

Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College

Sixth form college

Inspection dates

26–29 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Governors, leaders and managers have presided over a significant deterioration of the standards of training for apprentices since the previous inspection.
- Leaders' and managers' self-assessment and improvement arrangements have not been consistently effective, particularly in apprenticeships.
- Assessors do not complete rigorous enough assessments at the start of the apprenticeship programme. They do not identify what apprentices know and what they need to learn to allow effective planning of learning.
- Governors do not hold senior leaders to account for apprenticeship programmes.
- A small minority of teachers do not always, and assessors very rarely, plan challenging learning activities to meet the specific needs of students and apprentices.
- The feedback that apprentices receive is not sufficiently useful to help them improve their work.
- Managers and assessors do not ensure that apprentices receive enough high-quality training, which results in current apprentices not making the progress of which they are capable.

The provider has the following strengths

- Students develop high levels of employment-related skills through a broad and balanced curriculum which incorporates well-planned work experience and extra-curricular activities.
- Students receive a good standard of information, advice and guidance at the beginning and throughout their course.
- The proportion of students on 16 to 19 study programmes who make the progress expected of them has improved, and achievement on study programmes is high.
- Students are well behaved and respectful of each other and their teachers.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College operates from two main campuses in the borough of Stockport: the Cheadle College and Marple Sixth Form College. The college provides academic and vocational 16 to 19 study programmes, apprenticeships and an adult learning programme. Currently, 1,723 students are enrolled at the college. Of these, 1,424 are on 16 to 19 study programmes, 130 are on apprenticeships and 169 are on adult learning programmes. The provider receives high-needs funding for 51 students with high needs.
- Stockport is a metropolitan borough, located in the southern fringes of Greater Manchester, with a population of 291,000. The unemployment rate in the borough is below that of the north-west region. The proportion of residents who claim out-of-work benefits is below that of other towns and cities in the north west. The proportion of residents who have at least a level 2 qualification is higher than that for the north-west region.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of utmost urgency, governors, leaders and managers should make swift improvements to the standard of apprenticeships. They should increase the proportion of apprentices who achieve their programme on time. They should do this by:
 - ensuring that all apprentices receive a rigorous assessment at the start of their apprenticeship to identify what they already know and can do; assessors should use information from this assessment to ensure that apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours
 - ensuring that all apprentices receive their entitlement to well-planned, high-quality off-the-job training and ensure that apprentices make good progress on their programme
 - identifying the specific aspects of the programme that need to be improved and meticulously monitoring the impact of changes that they make so that the quality of training that apprentices receive improves swiftly.
- Governors should hold senior leaders stringently to account for the performance of the apprenticeship programme.
- Managers should ensure that assessors provide useful feedback on students' and apprentices' work to improve the standard of their work.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that they accurately evaluate and act effectively to improve the quality of the provision for students with high needs and apprenticeships.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The strategic leadership and operational management of apprenticeships are inadequate. Leaders and managers have been too slow to halt the substantial decline in apprentices' achievement since the previous inspection. Governors, leaders and managers do not have a clear plan on how they are going to improve this poor provision.
- Leaders' and managers' arrangements to evaluate the apprenticeship provision and the programme for students with high needs are not sufficiently detailed, analytical or rigorous. Leaders and managers do not accurately assess the quality of these areas of the provision.
- Strategies to improve apprenticeships are insufficiently rigorous and have not resulted in the rapid and significant improvements that are needed. Senior leaders do not hold directors, managers and assessors to account for the quality of apprenticeship provision.
- The processes that apprenticeship managers use to manage staff performance are not rigorous enough. Managers do not set challenging targets for assessors to achieve. They set childcare assessors targets that are lower than the level of performance achieved in the previous year, which was too low.
- The college management team has successfully rectified most weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, such as the effectiveness of study programmes. It has improved the proportion of students who make good progress in their studies and reduced the number of students who leave their courses early. However, there are still a few courses, such as A level sociology, where students make stubbornly slow progress. Furthermore, the proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship on time is very low and has deteriorated significantly since the previous inspection.
- Leaders successfully hold most managers and teachers to account, except in the apprenticeship division. This has resulted in an improvement in the proportion of students who stay on their course until it concludes and, in the grades, that students achieve on level 3 courses.
- Senior leaders review the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of students on study programmes, students with high needs and adult students.
- Managers ensure that students benefit from effective initial advice and guidance and on-going careers advice. This means that most students stay on their course and progress to the next step of their career.

The governance of the provider

- Governors monitor the quality of study programmes effectively and provide enough challenge when programmes do not improve. They receive detailed reports from senior leaders about student performance on study programmes. Consequently, they have a good oversight of the progress that these students make.
- Governors have failed to hold senior leaders to account for the quality of apprenticeships. As a result, the standard of training that apprentices receive has declined significantly since the previous inspection. Governors do not set challenging enough targets for improvement and do not have sufficient oversight of the progress that current

apprentices make. They do not yet hold apprenticeship managers to account for ensuring that apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers ensure that policies and procedures for safeguarding are appropriately detailed and up to date. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and consistently implement college guidelines.
- Leaders and managers ensure that there are appropriate checks on the suitability of members of staff, volunteers and governors before they begin working at the college. Staff check new employees' eligibility to work in the United Kingdom and their references, and they ensure that all new employees complete the required safeguarding and 'Prevent' training.
- Leaders and managers have nurtured very effective relationships with local agencies, which they use effectively in relation to safeguarding. They work particularly effectively with local councils to ensure that the transition from school into college life for vulnerable and young people is effective.
- Teachers and assessors ensure that students and apprentices understand and demonstrate safe working practices when working at college and in the workplace.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers effectively plan and deliver learning sessions that engross and inspire students to learn more. They ensure that they incrementally support students to improve their work between lessons, which assists students in the development of new knowledge and skills. Consequently, most students make good progress in their studies. However, the large majority of apprentices do not receive enough high-quality learning through off-the-job training. This has a detrimental impact, culminating in them making slow progress in their studies.
- Teachers use a range of highly effective strategies to check the learning of most students. They often probe students' knowledge and understanding skilfully and encourage students to be self-reflective. Useful prompts from teachers enable students to analyse their performance critically. As a result, students deepen their understanding and better engage in learning. Conversely, a small minority of teachers' questioning of students is superficial and does not lead to deeper understanding and learning. As a result, too many students in lessons that these teachers deliver do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers help students to develop their English skills effectively through extended writing, the promotion of speaking skills and the regular use of subject-specific terminology. This assists students in gaining confidence about the subject and producing work of a higher standard. For example, economics students debate economic growth with confidence, using appropriate terminology to strengthen their argument.
- Teachers appropriately develop students' mathematical skills in lessons. For example, applied science students are advised about the importance of a high level of accuracy

when taking measurements for experiments. Physics students develop their skills in using new methodologies of representing data when summarising their experiments.

- Support for students with high needs is effective and allows these students to develop independence over time. As a result, the support that students receive is reduced throughout their programme. However, in a small minority of lessons, learning support assistants are not meaningfully deployed to help students. This results in students not making the progress that they could.
- Teachers develop students' understanding of equality and diversity effectively. For example, in level 1 vocational studies lessons, students were encouraged to reflect the dietary requirements of a diverse group of customers when planning their café menu.
- Feedback on marked work provides useful guidance for students on how to improve their work. In several subjects, the use of a self-assessment document which students complete is an effective tool to encourage self-reflection and smart target-setting. However, assessors do not provide apprentices with useful feedback to help them to improve. Too often, the feedback does not identify the knowledge and skills that apprentices need to develop to improve their work, make progress on their programme and make a better contribution at work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Attendance is good across the college. It has improved over the last 12 months but has not yet reached leaders' aspirational target. Attendance at Marple Sixth Form College is slightly higher than at the Cheadle College.
- Students behave well in the classroom and in communal areas around the college and are respectful to teachers and their peers. They attend lessons promptly and are equipped and ready to learn.
- Students take pride in the work that they produce and submit. Their confidence improves incrementally throughout their time at college, which has a demonstrable impact on the standard of work that they produce.
- Most students on study programme and students with high needs effectively develop new English skills throughout their studies. Teachers' corrections help them to improve their written work. However, apprentices and students on adult learning programmes do not improve their English skills sufficiently due to ineffective development of these skills by teachers and assessors.
- Most students produce work that meets the standard expected for their course. However, too many apprentices and a small minority of students who have the potential do not produce higher standards of work and often settle for mediocrity.
- Students benefit from an appropriate and effective programme of additional activities. This programme allows them to engage in new experiences and develop useful knowledge and skills that will help them at college and in their personal lives. For example, they take part in activities which include the National Citizen Service, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and extra-curricular sport activities. These activities further enhance their self-esteem, confidence and team-working skills.

- Students and apprentices feel and are safe. They receive useful information through assemblies and tutorials on how to keep safe at college and in their personal lives. This includes information on how to stay safe while online, the risks of knife crime and the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. They are very clear about whom they should contact if they have any concerns about their own or anyone else's safety.
- Students develop high levels of employment-related skills through work-focused activities and take part in good-quality work experience. For example, students on travel and tourism courses have recently completed work placements in a range of relevant settings, including a local airport, travel agencies and hotels. As a result, students develop confidence, extend their knowledge of the industry and improve their verbal and written communication skills.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The proportion of students on 16 to 19 study programmes at levels 1 and 2 who achieve their qualifications has improved slightly since the previous inspection, is above that of similar colleges nationally and is high. Although achievement of level 3 qualifications has seen a slight decline, it remains high and above similar colleges nationally.
- Most students on level 3 vocational programmes make very good progress in their studies. Students on academic programmes make expected progress from their starting points.
- A high proportion of the adult students who remain on their course until the end make good progress in their studies and achieve. However, too many adult students left their course early in 2017/18.
- Almost all students with high needs achieve accredited qualifications and develop the skills and knowledge that they need to make good progress towards achieving their personal and educational goals.
- Around three fifths of students who complete their course and leave the college progress to higher education institutions, with the vast majority gaining a place at their first-choice university. Most of the remaining students move into either apprenticeships or employment.
- Leaders have not been successful in minimising all the gaps in achievement between different groups of students. Students who have declared learning difficulties or disabilities achieve significantly less well than other students at the college, and male apprentices' achievements are very low.
- The proportion of apprentices who complete their programme on time has declined significantly since the previous inspection and is very low. Almost three quarters of apprentices in 2017/18 did not complete their apprenticeship on time. Current apprentices make slow progress on their programmes and do not swiftly develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to succeed.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The college has 1,424 students on 16 to 19 study programmes with 77% enrolled on level 3 vocational and academic programmes. The large majority study on vocational courses. Around 17% study at level 2 and the remaining students study on level 1 courses. Students on 16 to 19 study programmes account for around four fifths of the college's provision. The proportion of students who achieve their qualifications is high.
- Managers carefully plan and manage the curriculum to ensure that they meet the principles of 16 to 19 study programmes. They ensure that students who have yet to achieve a grade 4 or better in GCSE English and mathematics receive support to improve. Managers ensure that students take part in work experience related to their course and attend additional classes to stimulate their minds and broaden their experiences. For example, students on level 2 and level 3 public services courses benefited from an inspirational presentation from a female boxing champion. The presentation emphasised the objectification of women in the media and the importance of recognising unconscious bias in society.
- Teachers ensure that most students make at least the progress which is expected of them. They set students appropriate targets at the start of their course to help them make good progress in their studies. Teachers assess students regularly to ensure that they are on target to achieve their grades. However, in a small minority of subject areas, such as A level English literature and A level sociology, teachers do not challenge students sufficiently, particularly the most able, to achieve their potential. Consequently, the progress of students on these courses is not rapid enough.
- Managers ensure that students have access to dedicated and impartial careers guidance, available at both Cheadle and Marple sites. Students are effusive about the guidance that they receive about their next steps in their career plan. They receive useful information on higher education, apprenticeships and employment that allows them to make informed decisions about their future.
- Students behave well in lessons and in communal areas across the college. They are respectful to teachers and their peers. Most students arrive to lessons on time and are ready to learn. They show a good work ethic and develop independent learning skills. This helps them to make good progress in their studies.
- Most students progress to higher levels following completion of their study programme. Most move on to further study, including higher education and apprenticeships, with the remaining students progressing to employment.
- Students feel very safe at college and are fully aware of whom they should contact should they have any concerns. Students state that when concerns are raised, they are dealt with swiftly by the college's senior management team.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- The college has 169 students studying adult learning programmes. A high proportion study on level 3 access to higher education courses in health, science and human and social science. The remaining students are on level 2 and level 3 vocational courses in horticulture, with a few students studying on level 2 counselling courses. Students on adult learning programmes account for around a tenth of the college's provision. The overall proportion of students who successfully achieved their qualifications in 2017/18

was too low; this was mainly due to a poorly performing subcontractor that no longer works with the college.

- Managers have high expectations for their students to develop swiftly new knowledge and skills in order to achieve their career or educational aspirations. They identify and communicate a very clear and purposeful vision, offering adult education courses at the college to ensure that students can reach their potential.
- Students enjoy learning and make good progress in their studies. They are well prepared for lessons and demonstrate good study skills. They confidently use specialist vocabulary and subject terminology. For example, horticulture students assuredly identify different soil types needed for certain plants to flourish.
- Managers and teachers plan the curriculum to meet the specific requirements of adult students. They are mindful of the challenges that these students have outside the classroom, such as work and family commitments. Students are rightly appreciative of these considerations, which assist them in making good progress on their courses.
- Students can identify how well they are progressing on their courses. They confidently identify what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve the standard of their work further. Students' standards of work meet the expectations of the college and awarding organisations and improve throughout the course.
- Teachers effectively incorporate numeracy into lessons, particularly in the scientific elements of the access to higher education course. However, teachers do not consistently identify spelling and grammatical errors in students' work. This results in students repeating these mistakes in subsequent work.
- Leaders and managers have successfully developed an access to higher education programme that provides students with opportunities to improve their life chances. More than four fifths of students continue to higher education institutions following completion of their course. Most students who complete vocational courses progress directly into subject-related jobs or self-employment.

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

- At the time of inspection, 130 apprentices were enrolled on apprenticeship programmes. Apprenticeships account for around 7.5% of all students at the college. Most apprentices study on level 2 and level 3 programmes, and just over 1 in 10 apprentices study level 4 programmes. Most apprenticeships are in the childcare sector. There is a very small proportion of apprenticeships in accounting, activity leadership, business and management. Around half of all apprentices are studying towards the new apprenticeship standards, with the remainder on legacy framework programmes.
- Achievement rates for apprentices have declined significantly since the previous inspection and are very low. Just over a quarter of apprentices completed their programme on time in 2017/18.
- Leaders and managers have presided over a significant decline in the standard of training for apprentices since the previous inspection. This has resulted in most apprentices in the current year not making the progress of which they are capable.

- Managers do not ensure that the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship are consistently met. The large majority of apprentices do not receive enough high-quality training on their programme. Assessors place a disproportionate emphasis on assessment as opposed to learning.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that appropriate assessments are completed at the start of the programme to identify apprentices' existing knowledge, skills and behaviours. Assessors place too much emphasis on rudimentary tick sheets that do not identify clearly what apprentices already know and what they need to learn to be effective at work. Consequently, assessors cannot adequately plan learning or monitor the progress that apprentices make on the programme.
- Leaders and managers do not have a clear or accurate understanding of the progress that apprentices make on their programmes. They are unaware of the apprentices who are making slow progress on their programme until it is too late. Consequently, very little can be done to intervene and help them to catch up.
- Managers do not ensure that apprenticeships are planned effectively. There is no coordination between on- and off-the-job training with employers. Too often, what happens on a workplace visit depends on what the apprentice is doing at work on that day. Workplace visits do not focus sufficiently on what apprentices need to learn. This results in a very fragmented learning experience for apprentices, who do not know what they are going to learn or when they will learn it.
- Assessors do not prioritise the development of apprentices' English and mathematical knowledge and skills enough. This has resulted in a large proportion of apprentices not achieving their apprenticeship because of the lack of progress in these key aspects of their programme. Leaders have recently appointed specialists to support apprentices in the development of these skills. However, at the time of the inspection, no tangible improvements were identified.
- Assessors do not provide effective guidance or feedback to apprentices to help them understand how much progress they are making or advise them of what they need to do to improve. Too many actions on progress reviews focus on the assessment of units as opposed to identifying clearly what apprentices need to do to improve their work.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- The college receives funding for 51 students with high needs. Of these, 36 are on programmes specifically designed for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including 10 students who are on supported internships. The remainder are on level 1, level 2 and level 3 vocational study programmes.
- Leaders and managers use high-needs funding effectively. They provide specialist support and expertise when required in education, health and care (EHC) plans, such as support for students who have visual and hearing impairments. Leaders and managers review the effectiveness of the specialist curriculum regularly to ensure that it meets the needs of all students.
- Teachers and support staff plan and deliver effective learning sessions based on their knowledge about students' needs and requirements. Teachers on vocational courses receive and use detailed information on effective strategies to enable students to

participate in learning and make progress towards their personal and qualification targets. For example, teachers break down assignments into manageable components. They implement strategies to support students with autism spectrum disorder to cope successfully in noisy environments and remain focused in their lessons.

- Teachers and support staff diligently record students' progress and achievement throughout their course. Students' records provide clear information for teachers and support staff about students' progress towards the targets in their EHC plan. Students set motivational and challenging targets for themselves that staff monitor weekly at progress reviews. As a result, most students make good progress.
- In most lessons, teachers integrate English and mathematics into students' learning. Most students, including those with the most complex needs, have a high standard of written English. Most students who have high needs use technical terminology appropriate to their subject and level of programme effectively. They develop mathematical skills such as understanding the value of money, budgeting for the cost of meals and community visits, and understanding opening times. This supports them for adulthood and future independence.
- Learning support assistants provide effective help in lessons. Most learning support assistants help students develop independence in lessons and over time. Students respond to questions confidently and without prompts. For example, in GCSE English lessons, students explain correctly the meanings of technical terms such as adverb, simile and personification. In mathematics, they answer questions accurately about how to calculate the area of a circle. With further questioning from the teacher, students build on their answers and provide more detailed responses. As a result, support for students is reduced over time.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130515
Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of students	16+
Approximate number of all students over the previous full contract year	1,829
Principal	Jenny Singleton
Telephone number	0161 486 4600
Website	http://www.camsfc.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 students (excluding apprenticeships)	78	7	239	102	1,106	55	1	5
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	36	12	37	34	5	6		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of students aged 14 to 16								
Number of students for which the provider receives high-needs funding	51							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:								

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the assistant principal, quality teaching, learning and assessment, 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 students 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

Paul Cocker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrea Machell	Her Majesty's Inspector
Suzanne Wainwright	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jill Gray	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Russell	Ofsted Inspector
Charles Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Matt Gower	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Young	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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