

# Stanmore College

General further education college

## Inspection dates

31 January–3 February 2017

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Governors, senior leaders, teachers and support staff have secured rapid and significant improvement in the quality of provision since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications has risen and is high, and current learners and apprentices are making good progress.
- The courses offered meet learners' and local employers' needs well.
- Learners make good gains in their confidence and self-esteem during their time at college.
- Teachers have improved their skills, which are now good, to support their learners effectively and raise their aspirations; teachers have high expectations of their learners.
- Teaching and support staff help, guide and support learners very effectively to be successful during their time at college.
- Learners understand well how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation and to be safe online.
- Learners are prepared well for living and working in modern Britain. They have high standards of conduct and behaviour, they respect their peers and understand democracy well.
- Governors provide effective support and challenge to senior leaders to help bring about improvement.
- The most able learners do not always achieve the grades expected of them relative to their prior attainment.
- Learners' attendance and punctuality are not yet good enough.
- Learners do not develop their English and mathematical skills well enough as teachers do not help them develop suitable strategies to do this.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Stanmore College is a small, general further education college in north-west London. Most of the provision takes place on the college site, although some of the adult learning programmes are offered at a learning centre in the local community. A small amount of subcontracted provision is offered at four sites in London through one subcontractor.
- At the time of the inspection, the college had about 1,800 learners, of which just under 1,000 are full-time 16 to 18 year-olds on study programmes and 33 are apprentices, with the remainder being adult learners on either full-time vocational courses, part-time provision during the day or in the evening, or higher education provision. A total of 12 learners on study programmes are in receipt of high-needs funding. The college offers full-time further education provision in 11 of the 15 subject areas and higher education provision in healthcare, early years and working with children and young people.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that teachers inspire and motivate learners to achieve their very best, enabling a higher proportion of them to achieve their qualifications, particularly younger learners at levels 1 and 2.
- Ensure that teachers help learners to develop their skills in English and mathematics by providing them with strategies to improve the specific skills in which they are not yet proficient.
- Improve further learners' attendance and punctuality at lessons by setting high expectations for attendance, intervening swiftly when learners do not attend and supporting learners to attend most of their lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Senior leaders and governors have overseen a substantial and rapid improvement in the quality of provision since the previous inspection in September 2015. Teachers have improved the quality of their practice markedly. Senior managers have achieved this through raising the expectations of staff, who have in turn raised the expectations of learners. This is promoting a culture of high aspirations for learners.
- Senior leaders have used performance management processes very effectively to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They plan carefully a supportive and individualised staff development programme to help less successful teachers improve their practice. Senior leaders use an effective observation system to make reliable and accurate judgements of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This enables managers to understand well the quality of provision and make necessary improvements.
- Managers' evaluation of the college's provision is effective. At college level, their evaluation is detailed, thorough and, in the main, accurate in identifying areas for improvement. In the vast majority of subjects, managers have been successful in making swift improvements. As a result, there has been an overall improvement in the quality of provision, although the challenging timescales for improvement have not been met in a few cases. Managers recognise where there are gaps in performance of different groups of learners and they have well-considered plans in place to close these.
- The courses on offer match the needs of learners well. Managers have implemented successfully the principles of study programmes that prepare learners for their next steps. All learners for whom it is appropriate take part in valuable work experience. Managers have removed A levels from the courses on offer in response to rapidly declining enrolments and their recognition that these did not meet the needs of learners. Local employers work well with the college and support learners on work experience and in ensuring the relevance of the vocational courses offered. The courses on offer for adults are managed well and meet the local training priorities of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and healthcare.
- The management of apprenticeships is good. Managers have ensured that the small number of apprentices currently on programme are supported effectively. Well-qualified and knowledgeable trainers provide good support to apprentices and, as a result, the large majority of apprentices are making a positive contribution to their employers' businesses and have clear plans for their next steps.
- Senior leaders recognise the importance of developing learners' skills in English and mathematics. Managers make this a priority when planning a learner's programme of study, as shown in the reorganisation of the timetable in 2016/17, putting the teaching of these subjects at the heart of the teaching day, which has improved learners' attendance at these lessons. Specialist teachers have been employed and the proportion of learners who achieve A\* to C grades in GCSE English and mathematics has increased recently, with November re-sit results being very positive.

- Learners receive good careers education, information, advice and guidance from well-qualified staff who guide applicants carefully about their options within the college and for work. Processes for ensuring that learners make the right choice in their subjects to study are well established and effective. As a result, the vast majority of learners remain on their programmes and make informed choices about their next steps.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Governors are effective in their role of holding senior leaders to account. Governors are highly dedicated and have worked tirelessly to support the new principal in her efforts to improve the college. After the previous inspection, governors faced up well to the challenges associated with improving the quality of the provision at the college rapidly.
- Governors understand most aspects of the college well and know the specific areas requiring further improvement. They monitor the improvements in the college frequently, through the academic monitoring group, and they ask searching and challenging questions when improvements are not secured rapidly.
- Governors are participating in discussions about the future direction and constitution of the college, in response to the ongoing area review; they have considered carefully a full range of possible options before deciding on a future merger that will, in their opinion, best serve the local community of Stanmore.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The college meets its statutory duties. Designated safeguarding officers are well trained and ensure that all staff have introductory and refresher training on safeguarding. The vast majority of staff have completed training about the 'Prevent' duty. Learners' knowledge of how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation is well developed.
- Managers' links with the local authority and multi-agency support networks are well established and they use these to make prompt referrals and ensure that action is taken quickly to support learners in need of external help or support.
- Arrangements for ensuring that learners remain safe online are highly effective; staff monitor learners' online activity using specialist software, following up swiftly cases where learners try to access potentially inappropriate material. Learners know how to keep themselves safe when working in college and at work.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers know their learners well and have high expectations of what they can achieve. Consequently, learners enjoy their learning, take pride in their work, work diligently in lessons and make good progress. Adult learners enjoy working collaboratively, enabling them to make progress with their teamworking skills. Most learners take detailed notes in theory lessons, which they use well when completing assignments or for revision.

- The majority of learners, particularly those studying at level 3, take responsibility for their own learning and use their time outside the classroom effectively, which prepares them well for their next step in education, particularly those who go to university.
- Teachers use oral and written feedback well in lessons and on learners' written work to support learners and apprentices to improve. Learners on study programmes benefit from supervised independent study sessions and additional skills lessons which help them develop a curiosity and enthusiasm for their subject and develop personal skills, such as organising their own time. Learners use the virtual learning environment well to enhance and develop their learning outside lessons.
- Most teachers use their knowledge and skills well to ensure that learners meet industry expectations and are prepared well for the world of work. Most assessors ensure that apprentices make good progress in their workplace learning by matching tasks to their work contexts. Adult learners on entry-level ESOL courses develop effectively knowledge and skills that can be used in their everyday lives, such as understanding the 24-hour clock.
- Staff identify learners' prior knowledge and support needs quickly at the start of their course. They use this information well to ensure that learners are placed on the correct level of course and that those who need extra help receive this. The good support that learners receive from staff helps them to improve their self-confidence, and raises their aspirations.
- Well-qualified and experienced staff use their knowledge and expertise well to plan learning effectively and to ensure that learners make progress. Teachers make learning relevant to the workplace, for example, sport learners were required to apply their learning to coaching scenarios and business learners create realistic working environments in which to practise their skills. Learners use vocational and subject-specific terminology confidently in their written work and orally.
- Learners, particularly those with previous poor attendance or who face complex personal issues, receive highly effective support through an experienced team of mentors and learning coaches. Learners value the support that they receive from tutors and support staff, which enables them to achieve their learning goals.
- The majority of teachers use a wide variety of assessment methods well to evaluate accurately the progress their learners are making. Teachers ensure that learners self-assess their progress and this, along with constructive feedback on their work, enable learners to make good progress. ESOL learners benefit from weekly assessments that enable them to understand the progress that they are making and what they need to do to improve. A minority of teachers do not use strategies in class effectively to develop learners' understanding and skills.
- Learners know their targets and what they need to do to improve. Reviews with their teachers provide them with a clear understanding of their progress to date and what they need to do to improve further. Learners are ambitious, keen to learn and to move on to their next step; learners are able to speak confidently about what they are doing next.

- Where they are sufficiently confident, teachers encourage learners to discuss diversity, British values and democracy well. For example, in a business studies lesson, learners discussed the difference between cultural approaches to women working, and in a sports lesson, learners used wheelchairs to experience coaching of participants who have disabilities. However, a minority of teachers are not yet sufficiently confident to discuss these topics in lessons.
- A minority of teachers do not use their knowledge of learners effectively to plan learning that enables them to make the rapid progress of which they are capable. In these lessons, teachers set learners the same tasks, leading to the most able learners finding the work too easy and less able learners finding the work too challenging.
- Teachers do not help learners develop their mathematical skills sufficiently because they do not plan effectively for this. For example, health and care learners are given the necessary percentages and fractions for a piece of classwork on kitchen hygiene, rather than being required to calculate these themselves. However, where teachers plan to develop learners' mathematical skills, they make good progress. For example, level 1 business studies learners are able to estimate weights, measure actual weights and calculate postage costs for a wide range of parcels.
- Teachers correct spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors in learners' work but they do not help them develop strategies to improve, and consequently too many learners do not improve these skills over time.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- The diverse range of learners benefits from a wide range of extra activities comprising sporting, cultural and social activities. Learners, particularly those who have not had the opportunity to participate in social and cultural activities before, value highly the opportunities to develop their confidence in social situations and mix with learners from different courses.
- Learners and apprentices are developing self-confidence and a pride in their work. Apprentices work effectively in their job roles and take on additional roles and responsibilities as a result of the confidence and skills they develop.
- Learners are aware of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation and to whom they would report any suspicions about a fellow learner. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They are able to relate the risks of posting inappropriate content on social media to how this may damage their employment prospects, should a potential employer check their profile.
- Learners are able to make informed choices about their next steps in education, training or employment as a result of the good-quality careers guidance they receive from their tutors and assessors. As a result of the encouragement they receive from staff and of the high aspirations that both staff and learners have, a high proportion of learners on level 3 courses move on to higher education. A wide range of events provides useful information for learners, such as the higher education fair and 'Get a job day'.
- Learners feel safe at college and in the workplace. They value the diversity of the learner body and the colleagues with whom they work. They are respectful of staff and each other, both in lessons in social spaces and at work.

- Learners' attendance at lessons has improved from the previous year as a result of more accurate monitoring and swift interventions by staff to support those with barriers to attendance. However, their rate of attendance is not yet high enough.

## Outcomes for learners

**Good**

- The proportion of learners on courses at level 3, the majority of the provision for younger learners, who achieve their qualifications has risen significantly over the past three years and is now high.
- A very large proportion of adult learners achieve their qualifications at entry level, level 1 and level 2.
- Current learners, both 16 to 18 year-olds on study programmes and adults, are making good progress towards the achievement of their qualifications. They are developing their practical skills and knowledge of their subject very well and produce written work of a good standard. For example, applied science learners develop very good laboratory skills, such as staining bacteria and using microscopes proficiently.
- Apprentices are making good progress towards achieving their qualifications. They make valuable contributions to their employers' businesses and they secure permanent employment on completion of their course.
- Learners for whom the college receives high-needs funding make good progress towards achieving their qualifications; they receive very good support from staff to overcome personal and/or academic challenges, when these arise.
- Those learners who took GCSE examinations in the current academic year achieved grades A\* to C at a much improved rate than in previous years. Nearly half of those taking English achieved a grade C or above. Learners studying functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics do not achieve these at a high enough rate.
- Learners are prepared well for their next step in education, training or employment; the large majority of learners on level 3 courses go to university. However, managers do not know the destinations of a minority of learners who complete level 2 qualifications.
- Managers are aware of the achievement gaps that exist between male and female learners and between learners who have declared a learning difficulty and/or disability and those who have not. They have effective plans in place to close these gaps and in-year data shows that these are having a positive impact, although it is too soon to evaluate the full impact of their actions.
- The small proportion of adults who study at level 3 do not achieve well enough. Learners' achievement of qualifications in the very small proportion of subcontracted provision is inadequate.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- The college has 981 learners on study programmes in 11 subject areas. The largest areas are business, sport, creative arts and media. Courses are offered at levels 1, 2 and 3 with the majority of learners studying at level 3. Learners achieve their qualifications well and move on to higher levels of learning or employment.
- Leaders and managers plan individualised study programmes well and meet the study programme principles. Learners are able to study at levels 1, 2 and 3 in most subjects, and improve their English and mathematical skills. Teachers have high expectations of what their learners can achieve.
- Leaders and managers have prioritised actions to improve teaching and learning on study programmes and teachers work diligently to improve their practice and support learners to achieve. This has resulted in most current learners making good progress towards achieving their qualifications.
- Teachers assess learners' work accurately and provide both written and oral feedback which identifies what learners need to do to improve. Learners make very good use of the facilities to support their learning, such as the library and well-resourced practical facilities including the sports hall and fitness suite. Learners make effective use of the range of software and online materials, including for the development of their English and mathematical skills and for completing homework.
- Teachers assess learners' skills in English and mathematics thoroughly at the start of their course. They use this information well to help learners improve their skills during vocational lessons and in specialist lessons for qualifications in English or mathematics. For example, science learners learned to calculate standard deviation correctly and understood the importance of this in a scientific industry context. A teacher in an English lesson explained to learners why a sentence was incomplete and learners then explained the role of connectives in sentences.
- All learners for whom it is appropriate complete a work-experience placement as part of their study programme, during which they develop further their practical skills and skills for work. Learners at level 1 develop their skills for work through work-related experience in several college departments, before they complete placements external to the college.
- Learners know how to keep themselves healthy and safe and they develop a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities in modern Britain. Learners have a clear understanding of the risks of radicalisation, extremism, grooming and bullying. They are strongly of the opinion that the college is a very safe place. They are also aware of what they might do should they feel uncomfortable about the behaviour of other learners.
- Teachers support learners well to achieve their learning goals, both in and between lessons through setting clear targets, which they review frequently. Teachers use a wide range of different approaches well to provide effective support for those who need extra help, such as supervised independent study, learning mentors, coaching, subject workshops, one-to-one support and learning support sessions.



## Adult learning programmes

Good

- About 800 adult learners attend courses at the college, and at a local community venue. The majority of adult learners are on ESOL courses at entry level and level 1. A minority of adult learners are on full-time vocational courses at levels 2 and 3, with a small proportion on access to higher education courses.
- Staff have high expectations of learners, which supports them to make good progress. In most lessons, staff use questioning skilfully to monitor progress, which motivates learners and deepens their understanding of their subject. For example, in a science lesson, each learner was asked a probing question that helped all learners in the class understand the concept of the electromagnetic spectrum. Learners share their knowledge through peer assessment in a purposeful learning environment.
- Lessons are well planned and teachers use a wide range of resources to stimulate and motivate learners. For example, accounting learners use online resources to identify different forms of communication in a business environment. Frequent assessment and feedback on their work enable the majority of learners to make good progress. The majority of learners know what they need to do to improve their skills and knowledge.
- Managers tailor learning programmes well to support the achievement of learners' next steps. For example, learners on ESOL courses develop the skills they need to participate in the wider community or enhance their employment prospects. In an ESOL lesson, learners identified their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to skills for employment and practised how to conduct effective job interviews.
- Programmes provided in partnership with the local job centre improve the skills learners need to get jobs. Learners also participate in a variety of programmes that enhance their personal development, which promotes their well-being. Teachers use information about learners' prior achievements and on-course assessments well to support learners in developing the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in modern Britain.
- Teachers plan and teach lessons to enable learners to develop their personal, social and employability skills. For example, learners commented on the value of being able to learn about celebrations in different cultures such as Eid and Diwali and also to improve their knowledge of ethical shopping and how this can be applied in their local community. Learners are respectful towards each other and are keen to share their knowledge and experiences, which enables them to make good progress.
- In a small minority of lessons, learners found the activities too easy and they were not given opportunities to develop higher order skills, such as analysis or evaluation.
- Learners enjoy their learning and speak highly of how they are improving their confidence and how they are able to apply their knowledge in their personal and professional life. For example, when considering the dangers of social media, childcare learners discussed how they safeguard children from receiving and sending inappropriate images. Learners enjoy and value the range of enrichment opportunities available to them, which improves their self-confidence.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	130440
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,979
Principal	Mrs Sarbdip Noonan
Telephone number	0208 420 7700
Website	<a href="http://www.stanmore.ac.uk">www.stanmore.ac.uk</a>

## 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)	123	400	261	187	597	168	0	54
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	9	0	24	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	26							
Funding received from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Education Funding Agency</li> <li>■ Skills Funding Agency</li> </ul>							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Let Me Play							

## Information about this inspection

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

### Inspection team

Richard Pemble, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ken Merry	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynda Brown	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sherrilee Dougan	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Barrett-Mold	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Goodwin	Ofsted Inspector
Amanda Washbrook	Ofsted Inspector

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