

Walsall College

General further education college

Inspection dates		11-15 February 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding-1
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding-1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding-1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is outstanding because:

- Students make excellent progress and achieve extremely well. The vast majority of students successfully complete and achieve the qualifications on which they enrol and progress to higher levels of study or into employment.
- The standard of students' work is exceptionally high. Students are encouraged to take pride in their work and develop excellent practical skills well above the standard expected for the level of course.
- Students' literacy, numeracy and employability skills are developed extremely effectively. The curriculum enables students to become skilled, professional and enterprising and ensures they are very well prepared for their next steps.
- Resources to support teaching and learning are of an exceptionally high standard. Classrooms are well equipped with interactive learning technology, and resources for practical teaching in all curriculum areas are excellent.
- Teachers set very high standards, have very high expectations and use their vocational skills and expertise to make lessons motivating, interesting and memorable. Lessons are well planned, engaging and enable students to make rapid progress and achieve well.
- Teachers and support staff provide outstanding advice and guidance to help students make progress and achieve. Working relationships between staff and students are very strong and create a friendly, inclusive and safe learning environment.
- Assessment practice is outstanding. Students are set challenging targets and their progress is frequently monitored and reviewed using a wide range of assessment strategies that enable teachers to provide detailed feedback that helps students improve.
- Leaders, managers and governors have an ambitious vision for the college and its students. The college is rooted in its community and works in very strong partnership with key organisations for the benefit of students and to promote the regeneration and prosperity of the borough.
- Quality assurance and quality improvement arrangements, including performance management, are outstanding. The college maintains a relentless focus on ensuring that students' outcomes and the quality of students' experiences are the best they can be.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Raise success rates on the small number of courses at intermediate level that are below national average rates and continue to improve outcomes for learners on work-based courses.
- Enable students to gain accreditation for the skills and knowledge they acquire as soon as they reach the standard required for the level of course.
- Ensure more consistent planning of the use of specialist classroom support so that all students receive the maximum benefit from the expert help provided.
- Maintain the sharp focus on ensuring the quality of subcontracted provision so that it continues to improve to reach the same high standard as provision taught within the college.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
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- Students make excellent progress and achieve very well. They quickly acquire knowledge and develop excellent practical skills related to their course of study. The vast majority of students successfully complete and achieve the qualification on which they enrol and success rates on most courses are well above corresponding national rates.
- Overall success rates on long courses are very high and well above the national rate for similar providers. Success rates on foundation level courses are exceptionally high and on advanced level courses are considerably above the corresponding national rate. At intermediate level, success rates are above average overall, although on a very small minority of courses success rates are below average. Success rates have increased year on year and at the time of inspection both attendance and retention rates were very high.
- Students produce work of a consistently high standard. Students' practical work often exceeds the standard required by the level of qualification on which students are enrolled. The overwhelming majority of students enjoy their learning, have high attendance rates, are punctual to lessons and develop an excellent attitude to learning.
- The development of students' personal, social and employability skills is outstanding. Comprehensive initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy levels enables a tailored programme of development that improves students' English and mathematical abilities. Broader aptitudes such as communication, team working and problem solving are developed extremely well and significantly enhance students' prospects of employment.
- Many students gain useful additional qualifications and undertake beneficial work experience placements. They are well prepared for progression to employment and develop a thorough understanding of career and progression opportunities. Students develop a strong work ethic that is well promoted by teachers in a professional and productive learning environment.
- The vast majority of students successfully progress to higher level courses or into employment. The curriculum is well planned and enables students to progress to higher level qualifications and into jobs that meet local and national needs. Progression rates between levels of qualification and from education to employment are high.
- Achievement levels are very high for most groups of students including those with complex learning difficulties. Success rates, including those collated by gender, age, ethnicity and disability, are above corresponding national rates, with no significant underperformance over time of any specific group. Any emerging disparities in levels of achievement are closely analysed and appropriate action is promptly taken to try and ensure that all students achieve as well as they can.

- The college successfully raises students' expectations and level of ambition. An increasing proportion of students now progress to advanced level study and to higher education courses. Students develop their self-confidence and self-esteem while gaining a thorough understanding of the multicultural society in which they live.
- Outcomes for students on work-based programmes are improving rapidly and are now good. Students now make good progress and are frequently monitored to ensure they are on target to achieve their qualification within the timescale set. Students have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and acquire the skills and knowledge that enable them to make progress in their chosen career.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding, as reflected by outstanding outcomes for learners. The college strategy to improve teaching and learning is well understood, and rigorously implemented. Teachers are passionate about helping their students to achieve, and provide high levels of support both in and outside the classroom.
- Teachers have very high expectations of their students and constantly challenge and support them to produce practical work of a very high professional and commercial standard. Many students produce work well above the required standard for the level of course. Teachers use their excellent vocational experience and expertise to enhance students' knowledge and understanding, and to help students develop outstanding practical skills.
- Teachers know their students very well and working relationships are excellent. Students value the very collaborative and safe learning environment teachers create, and they benefit from the outstanding resources in all vocational areas of the college. Students develop very positive attitudes to independent learning and attend college punctually and regularly.
- The vast majority of lessons are well planned and include a variety of teaching methods that motivate, enthuse and engage students in memorable and meaningful learning activities. Teachers use information and learning technology (ILT) very imaginatively to enhance students' enjoyment of lessons. The virtual learning environment (VLE) is well populated with excellent interactive learning materials that help develop students' knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers carefully use group work and research activities to develop students' team working and communication skills and to promote independent learning. The skilful use of questioning enables teachers to check students' knowledge and understanding and to challenge students to improve their work further. Lively and purposeful discussion and debate are key characteristics of the most successful lessons.
- In a small minority of lessons, where teaching is less successful, students are not as actively engaged in learning activities or teachers do not make full use of the available technology to enhance the learning experience. In a few instances classroom support could be used more effectively to ensure students gain the maximum benefit from the help provided.
- Initial assessment is comprehensive and provides for accurate diagnosis of students' starting points. Detailed student profiles inform teachers' planning of lessons and identify very clearly the support needed by individual students. Teachers monitor students' progress very closely and frequently review and update targets to ensure students make continuous progress and achieve. However, opportunities for students to gain early accreditation for the skills and knowledge they develop are limited in a few subject areas.
- Assessment practices are outstanding. Teachers use a wide range of effective assessment methods within lessons to monitor students' progress. Question and answer techniques are used well to check and consolidate students' learning and understanding. Teachers mark assignments promptly and provide detailed and constructive individual feedback to students that informs them what to do to improve their work.
- Tutorials are used extremely effectively to monitor and review students' progress against their expected grades and challenging individual targets. Teachers meet frequently with students in

individual tutorials to agree clearly defined goals to help them progress. Students have a very clear and precise view of their progress and know exactly what they need to do to improve.

- The development of English, mathematics and functional skills through teaching and learning is highly effective. Teachers integrate English, mathematics and functional skills within vocational teaching, and ensure that students not only develop these skills well but also recognise very clearly their importance for their future progression and employment. Most teachers routinely and effectively correct any spelling or grammatical errors in students' written English.
- Guidance and support provided to students to help them make progress and achieve are outstanding. A very high proportion of students successfully progress to higher level study or into employment following the completion of their course. Good careers advice and guidance ensure students are well prepared and informed for their next steps.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is consistently good and often outstanding. Within lessons teachers routinely challenge stereotypes and improve students' understanding of equality and diversity by making them aware of its importance and relevance in everyday life. In a few instances, teachers miss naturally occurring opportunities in lessons to extend students' understanding of aspects of equality and diversity.

Science and mathematics	
Learning programmes for 16-18	Good
Learning programmes for 19+	

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Consequently, success rates on most courses are above corresponding national rates and most students make good progress from their starting points. Attendance rates are high and students are punctual to lessons. Many students successfully progress to higher levels of study.
- Teachers in both science and mathematics are well qualified and use their subject knowledge very effectively to plan lessons that motivate and engage students. Science students develop good practical skills using laboratory equipment and conduct experiments safely and confidently. Students on mathematics courses are able to use a wide range of techniques, formulae and equations to solve complex calculations.
- Lessons are generally well planned and include a variety of teaching techniques. Vocational assignments encourage students to think critically about scientific or mathematical concepts and to develop their independent learning. Classroom activities encourage the good development of team working, communication and problem-solving skills. In a small minority of lessons, usually where teachers use pre-prepared workbooks, more able students are insufficiently challenged as the work set is not well matched to their ability level.
- Good resources, especially for practical teaching in science, significantly enhance students' enjoyment of courses. Resources are used well to support the development of science students' practical skills. For example, students confidently delivered a practical demonstration on fingerprinting techniques to a group of deaf students. On mathematics courses, teachers are confident in using technology to enhance learning and inspectors observed students using a variety of software packages and interactive learning material.
- Initial assessment, advice and guidance are good. Thorough diagnostic assessment ensures that students are placed onto the correct course. Adult students speak highly of the guidance they receive which helps them make the difficult transition back into learning. Advice and guidance to help students progress to higher education are good, and many students go on to study subjects related to science and mathematics in higher education following the completion of their course.
- Assessment practice is mostly good. Work is marked frequently and returned quickly to ensure students are fully informed of their progress. Students are clear about assessment requirements

and deadlines. The majority of teachers provide supportive and constructive feedback on written work; but in a minority of cases, assignments are marked superficially and do not provide students with sufficient feedback on how to improve their work.

- The development of students’ literacy and numeracy skills is good. The standard of English in written work is good. Grammatical and spelling errors are routinely corrected. Students demonstrate confident use of appropriate mathematical language, formulae and notation, both when answering questions orally and in their written answers.
- Students benefit from a high level of personal and academic support that helps them make progress and achieve. Workshops and additional support lessons in science help late starters or long-term absentees catch up with their work. Mathematics students in need of support to help them achieve the expected grade attend helpful revision and examination preparation classes.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. Working relationships between students and staff are excellent and a culture of mutual respect is clearly evident. Cultural differences in the use of mathematical techniques are celebrated in lessons and teachers use naturally occurring opportunities to discuss equality and diversity issues. In science subjects, opportunities to promote students’ knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity themes are occasionally missed. Students’ behaviour in and out of lessons is outstanding.

Public services	
Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+	Outstanding

- Inspiring teaching, learning and assessment enable students to make excellent progress and achieve especially well. Success rates are very high on most courses and many students achieve high grades. Students thoroughly enjoy their courses and are strongly motivated to do well. Progression rates to further study or relevant employment are very high.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and highly credible practitioners drawn from a range of services including the armed forces, the police and the prison service. They use their considerable experience and expertise extremely effectively to augment learning and to motivate and engage students in lessons. Students develop a wide range of skills that enhance their career prospects including effective teamwork, problem solving, and research and communication skills.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students and prepare them well for their future careers in public service. Students are immaculately presented in college uniform and frequently take part in college and community events that enable them to develop their self-confidence and practise their skills. Students shadow college security staff and assist in stewarding at spectator events held at the college and in the community.
- Classroom teaching is extremely effective and develops in students a comprehensive understanding of the roles of different organisations and the contribution they make to public life. Students quickly gain knowledge and understanding of processes, procedures and requirements of different roles in uniformed and public service. Practical activities, especially physical education, enable students to practise drills and to participate in ceremonial and remembrance events.
- Initial advice and guidance are extremely thorough and ensure that students are able to make an informed choice of course. Diagnostic testing is completed early and accurately identifies any additional support needs. Students are set challenging targets and their progress is frequently monitored to ensure that they make substantial progress and achieve. Students are encouraged to take ownership of their own learning and to set, monitor and review their targets for improvement.
- Assessment practice is outstanding. Assignments are well devised using interesting and relevant scenarios and contain clearly defined grading criteria. Teachers provide very detailed feedback

to students that identify individual strengths and provide useful comments to help students improve their work. Learning in the classroom is frequently assessed by teachers skilfully questioning students to test their knowledge and understanding and by the thoughtful use of peer assessment.

- The accurate application by students of English and mathematics are developed extremely effectively. Spelling and grammatical errors in students’ work are routinely corrected. Assignments and classroom activities are designed to incorporate reading, writing and numerical reasoning tasks that develop students’ knowledge, understanding and confidence in a relevant vocational context. Success rates in functional skills tests are high.
- Pastoral and academic support for students is outstanding. Teachers and support staff ensure that students achieve to their full potential academically, and promote their personal, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Students with additional support needs receive timely advice and guidance to ensure they make progress and achieve as well as their peers. Careers advice and guidance, including help with university and employment applications, are excellent.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Teachers take every opportunity to promote, reinforce and further develop students’ understanding of equality and diversity during lessons. A strong culture of mutual respect and tolerance is promoted throughout the department that prepares students well for their future careers within the public services sector.

<p>Motor Vehicle</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
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- Outstanding teaching, learning and assessment enable students to make excellent progress and achieve exceptionally well. Success rates are very high on the vast majority of courses and most students’ progress to higher level courses or into employment within the motor industry. Students develop excellent practical skills and gain a thorough understanding of key theoretical concepts.
- Teachers are vocational experts and use their skills and experience very effectively to motivate and support students to achieve. Teachers have high expectations and set very high standards, often drawing on their own first-hand experience to enhance learning. The quality of care, support and guidance provided by staff is excellent. Students often produce work of a standard well above that required by the level of course.
- Teaching in practical lessons is outstanding. Students use a wide range of specialist tools and equipment competently and confidently. Advanced level students were observed solving complex engine management faults on modern vehicles using a wide range of diagnostic equipment. Students on foundation and intermediate level courses were observed skilfully replacing steering and braking system components.
- Learning is well planned with close synergy between the teaching of theoretical knowledge and practical application to advance students’ understanding and skill development. In the majority of lessons a wide range of teaching methods, including group work and the use of ILT, stimulates and motivates students to make rapid progress and achieve well. Students are continually developing new skills that increase their confidence and further develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Resources to support teaching and learning are outstanding. Motor vehicle workshops are extremely well equipped with modern cars, tools and specialist, industry-standard test equipment. Teachers regularly go back into industry to update their knowledge and skills. Teaching materials are of high quality with good use of interactive learning technology and visual aids to help students deepen their knowledge and understanding.

- Initial assessment arrangements are comprehensive and include practical and written diagnostic testing. Students’ support needs are accurately identified and those that require support are helped to ensure they make progress and achieve as well as their peers. Students are set challenging targets and their progress is closely monitored. However, opportunities for students to gain early accreditation for the skills and knowledge they develop are limited.
- Assessment practices are very good. Students are assessed frequently and are provided with clear success criteria. Practical assessment tasks and written assignments are based on realistic scenarios and enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding while developing team working and communication skills that enhance their prospects of employment. Feedback provided to students following assessment is not always sufficiently detailed to inform students what they need to do to improve.
- The development of students’ literacy and numeracy skills is good. Success rates in functional skills tests in English and mathematics are very high. Teachers incorporate the development of students’ literacy and numeracy levels into vocational lessons and students are set tasks that require them to read instruction manuals, write service reports and calculate costs. However, teachers do not always correct spelling and grammatical errors in students’ written work.
- Advice, guidance and support strongly motivate students to achieve as well as they can. Students speak extremely highly of the support provided by staff and of the additional help they receive to ensure they achieve. Students value the opportunity to complete work experience placements that further develop their skills and knowledge, and would like even more opportunities for such placements.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Equality and diversity themes are promoted in lessons and students’ behaviour is well managed. Working relationships between staff and students are strong. In a minority of lessons opportunities are missed to integrate aspects of equality and diversity fully into learning.

Hospitality and catering	
Learning programmes for 16-18	Good
Learning programmes for 19+	

- Good teaching, learning and assessment enable most students to make good progress and achieve well. Success rates do vary between different courses and levels, but on most courses are at or above corresponding national averages. Success rates at intermediate level are very high. Students develop excellent practical skills and many progress into industry-related employment.
- Teachers have significant vocational experience and use their good subject knowledge to motivate and engage students in lessons. Teaching in practical lessons is particularly strong and enables students to develop good team working and communication skills whilst operating under commercial pressures. Teachers have high expectations and continually challenge students to improve.
- Resources to support practical teaching are excellent. Students competently and confidently use catering equipment and produce a wide range of interesting and appetising food. Students are well presented and have a good understanding of health, safety and hygiene practices. Students provide an excellent level of service in the restaurant and demonstrate high levels of customer service and menu knowledge.
- Theory lessons are generally well planned and engage students in challenging tasks that build on their previous learning. Strong links between theory and practice enable students to develop a deeper understanding of different preparation, cooking and serving techniques. Teachers use a variety of methods to check students’ knowledge and understanding and use technology well to support students’ learning.

- In a small minority of theory lessons teachers do not challenge students sufficiently to make enough progress. In these lessons teachers do not always use information about students’ prior attainment to plan lessons specifically to meet their individual needs. Consequently, a minority of more able students are not sufficiently challenged to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Well-established partnerships with local employers support students in developing confidence, independence and employability skills. Links with local employers enable students to complete valuable work experience placements, and often lead to employment follow the completion of the course. A ‘Master Class’ initiative for advanced level students delivered by a Michelin-star chef contributes significantly to enhancing the curriculum.
- Initial assessment and induction arrangements are comprehensive. Teachers use a range of taster events, mock interviews, written assessments and practical tests that ensure students are placed onto the right course at the correct level. Students are set challenging targets and their progress is closely monitored to ensure they achieve.
- Assessment practices are good. Assessment is frequent and fair. Teachers mark students’ work promptly and provide feedback that identifies how students may improve. The monitoring of students’ progress is very good and teachers update individual learning plans with specific measurable targets that challenge students to achieve higher levels. Students understand how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- The development of students’ functional skills is good. Success rates in functional skills tests are high. Teachers incorporate the development of students’ literacy and numeracy into vocational teaching and use naturally occurring opportunities to develop students’ knowledge and understanding further. However, teachers do not always correct spelling or grammatical errors in students’ work.
- Students are very well supported to progress to further study and into employment. Teachers and support staff have strong working relationships with students and provide good support to ensure students make good progress and achieve. Students value the support provided by staff to help them overcome barriers to learning.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Teachers use naturally occurring opportunities to promote and reinforce students’ knowledge and understanding of key equality and diversity themes. Menus and themed events raise awareness of cultural diversity and students have the opportunity to cater for a diverse range of clients.

<p>Hairdressing and beauty therapy</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
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- Excellent teaching, learning and assessment enable students and apprentices to achieve exceptionally well. Success rates are very high on most courses and students develop excellent practical skills. Attendance rates are high and many students progress to higher level courses or into employment on completion of their programme of study.
- Staff are very experienced and extremely supportive of their students. Working relationships between staff and students are excellent. Teachers set very high standards and have very high expectations of students. Teaching in practical lessons is outstanding and enables students to make rapid progress. Students demonstrate outstanding salon etiquette and many work at a level beyond that required by the course.
- Practical lessons are expertly designed and taught so as to enable students to develop outstanding vocational skills. Students make rapid progress and quickly learn how to complete complex tasks such as advanced foiling, nail extensions and electrical body treatments. Students

experience the pressures of a commercial environment and teachers develop students' knowledge and understanding of the retail and commercial opportunities that exist.

- Teaching in theory lessons is consistently good and some lessons are outstanding. Teachers link theory to practice extremely well and use interesting, realistic scenarios to develop students' knowledge and understanding. Questioning is used particularly well to check students' understanding and to challenge students to achieve as well as they can.
- Resources to support learning are outstanding and the commercial hairdressing and beauty salons reflect the very best of industry standards and practices. Students make extensive use of a well-populated and interactive VLE to augment their learning within lessons and outside the classroom. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods that motivate and engage students in interesting and memorable learning activities.
- Initial assessment processes are thorough, and accurately identify student support needs. Students are placed onto courses at an appropriate level and their progress is frequently monitored. However, opportunities for students to gain early accreditation for the skills and knowledge they develop are limited.
- Assessment practices are outstanding. Students are clearly informed of assessment decisions and are given detailed feedback that helps them understand how to improve. Students are assessed frequently and are given clear success criteria. Progress is frequently monitored with students and apprentices benefiting from a highly effective electronic tracking system that enables teachers, students and, where appropriate, employers, to review progress and plan improvements.
- Students' English and mathematical skills are developed extremely well. Teachers promote the development of students' literacy and numeracy levels during vocational lessons very effectively. Success rates in functional skills tests in both English and mathematics are very high.
- Students benefit from outstanding pastoral and academic guidance and support. Regular tutorials with personal tutors help students overcome barriers to learning. Students with additional support needs are quickly identified and receive high quality support that enables them to make progress and achieve as well as their peers. Advice and guidance for students progressing to higher level courses, to employment or to self-employment are good.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Teaching and learning celebrate cultural diversity and teachers use all available naturally occurring opportunities to develop students' knowledge and understanding further. Students work with clients from many different cultures and backgrounds and have a good understanding of their differing needs.

Independent living and leisure skills

Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+

Outstanding

- Excellent teaching, learning and assessment in most lessons ensure that the vast majority of students successfully achieve their qualification and progress to higher levels of study or onto apprenticeships and employment. Success rates are well above national levels on most courses and progression rates are very high. Students are highly motivated by genuinely interested and proactive staff.
- Teaching is adventurous, personalised and thoroughly enjoyable. Lessons are well planned and based on a very effective analysis of individual needs. Respect, high expectation and high levels of student participation are typical characteristics of most lessons. Students make significant gains in their levels of confidence and self-esteem.
- Teachers are skilled practitioners and use their experience and expertise to great effect. They adapt learning materials and methods to engage students and encourage active participation. Students benefit from innovative use of ICT, clear instructions, skilful questioning, and vibrant

collaborative learning. Teaching in practical lessons is highly effective and develops students' employability and independence skills.

- In a small minority of lessons, for students with the most complex needs, teaching is less effective. While teaching in these lessons is good overall, on occasion teachers use too many worksheets or tasks that have little relevance or meaning to students. On occasion, in these lessons, students become disengaged and this disrupts learning.
- Initial assessment processes are highly effective and ensure that students are placed onto the correct course. Support requirements are quickly and accurately identified and timetabled to meet the specific needs of individuals. Student profiles are used extremely effectively to help inform and plan the nature and extent of support required. The outstanding support provided ensures that students make excellent progress and achieve their goals.
- Assessment practices are outstanding. Students' work is marked frequently and thoroughly, and teachers provide detailed feedback with specific instructions that enable students to improve the standard of their work. Teachers often provide instant and extensive verbal feedback where appropriate to encourage students to make better progress and achieve higher standards. Students are aware of their learning targets and are encouraged to take charge of their own learning and monitor their own progress.
- Individual learning plans are comprehensive. Clear targets and goals are set within learning plans as well as criteria to track and monitor learning and progress. Targets are frequently monitored and actions required are acted upon quickly to ensure students make tangible progress to reach their potential.
- The development of students' literacy and numeracy skills is outstanding. Imaginative methods linked to vocational teaching motivate and engage students in learning and enable them to make good progress and improve their skills. Students have access to literacy and numeracy lessons at the most appropriate level and have several opportunities each day to practise and improve their skills.
- Care, guidance and support for students are outstanding. All students are assigned a personal tutor and have regular personal and social development lessons. Students are fully aware of their learning goals and the extent of their progress. Excellent support, advice and guidance ensure that students are well informed and prepared for their next steps.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is outstanding. Lessons are very well planned to integrate equality and diversity themes and students demonstrate a good understanding of key issues. Teachers challenge discriminatory language and use all naturally occurring opportunities within lessons to develop further students' knowledge and understanding.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The Principal, senior leaders and governors set a very clear strategic direction and have an ambitious vision for the college and its students. They are clearly focused on attaining very high standards of teaching to ensure that students achieve as well as they can. The successful strategy enables students to become skilled, professional and enterprising and places the college at the heart of the local community.
- The college's assiduous determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning and students' experience is captured in five strategic ambitions and values. These permeate all the college's activities and place students at the heart of the college's work. Ambitious targets are set for continuous improvement and the college is meticulous in monitoring and evaluating progress towards achieving these targets.
- Governors are very well informed and provide excellent support to senior leaders. They ask the right questions to ensure managers are sufficiently held to account and their skills and experience are very well matched to the developing needs of the college. Governors meticulously monitor outcomes for learners and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the college.

- Quality assurance systems and quality improvement processes, including performance management arrangements, are outstanding. A rigorous programme of lesson observations, combined with tailored and targeted staff development, ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is continually monitored and improved. The programme of 'intensive care' has been successful in raising success rates on the small minority of courses that underperform. Improvements continue to be secured to the quality of provision delivered by subcontractors.
- Teachers value the intensive and tailored support they receive from learning development coaches to enhance further the quality of their teaching. The vast majority of teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced in their specialist field and benefit from a wide range of professional development activities. Teachers regularly complete technical updating in industry through a highly valued programme of secondment.
- Self-assessment clearly identifies key strengths and areas for improvement with a maturity of judgement that demonstrates a sound, self-critical approach. Monitoring of the college's performance by the senior leadership team is extremely thorough. Key performance indicators are clearly linked to the college's strategic ambitions and values, ensuring a sharp focus on further improving students' outcomes.
- The college listens to, and makes very good use of, students' views to improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and to enrich their overall experience of college life. Students are well informed of the college's response to their comments and suggestions through a feedback process known as 'you said, we have . . .', and college managers take great care in evaluating the impact of the actions taken.
- The college is an integral part of the local community and works in very strong partnership with key organisations for the benefit of students and for the regeneration of the borough. The college performs a key role, in collaboration with other local stakeholders, in encouraging employers into the area, and is very responsive to meeting their training needs. The college makes excellent use of labour market intelligence to ensure that the curriculum meets local, regional and national socio-economic needs.
- Managers and staff in subject areas perform a key role in establishing and maintaining the college's many partnerships which help to provide real work experience and live client briefs for their students. The competences for the 'Walsall College Graduate' in each curriculum 'cluster' are modelled closely on employers' skills needs, contributing to the high levels of progression into employment and the development of students' employability skills.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Equality and diversity are actively promoted throughout the college and a clear culture and ethos of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance create a friendly, harmonious and safe learning environment. Governors, staff and students benefit from frequent and regular training in equality and diversity and have an increased understanding and awareness of issues such as forced marriage.
- The college has detailed equality and diversity impact assessments and action plans. Managers routinely analyse data to ensure there are no unwarranted discrepancies between the performance of different groups of students. Complaints, student surveys and other management information are routinely analysed by age, gender, ethnicity and disability to guard against any discriminatory practice. The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding students.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Walsall College

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships
	Overall effectiveness	1	1	1
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	1	1	1	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1	1	1	1

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Public Services	1
Science	2
Mathematics and statistics	2
Motor Vehicle	1
Hospitality and catering	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	1
Independent living and leisure skills	1

Provider details

Provider name	
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 4168
	Part-time: 10655
Principal/CEO	Jatinder Sharma
Date of previous inspection	April 2008
Website address	www.walsallcollege.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 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	532	185	718	135	1534	744	15	43
Part-time	423	821	258	3160	129	1704	11	413
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	340	136	165	185	0	1		
Number of learners aged 14-16	165							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Skills Network Ltd ■ Gateway training Solutions Ltd ■ Learning Curve Ltd ■ Workforce training and Development ■ Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust ■ Aspire, Achieve, Advance Ltd 							

Additional socio-economic information

Walsall College offers vocational courses and was established in 1952. The college has two main sites located close to the centre of Walsall in the West Midlands. There are 19 secondary schools and two adult education colleges within the borough and a further 11 colleges within a 15 mile radius.

Walsall is an area of high economic and social deprivation and is ranked as the 30th most deprived of the 326 local authorities in England. The proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is below average. The unemployment rate in Walsall is above the national rate. The proportion of the local population from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Paul Joyce HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven additional inspectors, assisted by the college deputy principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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