their chosen sectors, or if the provision meets the local and regional needs of employers effectively. However, a high proportion of learners with high needs funding who secure internships or work experience gain paid employment. Most adults on access to higher education courses enter university.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Around 3,000 learners are enrolled on study programmes; two fifths are at level 3 and a third at level 2. Approximately a tenth of level 3 learners are on A-level courses. Learners study a wide range of academic and vocational subjects, the largest of which are arts and media, health and social care, and engineering.
- Most teachers do not provide learning which challenges learners enough, particularly those who are most able, and the pace of learning is often too slow. As a consequence, learners do not develop new skills and knowledge quickly enough, and often complete work which is too easy. For example, learners in GCSE mathematics had difficulty solving basic calculations with fractions and too many level 1 information technology (IT) learners are behind with their work. In art and design, too much learner work is based on secondary research and is not experimental enough.
- A few teachers set more difficult work for learners who are capable of achieving it, particularly at level 3. For example, applied science learners worked out standard deviation calculations at a pace and difficulty dependent on their ability. AS-level English language learners analysed similarities and differences between written texts and justified their responses to the rest of the group well, and in professional cookery the most able learners made complex patisserie desserts.
- Although the proportion of learners attending their lessons regularly has improved from the very low levels seen at the previous inspection, it is not high enough, especially in English and mathematics. As a result, a large minority of learners make slower progress than they should, or are not on track to achieve their qualifications at the grades of which

they are capable.

- Teachers do not check learners' understanding effectively to assess what they have learned and to what standard, or where they may need extra help to deepen their understanding. For example, revision sessions in a range of A-level subjects do not help learners consolidate their knowledge effectively in preparation for forthcoming examinations. A small minority of teachers encourage learners to think more deeply about their work, elicit more detailed responses from learners and support them well to reflect on how they can improve to achieve higher grades.
- Teachers in most vocational subjects use their industry experience well. They coach learners individually to produce work which is at least meeting the standards expected for their stage in learning and is often better. Consequently, the large majority of learners on vocational courses develop good practical skills which prepare them well for employment. For example, learners on level 2 childcare courses identify the importance of play in child development and link this well to their future roles in the workplace. Learners on level 3 photography use commercial software creatively to make panoramic images. Construction learners on level 2 maintenance operations gain a range of useful skills such as roof tiling, wall-papering and repairing door frames.
- Not enough teachers develop learners' English or mathematics skills in vocational lessons or workshops. Consequently, learners do not always understand the value of these skills, develop them well or know how to apply them. For example, the written work of learners on engineering and motor vehicle courses is not well presented. Teachers of these learners, and of public services learners, do not correct errors in spelling or punctuation, including technical vocabulary, sufficiently. However, a minority of teachers ensure that learners develop their skills appropriately. For example, level 3 floristry learners costed each floral display they were making for a gala dinner, including the relevant value added tax, and produced accurate invoices. Level 2 motor vehicle learners calculated appropriate levels of tolerance within a carburettor.
- Most teachers provide useful verbal and written feedback to learners on how well they have done and how they can improve their work. For example, learners on level 3 animal management have detailed written explanations on why their work was awarded each grade and how they could achieve higher marks. Teachers of ESOL use a range of effective resources to improve learners' skills, and provide helpful written feedback which identifies how learners can improve their work further; learners make good progress. However, a few teachers have not clearly identified the target grades for a small minority of learners, who are not sure which grades they should be aiming for in their qualifications.
- The large majority of learners benefit positively from well-planned work experience and work-related activity, including community projects, which broaden their understanding of working in their chosen sectors. For example, art and design learners work in collaboration with the city council to redesign local hoardings, while construction learners are helping to renovate a house for the use of learners with high needs.
- Staff provide good careers and next steps advice which learners value in making well-informed decisions for their futures. For example, A-level science learners received good support with their university applications and subsequently received offers from Russell Group universities.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- Approximately 3,700 adults are enrolled on a range of daytime and evening courses. Most are on ESOL, employability or access to HE courses, and a smaller proportion infill with core study programme courses. Managers have designed adult learning courses to meet local learning needs effectively and are responsive to local employment skills gaps and opportunities. Staff have strong relationships with subcontracting partners, which extend the range and locations of courses available and provide more opportunities for adults to participate and progress to employment or further learning.
- The large majority of adults make good progress, and a higher proportion are working towards achieving their qualifications than in previous years. Learners develop appropriate levels of knowledge and skills. For example, in ESOL, learners develop a systematic understanding of linguistic devices such as proper sentence construction and how to use this in written and spoken situations effectively. Learners on a chemistry access to HE course link theory on exothermic and endothermic reactions well to their practical experiments, and learners doing GCSE mathematics use a range of appropriate methods to calculate percentages. However, teachers do not consistently challenge learners in lessons, or in their written work, to achieve higher standards, or set learners work to deepen their understanding beyond what they need for their qualifications.
- Teachers and managers monitor the progress of learners effectively and help learners who fall behind in their work to catch up with their peers. They check learners' understanding effectively using a range of appropriate means of assessment. However, a small minority of learners do not know how well they have developed particular skills, as teachers do not explain this to them effectively.
- Managers monitor the quality of subcontractors' provision well. They provide regular support to subcontractor staff, conduct joint lesson observations and offer a wide range of professional development opportunities. As a result, learners with subcontractors benefit from improved teaching, learning and assessment and make good progress.
- Most learners take responsibility for their own learning well. They take part fully in class discussions and gain confidence in answering questions and suggesting ideas. They develop personal and social skills rapidly which prepare them well for employment or further learning. Learners on accounting and electrical engineering courses work at industry standards. However, a very small minority of learners on ESOL and access to HE courses do not arrive at lessons ready to learn and a few are often late.
- Learners are positive about the impact of their learning on their career plans. They benefit from visiting speakers from industry and work-related experiences, which prepare them for future employment. For example, learners on the Prince's Trust employability programme worked well collaboratively to prepare for projects in the local community and raising funds to support these.
- Teachers support learners' development of IT and mathematics well. For example, learners use mobile phones to research electrical engineering topics, and accounting learners use spreadsheets to lay out complex budgets. Learners on level 1 hospitality courses understand the importance of English and mathematics in their sector and how improving these skills will help them progress to higher level courses.
- Learners feel safe in the various locations where adult courses are provided and know

how to get the available help and support they may need. However, staff have not ensured that adult learners have an in-depth knowledge of the risks of extremism and radicalisation.

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- There are currently 1,450 apprentices enrolled on apprenticeships in a wide range of sectors, the largest of which are engineering, construction, and business and administration. Two thirds of apprentices are adults, and equal numbers of these are on intermediate and advanced levels. A small number of adult apprentices are on higher level engineering apprenticeships. Most apprentices aged 16 to 18 are on intermediate apprenticeships.
- A new, specialist management and recruitment team is now in place, and apprenticeships are managed well. A wide range of initiatives to improve the quality of apprenticeships have been introduced and are beginning to have an impact, most notably on the improved recruitment and retention of apprentices this year. Staff feel more supported and valued, the remaining subcontractor is monitored well and assessment practice has improved. As a consequence, the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications in the time they are allowed is increasing. However, it remains below the rates achieved at similar providers, and is low for apprentices who started before September 2016.
- Managers and staff monitor the progress of apprentices effectively, especially those at risk of falling behind. Staff interventions have been largely successful and more apprentices have remained on their courses this year than in the recent past. Most of these apprentices are on track to complete their apprenticeships.
- Not enough assessors focus on the development of apprentices' vocational, personal and social skills, or identify actions and targets which would help apprentices to improve their employment and promotion prospects beyond their apprenticeship. As a result, many apprentices do not make swift progress, and a small minority do not secure permanent employment on completion of their courses. Assessors do not encourage apprentices to evaluate their own progress by preparing properly for their routine progress meetings. For example, apprentices do not collect and present evidence of their work. They do not take notes or record what actions are necessary for them to make better progress.
- Tutors and assessors use their industry knowledge experience well and expect their apprentices to work to exacting standards and commercial speeds in plumbing, hairdressing and aeronautical engineering. Apprentices benefit from good on- and off-the-job training, which enables them to develop a good standard of vocational skills and gain the confidence to apply these in the workplace. Engineering apprentices benefit from very good-quality teaching and learning resources, for example aeronautical apprentices work on fully functional aircraft. IT networking apprentices use an appropriate level of technical language to communicate effectively with their clients. In contact centres, apprentices develop high levels of customer service skills and many gain early promotion and nominations for employer awards.
- Staff plan practical, off-the-job training sessions well so most apprentices make good progress in the development of their technical skills. Most teachers use learning resources effectively to develop apprentices' vocational knowledge and understanding. For example,

in electro-technical workshops, apprentices demonstrate appropriate skills in handling mineral copper-clad cable, and in plumbing, pipe-cutting and threading skills.

- Assessors provide appropriate help for most apprentices to achieve their required English and mathematical qualifications. However, they do not link this learning well to apprentices' work or vocational subject. Apprentices with higher-level English and mathematics skills do not receive sufficient support to improve their knowledge and skills further. Too few intermediate apprentices are supported to work towards GCSE or level 2 functional skills.
- Assessors establish strong working relationships with employers which support the development of apprentices' vocational skills well. A few apprentices develop higher-level skills beyond the requirements of their framework. The foundation phase of the degree-level engineering apprenticeships has been developed in partnership with international employers and it reflects the needs of the industry well. However, employers are not always involved fully in the planning of programmes, choosing relevant qualification units or in apprentices' progress reviews. They are, therefore, not always aware of their apprentices' progress towards their qualifications.
- Assessors' checking of apprentices' understanding of safeguarding, equality and diversity is superficial. Assessors do not explore these themes in sufficient depth to develop apprentices' broader understanding of their relevance across all aspects of their lives. Assessors completed recent training on British values and the 'Prevent' duty. However, a large majority lack the confidence to tackle these subjects usefully with apprentices, and, consequently, apprentices only have a basic knowledge.
- Apprentices are well motivated, enjoy their learning, attend regularly and have a positive attitude to learning; most have high ambitions and want to do well. They develop self-confidence, which enables many to undertake increased responsibility and to become more independent in their job roles.
- Apprentices' success is now recognised and celebrated by the college. Apprentices are encouraged to enter national and regional skills competitions and have won awards for their skills and achievements. For example, a female engineering apprentice won 'Female Apprentice of the Year' at the 'Women in Business Awards 2016'. Machinist apprentices were finalists in recent European Skills Olympics, and a higher-level engineering apprentice won 'Outstanding Apprentice of the Year 2016' at the regional apprenticeship awards.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- Since the previous inspection, managers have expanded the provision for learners with high needs in response to local demands. Of the 297 learners currently in receipt of high needs funding, 161 are on specialist high needs courses at two main centres and 136 attend full-time programmes across the college. The number of learners is planned to rise to 564 in September 2017.
- Managers develop and sustain strong partnerships with local authorities, schools, specialist education providers and employers that result in benefits for learners. For example, a very effective partnership with Bristol City Council results in innovative programmes such as 'Progression into Independence', good-quality internships and the

development of a residential provision. Learners are inspired and excited about their opportunities for work experience and to practise their independence skills.

- Leaders have designed a broad curriculum that is flexible and meets learners' individual needs well from pre-entry through to higher levels. Learners are making good progress in their understanding of the world they live in, including the use of money, credit and debit cards, and cheques. They improve their travel skills and their use of English. Many learners progress to the next level of course, a supported internship or employment. Most learners complete a relationship and sexuality course that enables them to become more self-assured and confident in socialising.
- Staff carry out assessments thoroughly. They plan and implement carefully crafted plans so that learners make a smooth transition from school and specialist education provision. A new, dedicated transition member of staff has developed good working relationships with schools so that the college receives timely information on learners. Teachers and support staff use this information effectively to create workable plans that enable learners to reduce their anxiety quickly, settle in well and be ready to learn.
- Well-qualified and experienced teaching staff use their knowledge effectively to provide well-planned, active and interesting lessons that inspire learners. Learners in retail enterprise learn about ethical shopping, recognise fair trade items and become confident in shopping responsibly. Learners working towards independence learn how to prepare vegetables and create healthy meals for themselves.
- Support staff make good use of the outcomes in learners' education, health and care (EHC) plans to set achievable targets that are regularly reviewed. Staff work well together, and communication is frequent and ensures that the learners get access to beneficial programmes and the right support. Therapy and additional support are well coordinated so that barriers to learning are removed. Learners with autistic spectrum disorder are well supported to reduce their anxieties, and this enables them to participate fully.
- Teachers hold high aspirations for learners and integrate English and mathematics effectively into learning activities so that learners improve these skills well. Teachers make good use of computers to further develop learners' independence and writing skills. Learners improve their spelling and design clear presentations for their EHC plan reviews that include what they have achieved and like at college.
- Learners are provided with very good individual classroom and work experience support. As a result, they develop good skills, progress well from their starting points and enjoy coming to college. Support workers are clear on their role, and learners value the support and can say what they have achieved and how the support helps them. For example, support staff are adept at breaking down information so that learners can understand clearly what they need to do to succeed.
- Teachers encourage learners to speak up in class well and, as a result, they participate fully and improve their communication skills. Learners enjoy the good pace of lessons, enjoy working with others and are keen to learn. Learners gain a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle, the importance of enough sleep and of reducing the consumption of sugar and fizzy drinks.
- Most teachers provide good explanations and use targeted questions well that challenge learners. In a few lessons, teachers do not explain or demonstrate activities sufficiently to

ensure that all learners understand the tasks and are fully engaged. Learners develop their understanding of how to use software, which they use well to create designs. Learners learn about different artists, including Banksy, and are inspired to be creative.

- Learners have good-quality work experience and internships. Learners are prepared well for the world of work and know what to expect at interviews. The large majority of learners who undertake an internship achieve paid employment, and those who leave go on to positive destinations such as employment, further learning, independent living or volunteering. Learners develop their social skills well so that they feel more confident in managing a variety of social situations, such as using public transport. They gain a good understanding of the value of coins and notes in order to purchase items.
- Learners receive good-quality advice and guidance throughout their time at college. However, staff do not coordinate this effectively enough to provide learners with a detailed action plan that moves them towards their careers or next steps; a few learners are unclear of their next steps.
- Teachers and support staff do not consistently use the same system to record sufficient information about learners' progress in acquiring independence skills. In the college's recording system, staff record progress towards qualifications and units rather than the achievement of independence skills. This means that information about life skills achievements are not easily shared with learners and other members of staff and not easily available for further target-setting or planning.
- The use of assistive technology is underdeveloped, so that a small number of learners who would benefit from such technology are not taking part fully in a few activities. Although the number of learners with complex needs is currently low, learner numbers are increasing and teachers have limited understanding of the range of assistive technology available. Managers recognise the use of technology as an area for development and have plans to improve this.

Provider details

Unique reference number	131094
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	14,100
Principal/CEO	Mr Lee Probert
Telephone number	0117 312 5000
Website	www.cityofbristol.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	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	846	1,867	975	1,543	1,262	354	2	11
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	328	461	153	475	0	30		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	None							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	297							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	HWV N-Gaged Ashley Community Housing Cabot Learning Federation							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, 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 learners 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

Helen Flint, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
William Baidoe-Ansah	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Shackleton	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tricia Pugsley	Ofsted Inspector
Kathleen Tyler	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Barrable	Ofsted Inspector
Penny Mathers	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Brownbill	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Hunter	Ofsted Inspector
Joy Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Carolyn Brownsea	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017