

Dudley College of Technology

General further education college

Inspection dates

25–26 January and 17–19 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Governors, the principal and college leaders have established an ambitious vision for the college and its role in the region; the curriculum anticipates regional and national need, leading to highly appropriate training pathways for learners and apprentices.
- Through extensive partnerships leaders create excellent opportunities for learners to progress into further learning and jobs in science, technology and engineering, which meets local and national need.
- Teachers and assessors make excellent use of their extensive links with employers to plan and deliver interesting and challenging learning activities that prepare learners very effectively for the workplace.
- Learners and apprentices of all ages are particularly well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment and almost all progress to further or higher education, employment or an apprenticeship.
- Leaders, managers and staff have successfully created a culture of high expectations for all learners; as a result, learners have excellent attitudes, take pride in their work and achieve consistently well.
- Learners and apprentices develop skills in English and mathematics exceptionally well, and achievement rates in these subjects are continuing to improve.
- By participating in very well managed, highly individualised and effective learning programmes, learners and apprentices make significant progress compared to their starting points in achieving their qualification goals and in gaining very good professional, vocational and wider work-related skills.
- Leaders and managers have successfully created a culture which encourages teachers to be professionally reflective, confident, enthusiastic and willing to take risks to bring the best out of learners.
- Leaders and managers have invested in high-quality buildings and equipment that inspire learners and help them to develop excellent skills that prepare them well for employment.
- Highly effective additional support enables the learners who need it to make excellent progress.
- Teachers and assessors provide learners with detailed and incisive feedback and clear targets; learners use these very well to make substantial improvements to their work.
- Provision for learners with high needs is good, but a few of their teachers in vocational subjects do not plan well enough to enable learners to make progress according to their potential.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Dudley College of Technology operates from the Dudley Learning Quarter in the town centre of Dudley. The majority of learners who attend the college live in the boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell and the wider region of the Black Country. The number of learners and apprentices that follow programmes with Dudley College of Technology has grown in recent years. The majority of the growth has been in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.
- The unemployment rate in Dudley is higher than the average for both England and the West Midlands region. A higher proportion of the population of Dudley has no formal qualifications than both the West Midlands and national averages. The number of pupils at schools in Dudley and Sandwell that attain five GCSEs at A* to C including English and mathematics is below the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision for learners with high needs by:
 - ensuring that teachers of vocational subjects use the detailed information available to them to plan and adapt activities to meet fully the needs of learners with high needs
 - ensuring that learners are involved fully in setting their personal development targets so they make good progress in becoming more independent and self-confident.
- Continue to improve achievement rates in level 2 functional mathematics and on the very small minority of underperforming courses.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The principal and governors have an exceptionally coherent and ambitious strategic vision for the future of the college and its learners, building strongly on the college's core mission of skills development in science, technology and engineering. The strategic plan is aspirational for future learners and the region.
- Leaders and managers have designed highly innovative, forward-looking apprenticeship pathways to prepare learners for future careers in newly emerging, highly skilled digital technologies. For example, the college is leading the development of apprenticeship pathways in digital construction techniques, in anticipation of a progressive shift in design and construction of pre-manufactured buildings to meet national housing shortages. Leaders and governors have worked assiduously and very successfully in securing the resources needed to realise these transformational ambitions.
- Senior leaders have responded very effectively to the findings of the previous inspection, while successfully managing a large growth in learner numbers at the college. They have continued to ensure that the great majority of learners achieve consistently well and progress successfully on to the next stage of their planned education, employment and career.
- Senior leaders and governors have strengthened significantly the college's already good links with secondary and primary schools in the area. This is part of college's wider strategic priority to encourage interest in STEM subjects among pupils and learners, especially females, from an early age. Plans are well advanced for the opening of a multi-academy trust with local schools, sponsored by the college, to facilitate learners' seamless progression into technical and digital skills development.
- The college makes an outstanding contribution to the development of digital, scientific, engineering and technological skills in the region by ensuring that the curriculum responds directly to emerging skills gaps. Extremely close collaboration with the college's key stakeholders, including the Black Country local enterprise partnership (LEP), employers and higher education institutions, has created new opportunities for learners at the college to progress successfully into employment, further training or higher education. Nearly half of the apprentices at the college now work in STEM subjects, crucial to regional and national future prosperity.
- The college works effectively with a range of subcontractors who are selected carefully for the subject-specific expertise they provide. Subcontractors' performance is monitored closely by leaders and managers. Achievement rates for learners and apprentices who follow programmes with subcontractors are particularly high.
- Leaders and managers have successfully maintained a culture of very high expectations among learners and staff. Relationships between staff and learners continue to be exceptionally strong, and learners' behaviour is exemplary.
- Senior leaders maintain a relentless focus on sustained, iterative improvements to the college's provision for the benefit of learners and staff. For example, they have evolved a more holistic approach to staff performance review. This is valued highly by staff for the greater ownership they have in applying the college's priorities to their personal

developmental objectives. Alongside this, a revised process for teacher development carefully combines expert practitioner support with much greater opportunities for teachers to observe their peers, debate teaching ideas and share good practice from across the college. As a result, teachers across the college have become increasingly reflective, confident and enthusiastic in trying out new approaches to engage and motivate their learners to succeed. This has, in turn, contributed to sustained improvement in the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment at the college, and the high achievement rates for learners.

- Staff feel exceptionally well supported in their continuing professional development and are enthusiastic about their roles within the college. Staff thrive on the challenge of their work, and staff turnover is below the sector average. Continuing professional development opportunities are very extensive; for example, increasing numbers of staff have developed new curriculum management and leadership skills, enabling them to progress to more senior roles and career opportunities.
- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have significantly improved arrangements to support all learners to develop their English and mathematical skills. Actions include extensive restructuring of timetables, introducing these subjects into cross-college conferences to emphasise their importance to learners, increasing hours on discrete courses, recruiting new specialist teachers and supporting existing teachers to gain level 4 qualifications in English and mathematics. As a result, learners clearly understand the message that good English and mathematical skills are essential for their next steps and future opportunities, and achievement rates in both English and maths have continued to improve significantly.
- Leaders and managers very effectively ensure that the college continues to provide a highly inclusive environment for learners, where shared values of mutual respect and tolerance are clearly evident. These attitudes are engendered by staff and reinforced at every level throughout learners' time at the college. Supported by frequent whole-college training, teachers regularly debate how they can best promote equality, diversity and British values within their lessons.

The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements are robust and highly effective. Governors are highly committed to the college's transformative agenda for skills development and are strongly supportive of the principal's actions in driving this forward.
- Governors scrutinise closely and very effectively the performance of the college, drawing on their extensive commercial and educational skills and experience. They analyse rigorously key performance measures, using live data from the college performance dashboard, and challenge senior leaders on any deviation from planned outcomes and agreed targets. Governors are unflinching in their pursuit of any areas of concern.
- Governors engage regularly with staff and learners at college meetings, by undertaking learning walks and participating in training sessions delivered by college staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers continue to give high priority to the safeguarding of learners, including those who follow programmes with subcontractors. Learners feel safe and know how to raise any concerns they may have.
- The comprehensive safeguarding arrangements seen at the previous inspection have been maintained, and have been very effectively developed to comply fully with the 'Prevent' duty. Staff speak confidently about the impact of the training they have received to identify and support learners at risk of radicalisation or extremism.
- Staff ensure that learners are made fully aware of safeguarding matters at induction and reinforce these well in tutorials and reviews. As a result, learners can clearly describe how to keep safe, including when using the internet, and how the college promotes their understanding of British values. In addition, employers' knowledge and understanding are carefully considered when apprenticeships and work placements are allocated.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Leaders and managers have worked closely with a range of employers and partners to develop learning facilities of an exceptional standard, including a range of new buildings that contain a wide array of very good specialist equipment. Teachers make excellent use of these resources and, in addition, develop varied, creative and stimulating learning materials that inspire learners to succeed.
- Most teachers and assessors make very careful use of the extensive information they hold on learners' prior attainment and recent progress; they plan lessons that ensure that work is demanding for all members of the group and helps them to achieve their potential. Where learners struggle, teachers are quick to identify this and to help them catch up.
- Highly qualified staff use their excellent subject knowledge and vocational skills, and extensive links with employers to provide lessons that relate closely to the needs and expectations of industry. This motivates and inspires learners exceptionally well. Learners enjoy their studies and develop a very good range of skills that prepare them well for employment. Employers are involved very thoroughly in planning on- and off-the-job training for apprentices. Employer mentors provide excellent help that enables apprentices to link their learning to their job roles and develop their skills in the workplace.
- College staff develop highly effective relationships with the parents and carers of learners who take 16 to 19 study programmes. Parents and carers are provided with very clear guidance from staff, including the principal, about the college's services and expectations. They receive regular updates about learners' progress through consultation evenings and concise progress reports. Where concerns arise about the progress of a young person, staff quickly make contact with parents and carers and resolve problems swiftly and effectively.
- Staff provide excellent support for those learners and apprentices who need extra help in their studies. Staff assess learners' and apprentices' needs thoroughly before they enrol ensuring that they receive the help they need as soon as they start their programme.

Staff receive high-quality training to enable them to support learners; they have access to and make excellent use of an extensive range of equipment and software to help them. College staff make highly effective use of well-established links with external agencies that allow them to access specialist support services for learners with specific needs, such as those who are hearing or visually impaired.

- Over the last 10 years, managers have introduced progressive and sustained improvements to cross-college approaches to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In the current year, the introduction of highly effective 'teaching triangles', 'teach meets' and 'bring and brag' sessions allow teachers to discuss and share practice. These approaches are contributing to a further, very positive improvement in the college's culture which encourages teachers to be professionally reflective, confident, enthusiastic and willing to take risks to bring the best out of their learners.
- Teachers and assessors assess learners' and apprentices' progress very effectively and frequently. They use the information this provides to adjust their teaching. Teachers make very good use of questioning, both to assess progress and to develop further learners' and apprentices' understanding. Almost all teachers and assessors provide incisive feedback that helps learners to understand what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Learners and apprentices are eager to learn from feedback and capitalise on the information provided to make substantial and sustained progress.
- Teachers and assessors include themes related to diversity and life in modern Britain very well in lessons and progress reviews. This provides learners with a comprehensive understanding of these important topics. For example, in business studies, learners examine gender stereotyping in advertising and are able to articulate very clearly, well-informed views about the topic.
- Staff assess the English and mathematics skills of learners accurately when they start their programmes. As a result, teachers understand the level of support required by each learner and plan their lessons accordingly. Teachers and apprentices' assessors develop learners' English and mathematical skills exceptionally well across all provision types. They provide an industry-based context to the learning of these subjects, so that apprentices can apply their skills very effectively in the workplace. The quality of discrete English and mathematics lessons has improved, and current learners make good progress.
- Staff provide a range of excellent additional services to help learners who may be struggling with English and mathematics. For example, the 'Learning Hub', a dedicated study space within the college, provides additional sessions every week and 'Reach Week', a week where normal timetables are suspended, is used to provide intensive support for those preparing for exams.
- Assessors frequently review apprentices' progress with them. They help apprentices to set challenging short-term targets and support them very well to achieve these. Following thorough assessments, learners on 16 to 19 study programmes are given clear and challenging targets for improvement. As a result, the vast majority of learners and apprentices make excellent progress. However, learners with high needs do not have enough involvement in setting targets for their own personal development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- Teachers and assessors are determined that learners and apprentices achieve well, despite poor experiences and underachievement of many while at school. The college has very successfully developed the '4 As' model of expectations focusing on aspiration, attitude, attendance and achievement, and all staff make these explicit for learners from the outset. They use this model to raise learners' expectations of what they can achieve and continually reinforce high expectations for all learners. This encourages learners to become curious and enthusiastic. As a result, they have excellent attitudes and take pride in their work.
- Learners' and apprentices' attendance at learning and work is high in almost all subjects. College managers and staff set high expectations from the start of learners' and apprentices' programmes and consistently reinforce these throughout their time at the college. Learners and apprentices recognise that good attendance and punctuality are essential attributes that employers value.
- Managers and staff have ensured that the college is a highly inclusive environment where differences are tolerated and effectively celebrated. Learners demonstrate very high levels of mutual respect for each other and respect for staff. Learners' behaviour is excellent.
- Learners and apprentices have excellent access to very high-quality careers advice and guidance. This enables them to make well-informed choices about appropriate programmes to follow to achieve their long-term education and career aspirations.
- College managers use the extensive partnerships they have established with employers to provide learners with excellent work-placement and employer-mentoring opportunities. Through these they improve significantly their vocational and work-related skills and behaviours. All learners on study programmes undertake very well-planned and subject-related work experience.
- The personal improvement programme that all learners aged 16 to 18, including apprentices, undertake on a weekly basis, covers a wide range of topics that are very successful in raising learners' and apprentices' awareness about a range of topics such as staying safe, life in modern Britain, and physical and mental health and well-being. The programme also very successfully helps learners and apprentices to develop the skills and behaviours necessary to achieve and progress in their studies and careers.
- College staff work very effectively with a range of partners to identify existing and emerging risks that learners could experience in their everyday lives. Building very well on the information they gather, managers and staff introduce very appropriate approaches to enable learners to understand the risks they face and protect themselves from danger.
- Managers and staff are highly sensitive to the issues that young people in modern Britain experience. They take effective and proactive steps to identify the growing number of learners who experience anxiety, relationship issues and poor mental health. Through a very extensive range of support mechanisms they help learners to develop and implement strategies to cope with the problems they experience, remain on their programmes and achieve.

- Learners benefit greatly from an extensive range of well-planned, cross-college activities which raise their awareness about life in modern Britain and their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Outcomes for learners

Outstanding

- By participating in very well-managed, highly individualised and effective learning programmes, learners and apprentices make significant progress in achieving their qualification goals and in gaining excellent professional, vocational and wider work-related skills. Highly effective additional support enables the learners who need it to make excellent progress.
- Achievement rates for learners aged 16 to 18, adults and apprentices of all ages have remained high and well above the averages for general further education colleges over the three years up to 2015/16. As a result of the high expectations set for learners through the '4 As' programme, a very high proportion of learners have remained on their courses in the current year. Retention rates are higher than for the same point in time last year.
- Already high in 2015/16, the proportion of learners on study programmes and adult learning programmes who make good progress in improving their skills and achieving qualifications has continued to improve in 2016/17. The very large majority of learners on study programmes at all levels make excellent progress in achieving their educational, qualification and personal development goals.
- The proportions of learners and apprentices that achieve their planned qualifications are very high across almost all programmes and subjects, including those delivered by subcontractors. In the very small minority of subjects where achievement rates are not consistently high, managers have put robust plans in place to bring about necessary improvements.
- Learners and apprentices produce work of a particularly high standard which meets and often exceeds demanding industrial and commercial standards.
- In response to concerns they had, leaders and managers very successfully implemented a rigorous and well-considered strategy to improve achievement rates in GCSE and functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. A good proportion of learners and apprentices now improve their skills and achieve qualifications in these subjects. The proportion of learners aged 16 to 18 who achieved A* to C grades in GCSE mathematics in 2015/16 was more than twice the national average. In GCSE English, the proportion of learners aged 16 to 18 who achieved A* to C grades was nine percentage points higher than the national average. Leaders and managers continue to pursue diligently further improvements, particularly in functional skills mathematics at level 2.
- Through their programmes with the college, learners and apprentices of all ages are particularly well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment. Almost all learners and apprentices who achieve progress to further or higher education, employment, or an apprenticeship.
- Managers monitor the progress and outcomes of different groups of learners very effectively and take robust action to close any gaps. In 2015/16 there were no discernible differences in outcomes for different groups of learners, other than for adults who had a

recognised learning difficulty and/or disability, who achieved less well than adults who had no recognised difficulty and/or disability. As a result of the provision of much improved support provided for these learners, they now make progress and achieve in line with their peers.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Approximately 3,470 learners follow academic and vocational study programmes, from entry level to level 3. Just over half of the learners follow level 3 programmes. The largest subject areas are: science and mathematics; health, public services and care; engineering and manufacturing technologies; leisure, travel and tourism; arts, media and publishing; business and administration; and construction.
- Highly skilled and enthusiastic teachers ensure that the very large majority of learners remain in learning and achieve their qualifications. Learners make quick progress and produce exceptionally high standards of work in the large majority of subjects.
- Teachers have very high expectations of their learners and insist that they dedicate a great deal of time and effort to their studies and to extra-curricular activities. The large majority of lessons are highly productive and characterised by a quick pace and energy. Learners are encouraged to think independently and solve problems that require a multi-skilled approach; they respond very well to this, often working very effectively with their peers to solve problems and improve their skills. For example, in beauty therapy, learners demonstrate highly advanced anti-cellulite treatments with ease and skill.
- Teachers are highly motivational, raising the aspirations and self-belief of learners, inspiring them to make the most of their time at college. This, coupled with very high-quality careers advice, ensures that learners have well-considered plans for their futures and that they understand the steps they need to take to succeed. As a result, the overwhelming majority of learners progress to sustained employment, apprenticeships, or higher education.
- The conduct and attitude of learners are exemplary. Learners are courteous, professional and respectful to their peers, staff and external visitors. In lessons, learners involve themselves fully and demonstrate a keenness to do well. Learners' attendance is high. In almost all lessons, they arrive on time.
- The assessment of learners' progress is highly effective. In lessons, teachers skilfully use a range of strategies to acquire a strong insight into the skills gaps of individual learners. They use this information well to plan activities that meet learners' individual needs and prior learning. In the large majority of lessons, feedback and target setting are comprehensive, and learners have a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. Learners respond very well to this feedback and make considerable progress as a result of the support and guidance they receive.
- The management of study programmes is very successful. Teachers have secured high levels of commitment from learners to participate in the wider aspects of study programmes such as work experience, enrichment, English and mathematics. Learners benefit enormously from a wide range of additional opportunities available to them and the large majority of learners achieve additional qualifications that supplement their main

programme of study very effectively. For example, in sport, all learners complete community sports leader qualifications and many complete football coaching qualifications.

- Teachers and curriculum managers relentlessly pursue partnerships with organisations that enhance learners' experiences significantly. Learners have access to very high-quality work-experience opportunities in an impressive range of settings. In addition, many learners work on innovative cross-curricular projects. These provide rich opportunities for them to showcase and celebrate the work they produce in lessons. For example, learners in art are producing an adult colouring book to be sold in the souvenir shop of a local heritage museum and learners in drama are devising a piece of theatre for the Halloween festival at the same museum.
- Learners on vocational programmes make rapid progress in developing very good work-related skills relating to their planned careers. Learners value and make very good use of the exceptional facilities and accommodation that are available to them. Industry-standard equipment and software enable learners to produce practical work of a very high standard. As a result, learners entering employment and further vocational study leave the college work-ready, and as attractive candidates for prospective employers. For example, in business studies, two learners have had their enterprise projects selected to present at the prestigious final stage of the Peter Jones Enterprise Foundation.
- Learners develop their personal and social skills very well throughout their time at the college. As a result of highly effective and carefully planned lessons and extra-curricular activities, learners grow in confidence and maturity, making significant progress in their oral communication, collaborative working and leadership skills. For example, learners in hair and beauty have used their own initiative to visit local hospital wards at weekends to offer treatments and therapy to patients, a project that also demonstrates the compassion they have developed for contributing to wider society.
- Teachers successfully develop the English skills of learners and focus very well on spelling, punctuation and grammar in lessons and in marked work. Learners develop their skills of discussion and argumentation well and are able to challenge each other's viewpoint robustly and respectfully in lessons. As a result of well-thought-out improvement planning, the teaching of discrete English and maths has improved significantly this year, and is now consistently good; learners are making significantly better progress in lessons than they were in previous years.
- Teachers take the opportunities, where they arise in lessons, to promote the diversity of modern Britain very effectively to their learners. Teachers ensure that learners have a strong understanding of current global topics and link this well to securing a good understanding amongst learners of British values. For example, in business, learners took part in a highly effective debate about the manifestos of the major political parties in the approach to the upcoming general election.

Adult learning programmes

Outstanding

- Around 2,640 adults follow a range of programmes at Dudley College of Technology. Around half take qualifications in English, mathematics, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and employability. The remaining adults follow professional and technical programmes, mainly in: health, public services and care; engineering and

manufacturing technologies; construction; retail and commercial enterprise; and business and administration.

- Adult learning programmes are particularly well managed, meeting very well the skill development needs of both learners and local employers. Managers and staff use the excellent partnerships they have established with employers, community groups and professional bodies to design and deliver highly effective programmes that enable adults to gain the skills and qualifications they need to progress into work or further learning. Almost all adults who achieve progress onto further learning programmes at a higher level or find work, with many examples of where they do both.
- Managers and staff design highly individualised programmes and learning activities. Through these, adults who often lack confidence or have other barriers to participating in learning that prevent them from attending college achieve well and make significant progress compared to their starting points.
- Managers and staff are very well qualified, extremely enthusiastic and have particularly high expectations of learners. The vast majority of learners are highly motivated as a result. They gain in confidence significantly through their programmes at the college.
- The cross-college strategy to bring about improvement to the quality of English and mathematics lessons and learning activities has been very successful in improving the experience and outcomes for adult learners. The vast majority of learners now make substantial and sustained progress in developing their English and mathematics skills in both subject-specific essential skills classes, and in professional and technical subjects.
- Teachers plan learning very effectively to build on learners' prior attainment and life experiences. Learners work towards highly detailed, ambitious and personalised targets that frequently challenge them to achieve beyond the requirements of the qualification they are taking and which extend greatly their personal and work-related skills. This prepares them very well to achieve their future career aims and personal goals.
- Learners improve their confidence markedly through participating in their learning. They keenly articulate the benefits of their learning. Staff make them feel valued and respected – which raises their self-esteem considerably. Adults attend well and are punctual.
- Staff foster very effectively an ethos of respect and tolerance which adults respond to particularly well. Learners improve their understanding about life in modern Britain significantly through topics, discussions and activities which teachers very effectively integrate into lessons.
- Staff provide highly effective support for learners. Learners who require additional help in their learning, or to manage personal and family issues so that they can participate, receive excellent and highly personalised support so that they can attend, remain on courses and achieve. Learners receive high-quality advice and guidance that build effectively on prior attainment and prepare them well for their next steps in learning and work.
- Staff take very effective steps to ensure that adults are kept safe. Learners confidently articulate how to stay safe and understand how to report any concerns they have.

Apprenticeships

Outstanding

- Just over half of the 4,176 apprentices at the college are on intermediate apprenticeships. The large majority of the remaining apprentices are following advanced apprenticeships with a small number on higher-level apprenticeships. Most apprentices follow programmes in: engineering and manufacturing technologies; construction; leisure, travel and tourism; health and social care; business and administration; and information and communication technology.
- Management of the apprenticeship provision is outstanding. The courses available meet the needs of employers and apprentices particularly well. College staff and employers work highly effectively and collaboratively to monitor apprentices' progress. As a result, a high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications within the planned timescale.
- Apprentices benefit significantly from carefully planned learning programmes that reflect their individual needs and starting points. On- and off-the-job training are very well coordinated. Highly effective workplace mentors help to ensure that apprentices make good progress by linking the theoretical aspects of the apprentices' learning to the job roles that they undertake at work and their skills development. As a result, apprentices make significant contributions in their workplaces that employers value highly. Almost all apprentices remain in employment at the end of their course.
- Teachers and assessors are enthusiastic, positive role models for apprentices. They use their excellent occupational knowledge and technical experience highly effectively to extend and deepen apprentices' knowledge and skills. As a result, apprentices develop an extensive range of personal, technical and work-related skills that employers need. For example, apprentices on manufacturing programmes successfully review and improve processes in the workplace, making their employers' businesses significantly more cost-efficient. Social care apprentices sensitively support service users suffering with dementia, meeting their individual care needs very well. Hairdressing apprentices skilfully cut and colour clients' hair to a high industry standard in very busy commercial salons.
- Apprentices develop their English and mathematical skills very well. Teachers integrate English and mathematics into practical lessons very effectively and, as a result, apprentices learn to apply these skills confidently at work. Apprentices routinely study English and mathematics to a level higher than that required by their apprenticeship framework in preparation for progression to higher-level programmes.
- Teachers and assessors provide highly effective support for apprentices. They set and agree clear and challenging short-term targets for apprentices during regular reviews of their progress. This enables almost all apprentices to make very good progress towards achieving their qualification and career goals. Apprentices with additional needs, such as dyslexia, are supported very effectively and as a result make significant progress.
- Apprentices produce work that is of a very high standard. Apprentices work very well in the college and in the workplace. They demonstrate a very high level of skill in their subject areas. The assessment of apprentices' work undertaken by staff is thorough and highly accurate. The verbal feedback that teachers and assessors give to apprentices is extremely constructive and supportive, enabling them to improve their work further.
- Careers guidance is highly effective. College staff work very well with employers to recruit apprentices. In the early stages of a programme, staff use very well initial information,

advice and guidance and diagnostic assessments to ensure that apprentices are on the right course. Teachers, assessors and employers provide apprentices with highly personalised, ongoing careers advice and guidance. As a result, the vast majority of apprentices are very well aware of the options available when they complete their programmes and what they need to achieve to take their planned next steps.

- Staff take particularly effective steps to ensure that apprentices are aware of safe working practices and know how to keep themselves safe. They check frequently to evaluate if apprentices have any concerns they wish to raise. Apprentices know what to do if they have safeguarding concerns at work.
- Apprentices' understanding of life in modern Britain is good. Teachers and assessors ensure that apprentices understand how these values affect them in their workplaces and local communities through highly effective reviews. All apprentices aged 16 to 18 participate in the very effective personal improvement programme that learners on study programmes follow. Apprentices show high levels of respect for others, and are confident and articulate.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- Dudley College of Technology receives high needs funding for 46 learners. Forty of these learners follow vocational programmes from levels 1 to 3 and the remaining six are on discrete programmes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities at pre-entry and entry level.
- Managers have high expectations of learners and support well trained and experienced staff very well to meet learners' needs. Staff provide well-planned support so learners integrate well into mainstream courses and prepare for adult life.
- Managers have developed strong external partnerships with a wide range of specialist organisations so that staff receive appropriate support and training that helps them respond effectively to learners' support needs. For example, speech and language therapists visit to work with individual learners, cascade strategies and share good practice with college staff.
- Teachers and support staff know their learners well. They use previous assessments effectively to plan learning, which enables learners to build their confidence and abilities to concentrate and learn new skills.
- Most learners develop good practical skills and make good progress in lessons. They follow instructions carefully in lessons. The vast majority of learners pass their qualifications and progress to the next level course.
- Staff manage learners' challenging behaviour very effectively in discrete provision. They consistently reinforce key strategies which they calmly share with learners to support them in managing their own behaviour better.
- The college works closely with other providers to ensure that transition is effective both into the college and when learners leave. Staff provide learners with good, impartial information, advice and guidance. They support learners well to access necessary financial and specialist learning support and equipment, and specialist professional agencies including physiotherapy, occupational therapies and mental health counsellors.

- Learners on discrete courses benefit from an interesting and varied programme of practical activities to provide experience of work. Through this they improve their understanding of the concept of work. A new and innovative woodland project enables learners to explore the history of their community and reflect the changes over time in creative artwork for the woodland walk. Others enjoy work in the vegetable garden and kitchen, and visits to conservation garden projects. Learners in mainstream courses benefit from practising their work skills, timekeeping and behaviour management through well-planned work experience.
- Teachers integrate English and mathematics into discrete provision, routinely linking the skills very well into the practical life skills programmes. In cookery classes, learners match words and images to establish a list of ingredients then improve their money-handling and counting skills when buying the ingredients. Others develop their skills in English, mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT) very effectively through text processing, costing and the use of computer images in the print workshop.
- Learners feel safe in the wider college environment. Support staff skilfully enable learners who have high anxiety levels to successfully integrate and improve their social skills in the busy college environment. Learners behave well and learn to respect and work with others.
- Learners do not have sufficient involvement in setting and evaluating their individual targets. Targets often focus on course requirements and make little reference to learners' individual behavioural and social needs and study skills. This hampers the pace at which learners develop and improve their independence, social skills and self-belief. They do not always develop strategies or practise their coping skills well enough in preparation for independent adult life.
- A minority of vocational tutors do not always use sufficiently the detailed information recorded in learners' electronic learning plans to adapt lessons and materials to meet the needs of learners with high needs.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130475
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	9,697
Principal/CEO	Lowell Williams
Telephone number	01384 363 000
Website	www.dudleycol.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)	561	1,080	1,009	1,124	1,901	414	1	25
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	829	1,621	739	860	14	113		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	46							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Central Construction Training Crosby Management Training Lean Education and Development Limited DJS Training and Consultancy Limited Sport Structures Education Community Interest Company Stanfords Training Ltd							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, curriculum and standards, 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

Malcolm Fraser, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Russ Henry	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Parton	Ofsted Inspector
Tony Day	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Hedges	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Fobister	Ofsted Inspector
Margaret Garai	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Winchcombe	Ofsted Inspector

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