

Sussex Coast College

Inspection report

Unique reference number:	130665
Name of lead inspector:	Richard Moore HMI
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Type of provider:	General further education college
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Information about the provider

1. Sussex Coast College is a medium-sized general further education college situated in Hastings. Both its main campus in the town centre and the technology centre at Ore Valley, just outside the town, opened in 2010. It also has two specialist centres for motor vehicle and energy studies. The college serves two very different local areas. While the surrounding district of Rother has an economy that is rurally based, Hastings has one of the highest unemployment rates in the South East with a population that is very dependent for jobs on seasonal low-wage economies and small businesses. Transport links are poor and key indicators of deprivation are consistently above local and regional averages.
2. The college's catchment area incorporates ten secondary schools which have very wide variations in the proportion of 16-year-olds who achieve five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics. Students enrolling at the college generally have low levels of prior attainment. Significant changes in Hastings have led to the closure of much of the previous sixth form provision, the establishing of two new academies and the opening of a sixth form centre at the college.
3. The college offers provision in 13 subject areas, with the largest numbers of students in preparation for life and work, arts, leisure, travel and tourism and retail and commercial. It is intending to expand its commercial activities significantly in 2011/12, particularly work-based learning programmes for young people. The college also offers a range of adult and community learning courses and higher education programmes. In 2010/11, there were 2,471 full-time students of whom about 75% were aged 16 to 18.
4. The current Principal joined the college in January 2011. Since then, the college has gone through a process of restructuring its senior leadership team and making a number of new management appointments. It has also re-organised a number of the curriculum areas and introduced new job roles.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Bexhill Skills Centre (full-cost provision for students aged 14 to 16: motor vehicle)
 - Joint Training Ltd (employer responsive provision: electrical engineering)
 - Sigta (employer responsive provision: engineering)
 - Sussex Downs College (European Social Funding provision for students not in education, employment or training)
 - City College, Brighton and Hove (European Social Funding provision for programmes for the unemployed).

6. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
- Manley Summers Housing (employer responsive provision: painting and decorating)
 - CJI Solutions – Easton Training Centre (employer responsive provision: business)
 - Millennium Academy (employer responsive provision: plumbing)
 - 5E Ltd (employer responsive provision: information technology).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
<p>Provision for young learners: 14 to 16</p> <p>Further education (16 to 18)</p> <p>Foundation learning</p>	<p>643 part-time students</p> <p>1,860 full-time students</p> <p>169 part-time students</p> <p>263 full-time students</p>
<p>Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)</p>	<p>611 full-time students</p> <p>1,414 part-time students</p>
<p>Employer provision: Train to Gain</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p>	<p>432 students</p> <p>287 apprentices</p>

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 4
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Capacity to improve	Grade 4
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	4
Quality of provision	4
Leadership and management	4
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3

Subject areas	
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Science and mathematics	4
Construction	3
Arts, media and publishing	3
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	4

Overall effectiveness

7. Sussex Coast is an inadequate college. The new Principal and senior leadership team are striving hard to bring about improvements and are ambitious for the college, but the recent restructuring and introduction of new systems are not yet showing a measurable impact on success. Outcomes for students are inadequate in most of the significant areas of the college's provision. They are particularly poor for students aged 16 to 18 and apprentices in work-based learning, but are satisfactory for adult students. Learners feel safe in the college and work safely as a result of the generally good attention to health and safety.
8. The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Good practice in teaching and learning and other aspects of the provision is shared insufficiently by those curriculum areas where performance has improved over the last year. Lesson observations do not yet bring about meaningful improvements in teachers'

classroom practice or students' learning experiences. Assessment is also weak in many areas of the college.

9. The range of the college's provision is satisfactory with a good choice of courses at advanced level, but too few at foundation level, which hinders progression opportunities for students. The college's arrangements for advice and guidance do not always place students on the right level of course. Academic and personal support for students is too inconsistent.
10. The college's progress since the last inspection has been inadequate. It has not rectified areas for improvement identified at that time and almost all areas of the provision have declined in quality, significantly so in a number of instances. The college has not secured a settled senior management team. As yet, the college does not focus sufficiently on improvement processes to drive up the quality of provision.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are inadequate overall for students aged 16 to 18 and satisfactory for adults. Success rates for young people have declined over the last two years and are now well below national averages at all levels. They are satisfactory for adult students who perform particularly well on foundation level courses.
- A-level success rates are low and have been below the national average for the last two years. AS-level courses perform particularly poorly. Progression rates to the second year of A levels have been very low for the last two years but have improved to satisfactory in 2011/12.
- The prior attainment of students aged 16 to 18 studying at advanced level is below average compared to similar colleges. The small number of students who complete their A levels progress very well overall, but the much larger cohort studying AS levels makes only expected progress. Data show considerable variation in students' progress across the range of vocational subject areas.
- The quality of the provision in science and mathematics and skills for life is inadequate. The management teams in these areas have developed plans to bring about improvement, but it is too early to see whether these are having the necessary impact.
- Work-based learning success rates are very low. Overall success rates for apprentices are very significantly below national averages. Too few students on Train to Gain programmes complete their qualifications in the time allocated to them.
- Teaching and learning are inadequate. Some good classroom practice exists across the college, but too few teachers plan activities and tasks sufficiently well to extend students' knowledge and practical abilities and to ensure they make good or better progress. Teachers lack the confidence to promote equality and diversity in lessons when appropriate opportunities arise.

Resources are good but teachers' use of information and learning technology (ILT) requires further training and development.

- The college accurately identifies that its observation scheme is insufficiently rigorous and precise to improve teaching and learning and is taking steps to introduce a better procedure and more targeted support for staff. The present system inflates the performance of teaching and focuses insufficiently on learning.
- Assessment is weak in too many areas of the college. In many cases, teachers return work late and written feedback does not identify clearly enough what students need to do to improve. Many students do not have sufficiently detailed or meaningful learning targets that accurately reflect the outcomes of initial assessment.
- The range of provision at the college is satisfactory. The choice of courses is good at advanced level but insufficient at foundation level in some curriculum areas. The offer does not always provide coherent progression routes to further study or employment.
- Partnership working is satisfactory. Community partners value the college's flexible approach in creating solutions for students who find it difficult to engage with learning. Partnerships in some curriculum areas and with local schools are under developed. The college does not yet involve employers sufficiently in the development of the curriculum.
- Information, advice and guidance for students are inadequate. They are not always effective in placing students on the right course or in giving them sufficient information to make well-informed decisions about progression. Students value the effective personal support they receive. However, the college has not yet successfully implemented its new arrangements for group and individual support in many curriculum areas.
- The Principal has involved the staff fully in developing a new vision for the college. He has clear priorities for its future and the community it serves. However, the college is in the early stages of recovery and does not yet have a settled senior leadership team. In two of the four subject areas inspected, leadership and management were judged to be inadequate. Governors have not been sufficiently rigorous in the monitoring of the college's performance.
- Equality and diversity are satisfactory overall, but their promotion through the curriculum is under developed. The Principal has worked hard to raise the profile of equality and diversity across the college and students respect each other and their teachers. The college does not yet routinely analyse performance data for different groups of students.
- Self-assessment is improving and the most recent summary self-assessment report identified many of the areas for improvement found by inspectors. Self-assessment at curriculum level is less well developed and the overall process is not yet sufficiently inclusive. Managers have worked hard to develop new quality improvement arrangements, but it is too early to judge their impact.

What does Sussex Coast College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates on poorly performing courses through much closer monitoring of entry criteria, more rigorous target setting and better academic support.
- Improve success rates for work-based learners through closer monitoring of their progress and more effective involvement of vocational staff in recruitment of apprentices and in assessment and review procedures.
- Provide further training for lesson observers to ensure that they are diligent in judging the extent to which students learn and their progress in lessons.
- Improve the quality and use of initial assessment to ensure that lessons are planned to meet the needs of all students in order to enable them to achieve to the best of their ability.
- Implement a clear and comprehensive additional learning support strategy to ensure that support is targeted at those students who are most at risk of not achieving their qualification.
- Develop a better range of provision at foundation level to ensure that progression routes are clearer for students. Involve employers more in curriculum design.
- Prepare students better for progression to further and/or higher education through a coherent structure of individual and group support and by giving them more detailed and timely advice and guidance.
- Ensure that governors and staff at all levels take responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of their work so that any shortfalls in performance can be identified early and appropriate action taken.
- Ensure that staff are trained so that they have the expertise and confidence to implement policies in relation to equality and diversity, student support and all aspects of teaching and learning.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the friendly and supportive staff
- the way in which the Principal and senior managers make themselves available to talk to students
- the high-quality learning environment created by the new campuses and the very good facilities and equipment
- the improvements to the standards of discipline and knowing what is expected of them
- the safe environment provided by the college
- the range of sporting and other enrichment activities
- the class sizes, which are much smaller than they are at school

- the convenient location of the college.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the organisation of teaching so there is better cover for absent staff, fewer timetable clashes and less changing of classrooms
- the range of extra-curricular activities available at the Ore Valley campus
- drinking water to be available on all floors of the college
- the sound proofing in classrooms
- the ease of accessibility through doors around the college
- the range of activities that take place in the community
- course administration, particularly that related to enrolment procedures
- more opportunities for students from different curriculum areas to meet and to develop friendships
- the preparation for progression to further and/or higher education.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**What employers like:**

- the improved communications and responsiveness of the college
- the college's inspirational leadership and outward looking culture
- the way in which the college helps to promote vacancies with employers and offers advice and assistance with interviewing potential apprentices
- the excellent social enterprise activities and very positive community cohesion work carried out by the college
- the new campus which acts as a highly visible message to the local community of the importance of education and training
- the productive partnership working.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the experience and qualifications of some tutors
- more work experience for students
- the quality of careers guidance, particularly for those students who are not thinking of doing an apprenticeship or of going to university
- students' employability skills
- some of the entry criteria to courses which act as a barrier to adult students
- the college's flexibility and responsiveness on some occasions.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 4

11. The college has inadequate capacity to improve. Recent and ongoing management changes show recognition of the challenge facing the college to secure further improvements and accountability at all levels. The Principal, supported by the governors and senior leadership team, has a clear vision and strategic plan. Staff share this desire to bring about improvement. However, the senior staffing structure is not yet stable. Governors have not overseen the performance of the college with sufficient rigour. The college's efforts to improve the quality of provision and to rectify areas for improvement from the previous inspection have failed. The performance of the college has declined significantly since 2008/09 to the point where it has identified eight of its curriculum areas as being inadequate. Despite the recent introduction of new processes and procedures across the college, inspectors judged that almost all aspects of the provision have declined since the previous inspection and were inadequate at the time of the inspection.
12. Students' success rates have been well below national averages for the last two years and show a declining trend over that time. They are particularly low for much of the provision for students aged 16 to 18 who account for three quarters of the full-time cohort. Success rates for adult students are satisfactory. Functional skills remain a significant challenge for the college as does securing improvements in apprenticeship outcomes.
13. The most recent summary self-assessment identifies many features of the provision accurately with the notable exception of capacity to improve. The college has benefited from good recent analysis of its performance in this regard, although the overall process of self-assessment is not yet sufficiently inclusive. Self-assessment is better at cross-college level than in subject areas. The college is focusing rightly on improving the quality of lessons, but lesson observation is not yet rigorous enough to drive up the quality of teaching and learning.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 4

14. Outcomes for students are inadequate. Data used to calculate success rates have been unreliable and could have a further negative impact on published success rates. Notwithstanding, success rates for students aged 16 to 18 have declined markedly over the last two years and are now eight percentage points below the national average for similar colleges. This poor performance is most evident at advanced level and is exacerbated by particularly low success rates in AS-level qualifications. Retention rates are satisfactory, but many students do not achieve their qualification successfully. In contrast, the smaller cohort of adults has satisfactory success rates. They are high for adults studying at foundation level. The prior attainment of students studying at advanced level is generally below average compared to similar colleges. Many of these students

make good progress overall from their starting points, but data show considerable variation in this respect across the range of subject areas.

15. The college's analysis of data to monitor trends of significant minority groups is underdeveloped due to insufficiently thorough collection of students' details at enrolment. Inspectors' judgements about the performance of different groups of students were hindered by the reliability of college data. However, students with additional learning needs in many areas of the college do not perform as well as other students for whom success rates are already low.
16. Overall success rates in the college's apprenticeship provision are very low, as are success rates within the planned time for both apprenticeships and Train to Gain provision.
17. Students enjoy their courses and college life. They value the impact the new college campuses have on their morale, and punctuality in lessons is good. Students on practical courses develop appropriate technical skills and knowledge. Students feel safe at the college and demonstrate high standards of respect towards each other and their teachers. Student behaviour is good. Many students participate in sports activities and the highly visible college gym is particularly popular.
18. The development of students' economic and social well-being is inadequate. The college places a strong emphasis on developing students' employability skills through working in realistic work environments, with some particularly good examples in hair and beauty and catering. However, very few students achieve functional skills and the uptake of GCSE mathematics and English is very low. Inspectors agreed with students regarding the need for more timely advice on progression to employment and further or higher education.

The quality of provision

Grade 4

19. Teaching and learning are inadequate. Too much teaching fails to meet students' individual needs and prevents students from achieving their full potential. In the better lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan learning which contains varied activities to stimulate students' interest. Most teachers promote safe working practices in the classroom. However, in too many lessons, the teacher dominates the class and students' interest in the subject wanes. Teachers do not take sufficient account of students' prior attainment or identified learning needs to plan lessons which meet the full range of students' abilities. They often have insufficient confidence in their knowledge of equality and diversity to improve students' cultural awareness.
20. Resources for teaching and learning are generally good. Students speak favourably about the very good standards of the new accommodation and learning resources. High-quality learning environments are provided for students in a number of areas of the college, for example catering and hair and beauty. However, some classrooms are noisy and cramped and extra-curricular

activities taking place in the main atrium at the college can prove a distraction to learning. Teachers' use of ILT is a developing area of their practice as teachers become accustomed to the new resources available to them, but too many use the technology in classrooms for presenting notes rather than to enhance learning.

21. The college is putting into place new strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning but is doing this at a time of considerable change in other processes and systems. The newness of these strategies has reduced their effectiveness to date, as demonstrated by the inconsistencies seen by inspectors in the quality of teaching and learning. Lesson observation grades are over generous and observers fail to take sufficient account of learning and students' progress. The sharing of good practice in teaching and learning is insufficient.
22. Assessment is unsatisfactory in many areas of the college. Although students in many subjects receive regular coursework and homework, too many teachers do not return marked work quickly enough. The quality of their written feedback is sometimes too brief to be helpful.
23. The college has developed new systems for the use of electronic individual learning plans, target setting and progress reviews for students at intermediate level and above. Not all students have an initial assessment of their learning needs and, where they do, the college does not always use the outcomes productively. Most students understand the targets set for them to achieve their qualifications, but the quality of those targets and the ways in which students' progress is monitored and recorded vary too much across the college. Progress reviews for apprentices set imprecise targets and lack sufficient focus on the development of their skills. Until recently, they were carried out by staff who do not have any vocational experience.
24. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students and employers is satisfactory. It offers a wide range provision with a particularly good mix of academic and vocational courses at advanced level. The number of students aged 16 to 18 studying AS- and A-level subjects has increased significantly over the last two years. Apprentices in training are offered employment in the college where possible. However, the choice of foundation programmes is too limited, with significant gaps in progression routes in a number of curriculum areas. The college does not have a sufficiently rigorous policy regarding the criteria for students to study GCSE mathematics and English.
25. Enrichment is satisfactory. A central team provides a good range of cross-college activities on subjects such as healthy living. Enterprise activities encourage students in some curriculum areas to develop their commercial awareness. Students who participate in enrichment on a regular basis achieve an enrichment diploma to add to their achievements when applying for employment or to higher education. However, the participation generally in

enrichment activities is low. In some cases, timetabling prevents students from attending those activities that interest them. The college provides some good curriculum-based enrichment, including visiting speakers, public performances, competitions and stimulating trips to assist in assignment research.

26. The college's partnership working is satisfactory. It is good at strategic level where the college has taken a leading role in developing initiatives to respond to the downturn in the economy and the challenges this presents to the local community. In some curriculum areas, staff have collaborated successfully with community and voluntary-sector partners to raise participation levels and to promote social inclusion. However, in other subject areas, partnership working is under developed at curriculum level, particularly regarding the involvement of employers in the design of course delivery. Links with local feeder schools are also under developed.
27. Care, guidance and support for students are inadequate. Students value the appropriate levels of personal support they receive and the way in which staff deal promptly with issues raised. However, the college has not yet implemented its new tutorial system fully. The capacity to deliver individual tutorials is limited in some subject areas due to difficulties in recruiting staff with the right level of experience and qualifications. Too many students had not had an individual tutorial at the time of the inspection and this has led to delays in completing crucial paperwork such as university applications for some students. The college does not yet have a comprehensive college-wide group and individual tutorial programme which includes topics such as sex education, staying safe and keeping healthy. Additional learning support resources are good for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and include a wide range of assistive learning technology. However, staff and students are not trained to use these resources effectively.
28. Information, advice and guidance are insufficient to ensure students are placed on the right course to best meet their needs. As identified through self-assessment, those responsible for recruiting students onto courses have not always stipulated suitable entry criteria for a particular qualification. Students at advanced level who are not intending to go to university do not always receive appropriate advice and guidance on the alternative options available to them.

Leadership and management

Grade 4

29. Leadership and management are inadequate. The college has undergone a period of turbulence with a change of principal and several other changes at senior management level. The new Principal has provided clear strategic leadership, involving the staff, in arriving at a new vision and core values for the college. He has started the process of changing the culture so that staff take more responsibility for the college's performance. This has included the re-positioning of the college so that it can play a more significant role in the local community. He is also in the process of using local management information to review the curriculum. Following the identification this year of the seriousness of the significant decline in performance since 2008/09, the senior managers

have focused on improvements to the students' experience across a range of areas including tutorial arrangements and teaching and learning. Managers have introduced new procedures, but it is too early for them to have had a significant impact on outcomes for students. Leadership and management in two of the four inspected subject areas continue to be inadequate and are only satisfactory in the other two areas.

30. Governance is inadequate. Governors have been particularly active in providing expertise and support for the new building, which has substantially improved the college's image in the local area. However, they have been slow to identify significant shortfalls in the college's performance and have not provided sufficient challenge to the college in this respect. They are now more rigorous in their monitoring of performance and have started to challenge the college management more effectively.
31. Safeguarding is satisfactory. The college meets its requirements in carrying out Criminal Records Bureau checks, maintaining a central staff record and in recording and reporting incidents. It has a highly visible team of fourteen safeguarding staff, seven of whom have been trained in safeguarding to intermediate level. They work well with the local authority safeguarding board. All staff have safeguarding training, but the induction aspect for new staff is too short. Members of staff who work with students with high levels of need have not received training about the Mental Capacity Act (2005). The adherence to health and safety issues in the classroom is generally good.
32. Equality and diversity are satisfactory. The Principal has provided a strong lead in this area, coordinating the promotion of themed activities involving the local community. The college has revised its single equalities scheme, but has recognised that it is not sufficiently specific. Policies on anti-bullying and anti-harassment are appropriate. The new building has enabled students with disabilities to have a higher visibility and to be more centrally involved in the life of the college, although aspects of physical accessibility need improvement. The equality and diversity committee has increased its focus on teaching and learning. Staff have received training on the promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum, but not all of them are confident in its implementation.
33. The college's response to the views of students and employers is satisfactory. The most recent student survey shows increased satisfaction with the provision. Students have had a voice on the governing body for many years and make valuable contributions at its meetings. The college responds to feedback from college focus groups and displays the actions taken in a prominent place within the college. However, not all cohorts of students, such as work-based learning apprentices, are represented on the student council. The college recognises from its most recent employer survey the need to be more flexible in working with local businesses.
34. Quality improvement is inadequate. The college's most recent summary self-assessment report is evaluative and accurately identifies the decline in the college's performance. Subject level assessments are less evaluative and staff

and employers have not been sufficiently involved in the process. At the time of the inspection, the college was a few weeks into its planned recovery, and actions taken to improve the quality of the provision were in the early stages of development. Not all staff are implementing the revised arrangements in the way the college envisages and more staff training is needed to support this aim.

35. The college's new buildings are a significant strength and overall resources are good. Staff have good access to professional development and financial management is sound. However, value for money is inadequate given the college's significant under performance for the last two years.

Subject areas

Science and mathematics

Grade 4

Context

36. The college offers A levels and AS levels in mathematics, further mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. At the time of the inspection, 238 students were attending courses in this curriculum area. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and study in the college's sixth form known as Academy 6. Approximately 20 students take GCSE mathematics alongside their A-level courses and a similar number of adults are enrolled on the same qualification or GCSE single science.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are inadequate. Although success rates in A levels are close to the high national averages, students' outcomes in the larger AS provision are unsatisfactory. Pass rates at AS level for biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics were all very low in 2010/11. Too few students progress successfully from AS levels to A-level studies.
- Students make satisfactory progress in their A-level studies, but insufficient progress is made by students at AS level. The proportion of students achieving high grades at both A and AS level is low and many students do not achieve the grade expected of them based on their prior attainment.
- Standards of current students' written and practical work are satisfactory. Students enjoy being at college and attendance and punctuality are very good. They feel safe on the college campus and adhere well to appropriate working practices in laboratory work.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of checks on learning, including directed questioning, to involve all students and to develop their thinking. However, too often the questions are set at a level which does not require sufficient thought. In particular, more able students do not experience appropriate challenge to apply thinking skills such as evaluation and analysis.
- Teachers' use of ILT to support learning is underdeveloped. Although each classroom is equipped with interactive whiteboards, little use is made of computer simulations, video clips, software and internet resources to illustrate scientific and mathematical principles and to show their relevance to real life situations. Links with local industry and businesses to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm are too limited.
- Assessment of students' progress has improved recently and is now good. Students follow a rigorous assessment schedule requiring a formal test using examination-style questions. Curriculum managers monitor individual students' progress against their target grade and intervene effectively where concerns arise. Early monitoring of students during induction and interviews involving

them and their parents or carers ensure students are now placed on the right course.

- Academic support for students in their studies is satisfactory. They value the additional subject workshops provided and the way in which teachers make themselves available to students for individual help.
- Pastoral support is inadequate. Students value the new arrangements for individual support interviews with their personal learning coach. However, a significant minority of students have yet to meet their coach and have not received any tutorial support this year. Support for students applying for university has been slow and some risk being at a disadvantage through the relatively late submission of their university applications.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Course reviews fail to evaluate the performance of individual subjects and lesson observations do not improve the quality of teaching and learning sufficiently. Although self-assessment has improved significantly in its accuracy, it does not yet establish a sufficiently strong relationship between teaching and outcomes. Managers are implementing a sound action plan for this year with conviction and urgency.

What does Sussex Coast College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates and increase the number of students achieving high grades through ensuring that all students are set more challenging tasks in lessons. Train teachers to make more effective use of questioning techniques in order to develop students' critical thinking skills.
- Provide more opportunities for students to use ILT in order to make their learning more personalised and independent of their teachers.
- Implement the new pastoral support arrangements fully to provide more regular personal guidance for students and to ensure that information such as attendance, assessment and homework completion are available centrally to personal learning coaches and curriculum managers.
- Ensure that links with local businesses and industry are developed in order to provide more opportunities for visits and project work so students can see the relevance of their theoretical studies to real life practical situations.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Grade 3

Context

37. The college offers a range of construction courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels in carpentry, bricklaying, painting and decorating and plumbing. Students can also study for a BTEC national diploma in construction. At the time of the inspection, 208 students were studying on full-time courses, of whom just under half were aged 16 to 18. Work-based learning is provided to 50 apprentices. A small number of school pupils aged 14 to 16 attend courses in construction for one day a week.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Success rates for the large number of students on vocational courses improved significantly in 2010/11 and are now above the national average. They are high on a small number of courses such as the intermediate level diplomas in site carpentry and painting and decorating and the advanced level certificate in plumbing. However, they are below national averages for many courses, including the BTEC national diploma in construction.
- Apprenticeship success rates are very low and significantly below the national average. Information, advice and guidance are ineffective in work-based learning and the monitoring of apprentices' progress is weak. Poor vetting of employers has meant that students are unable to carry out the full range of work required to complete their qualification in a timely manner.
- Students' progression to other courses in the college is poor. Only half of the students who enrol on a foundation level course progress to an intermediate level qualification. Attendance rates are satisfactory, but were below the average for the subject area in classes observed during the inspection.
- Students feel safe in college. The promotion of health and safety awareness through course tutors and vocational skills practitioners is good. Students comply fully with health and safety regulations and the wearing of personal protective equipment in workshop areas.
- The standard of students' work is satisfactory. In some instances, students demonstrate particularly good hand skills and perform tasks that stretch their technical ability and knowledge fully. Behaviour is good and students are respectful to teachers and colleagues alike.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan well in the better lessons to incorporate an effective range of learning activities and resources that stimulate students' interest and desire to learn. Less successful teachers do not do this and the use of ILT is underdeveloped to support teaching. All classrooms, and most workshops, have interactive whiteboards, but many teachers lack the confidence to use them.
- The monitoring of students' progress is satisfactory. All teachers maintain tracking sheets for each student but their presentation and content are

inconsistent. They do not always reflect accurately the targets that students are working towards. The only feedback that students receive is verbal as there is insufficient formal opportunity to give constructive advice on how to improve students' practical skills in their individual learning plans.

- The range of courses at foundation level in construction is insufficient. The difference in the skills required for the foundation level multi-craft course and intermediate level specialist subjects is too great for many students to progress with confidence. The uptake of enrichment activities at the Ore Valley campus is low.
- Support and guidance for students are satisfactory. Initial advice and guidance have improved and are now effective in ensuring learners are enrolled on the right course. Students on intermediate and advanced level courses have individual tutorials every six weeks, but the arrangements for students on foundation level courses are unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Quality improvement planning and self-assessment have improved and data are now available to programme area leaders to track course performance. Resources are good with well-equipped workshops and industry standard software. However, the layout of some plumbing workshop areas is poor. The promotion of equality and diversity is insufficient in lessons.

What does Sussex Coast College need to do to improve further?

- Implement a rigorous screening and interview process for both students and employers to ensure students are on the right course with an appropriate employer in order to improve timely success rates on apprenticeship programmes.
- Improve the use of individual learning plans and the quality of target setting so that teachers have more detailed information about students to help them progress and to improve the effectiveness of their own teaching. Ensure all students on foundation level courses have a tutorial to monitor their progress against targets.
- Introduce more trade-specific courses at foundation level to increase the range of qualifications available to students and to make it easier for them to progress to higher level courses with more confidence and the right skills.
- Train staff to be more confident in the use of ILT to enhance the range of learning activities in the classroom and to familiarise students with its possible uses in the construction industry; also train staff to identify opportunities to promote equality and diversity more confidently in the classroom.

Arts, media and publishing

Grade 3

Context

38. The college provides vocational courses in visual and performing arts and media to 290 students and A-level qualifications in art and design to a further 270 students. Most of these students are full time. Just over 70 students, most of whom are adults, study part-time courses in the evening. Two thirds of the students on vocational courses are studying advanced level programmes. Of the A-level students, 191 are on AS levels and the remaining 79 are in their second year of their A-level studies. Just under two thirds of the students are female.

Key findings

- Success rates on vocational courses have improved since 2009/10 and are now satisfactory. They are very high on the BTEC foundation diploma in art and design and satisfactory on the BTEC national diploma in art and design. However, success rates are low on A-level programmes, and are particularly poor on AS levels in media studies and drama and theatre studies. They are satisfactory on AS-level art and design.
- The standards of students' final project work are high and students progress well on vocational courses in performing arts and art and design. Students feel safe at the college, but the reinforcement of health and safety is insufficient in some lessons.
- Progression rates from the first to the second year on both vocational and A-level programmes are poor. Over a quarter of the students on the BTEC subsidiary diploma in art and design has not progressed to the second year. However, progression from intermediate to advanced level courses is good in art and design and a high percentage of students progress from there to higher education.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan most lessons well with activities that stimulate students' interest. Students work purposefully on their own and in groups to develop their practical skills. They use software programmes effectively to create work that is of a high standard. However, in some lessons students have insufficient opportunities to participate fully and do not develop their own independent thinking skills sufficiently.
- Assessments are well planned and identify clearly the timescales for the submission of students' work. Tasks set are vocationally relevant and challenging. Students on the foundation diploma in art and design undertake creative projects to produce imaginative work. Teachers provide constructive and developmental feedback to students to help them progress further.
- Progression routes in the curriculum area are insufficient. Opportunities to progress from intermediate to advanced level courses are satisfactory in art and design, but no foundation courses are available. In performing arts and media, courses are only offered at advanced and intermediate levels.

- The college has well established links with a range of arts providers and uses them well to enable students to gain industry standards of experience in exhibiting and performing their work. The involvement of employers in designing the curriculum is underdeveloped, as are opportunities to carry out work experience.
- Tutorial support is good on vocational programmes, but inadequate on A-level courses. Vocational students receive good individual support to agree targets that are linked realistically to their performance. They are very complimentary about the academic support they receive. A-level students have not currently benefited from the new support arrangements this year, following the introduction of personal learning coaches, and many have not yet had an individual tutorial.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strategies to improve the quality of provision have had an impact on vocational programmes but less so on A-level courses. Self-assessment is generally accurate, although it does not identify some important areas for improvement such as retention on two-year courses. Teachers do not have enough awareness of a clear strategy for quality improvement.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum is satisfactory. Exhibitions of students' work highlight some good practice in relation to promoting equality and diversity. However, teachers miss too many opportunities to develop students' cultural awareness further during lessons.
- Resources are good overall and the new campus has had a positive effect on the curriculum area as a whole. Many workshops have industry standard facilities. However, some areas are cramped due to large class sizes, particularly on A-level courses. ILT facilities for students on the A level in graphic design are inadequate.

What does Sussex Coast College need to do to improve further?

- Improve retention on vocational courses by broadening the curriculum offer to provide access to foundation and intermediate level courses across the department. Ensure students are supported through accurate advice and guidance to understand the precise nature of the courses on which they enrol.
- Improve success rates on AS-level courses through ensuring all students have regular individual tutorials in order to provide better levels of support for learning.
- Increase the extent to which teachers challenge students to develop better independent thinking skills and to be more analytical. Facilitate further exploration in lessons on aspects of equality and diversity.
- Engage further with employers and community stakeholders to help shape the curriculum and to provide more opportunities for students to undertake work placements.

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

Grade 4

Context

39. Approximately 1,550 students study on full- and part-time literacy and numeracy programmes and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. Of these, 1,350 students attend functional skills classes, 130 are on ESOL courses and 50 study for literacy and numeracy qualifications. Just fewer than half the students are male and 20% are from ethnic minority backgrounds. All students have the opportunity to take nationally-accredited qualifications from entry level to intermediate level.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are inadequate. Although success rates on ESOL courses and foundation qualifications in numeracy have been very high for the last two years, success rates for key and functional skills have declined in the last three years and are now very low. They are also very low on both the foundation and intermediate level certificates in adult literacy. The unreliability of the data in this curriculum area is such that success rates may be lower than those published, particularly for 2009/10.
- Progression for students on language, literacy and numeracy courses is good. A third of adult students on ESOL programmes have progressed to a higher level language course or found employment. In addition, a third of young students on courses in this curriculum area in 2010/11 progressed to mainstream vocational programmes this year.
- The standards of students' work are satisfactory overall. Students develop good literacy and numeracy skills on full-time courses. However, the development of these skills for the significant numbers of students attending functional skills classes is poor.
- All students feel safe in the college and value the new facilities. In the better classes, students enjoy their learning and many of them participate in enrichment activities, such as football teams with students from other curriculum areas.
- Teaching and learning are inadequate. In the best lessons on literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses, teachers set relevant and interesting tasks and use ILT well. However, the identification of activities for students in many lesson plans tends to describe what students will do rather than the planned skills development or learning outcomes. Planning to meet students' individual needs is poor in too many classes.
- The quality of teaching and learning in functional skills is poor. Some teachers integrate English and mathematics well with vocational subjects. However, too many lessons exhibit no such link and this de-motivates students. In many

lessons, particularly those with large numbers of students, teachers do not have the skills to deal with the wide range of students' abilities and needs.

- Assessment is inadequate. The assessment of students' skills and subsequent target setting and planning for learning are good in a minority of lessons. More commonly however, and as identified by managers in the curriculum area, the outcomes of assessment are not used effectively in lessons to set and review targets and to plan for further learning.
- Pastoral support for students is good. Teachers care greatly for their students and take immediate action to resolve personal issues which affect them.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Too many areas of the provision have performed poorly for significant amounts of time. The use and accuracy of data to monitor and improve performance have been inadequate. Lesson observations are insufficiently evaluative. However, the management team now has a better understanding of what it needs to do to bring about improvements.
- Self-assessment does not review the different parts of the curriculum area in sufficient depth, focusing instead too much on the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It does not evaluate areas for improvement in sufficient detail.
- Arrangements to safeguard students are satisfactory. Teachers act appropriately when dealing with classroom issues relating to students' health and safety. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory overall, but in a few instances teachers do not challenge prejudice in the classroom sufficiently.

What does Sussex Coast College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that information gathered about students during initial and ongoing assessment is used more effectively to secure better teaching to all students and to set them more detailed targets.
- Improve teaching and learning through a more rigorous process of observations which are evaluative and focus primarily on students' learning and experiences in the classroom.
- Implement a strategy whereby staff are trained to manage the wide range of skills and needs of students in large classes so they can all benefit equally from their lessons.
- Take action to improve the reliability and use of data on students' performance at course and curriculum level in order to review accurately the different aspects of provision and to plan improvements.
- Improve self-assessment so it provides a balanced and detailed evaluation of all areas of provision in the curriculum area and can act as a catalyst for a comprehensive quality improvement plan.

Information about the inspection

40. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the college's interim vice principal for curriculum and quality, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.
41. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

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<p>Record of Main Findings (RMF)</p> <p>Sussex Coast College</p> <p>Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships</p>
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Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	2,137		1,752	385	
Part-time learners	1,140	91	92	472	485
Overall effectiveness	4	3	4	4	4
Capacity to improve	4				
Outcomes for learners	4	3	4	3	4
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	4				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	4				
How well do learners progress?	3				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	4				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
Quality of provision	4	-	4	4	4
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	4				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	4				
Leadership and management	4				
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	4				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	4				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	4				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	4				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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