City of Wolverhampton College

General further education college

Inspection dates			14–17 November 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**	Apprenticeships	**Requires improvement**
Outcomes for students	**Good**	Provision for students with high needs	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Governors, senior leaders and managers set a culture of high aspirations. They have rectified successfully most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.

- Senior leaders provide a good level of scrutiny and challenge. They hold managers and staff to account for students' and apprentices' achievements.

- Achievement rates for students on study programmes, for adults, and for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have improved and are now high.

- Leaders have successfully developed excellent relationships with local and regional employers, resulting in courses that meet local and regional needs very successfully.

- Students and apprentices develop the academic, practical, and technical knowledge, skills and understanding they need for further study or work. Consequently, most progress into further study, higher education or employment.

- Students and apprentices have positive attitudes to learning. They take pride in their work. They are highly motivated and develop confidence, knowledge, skills and understanding successfully.

- Students benefit from a range of highly effective support which enables a very high proportion of them to achieve their career aspirations and personal goals.

- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications by the planned end date is too low.

- In too many instances, teachers and assessors do not take into account students' and apprentices' individual starting points when they monitor and record the progress that they make. As a result, a small number of students and apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- The proportion of students who achieve higher grades in GCSE English and mathematics and in a minority of advanced-level subjects is too low.

- Students and apprentices have only a basic understanding of how the risks of radicalisation and extremism may apply to their daily lives and at work.

Full report

Information about the provider

■ City of Wolverhampton College is a general further education college based on three main campuses in Wolverhampton. The college serves the city, with approximately 250,000 residents, and the Black Country with approximately one million residents.

■ Wolverhampton and the Black Country have high levels of social and economic deprivation, and high rates of unemployment. The sectors with highest employment include manufacturing, health, and business services. Around 35% of the city's residents are from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of students who leave school with five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C (or grades 9 to 4), including English and mathematics, is below the national rate. The college currently has a small amount of subcontracted provision but is in the process of bringing this work in-house.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

■ Increase the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications in the planned time, by:

 – senior leaders having an oversight of apprentices' progress by monitoring closely the progress that apprentices make and ensuring interventions are made speedily when they fall behind

 – assessors setting clear and challenging targets and reviewing the progress apprentices make against these so that all apprentices make good progress from their starting points

 – ensuring that assessors improve the progress apprentices make by planning their on- and off-the-job training so that activities are ambitious, interesting and relevant.

■ Teachers should ensure that they set suitably demanding work for students. In particular, teachers should ensure that they challenge the most able students to make the progress of which they are capable.

■ Leaders, managers and staff should continue to focus their improvement strategies on underperforming courses. They should increase the proportion of students who achieve their qualifications and in particular increase the number who achieve higher grades in GCSE English and mathematics and on all advanced-level courses.

■ Leaders and managers should ensure that learners and apprentices have a more secure understanding of how they can apply to their daily lives and at work their knowledge of the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good

- Governors and senior leaders promote a culture of high aspirations. They have rectified most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The proportion of students who stay on their course and gain their qualifications has increased and is now high. This is the case for young people, for adults and for students who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The proportion of students in hairdressing, beauty therapy, and foundation English and mathematics who achieve their qualifications has increased. Most students now benefit from effective feedback to help them improve their work.

- Senior leaders' and managers' strategies to improve the quality of courses are successful. They focus relentlessly on improving the quality of the students' experience and the numbers of students who complete their courses and achieve. Governors, particularly link governors, support managers to improve students' outcomes and attendance, for example in English and mathematics.

- Leaders and managers identify the college's strengths and weaknesses through a comprehensive self-assessment process at curriculum level that involves all staff. Senior leaders set measurable targets to improve.

- Governors, leaders and staff have created a culture which recognises and celebrates equality and diversity throughout the college. Students and apprentices show tolerance and respect for each other and for staff and visitors. Teachers raise students' understanding of equality and diversity successfully through highly effective teaching, learning and assessment. The courses that managers offer provide opportunities for a range of students to participate in learning and to improve their future prospects, for example through the 'Get Ahead' programmes designed specifically for lone parents.

- Curriculum management is highly effective. Senior leaders ensure that managers account fully for their actions. Rigorous monitoring and interventions at course and curriculum level have led to improvements in attendance, retention and achievement in the most recent year, for example in hairdressing, uniformed public services, business, and information and communication technology.

- Managers' strategies to improve teachers' performance are successful. Leaders have recently revised the processes to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Lesson observations are supportive and developmental and welcomed by teachers. Staff who need to improve benefit from individual staff development. Most teachers value this support and consequently improve their teaching and assessment practices. Leaders and managers take decisive action, so that teachers who do not improve leave the college.

- The senior leadership team has fostered excellent relationships with local and regional employers, including local housing associations, broadcasting corporations and engineering companies. These employers provide very good opportunities for work-related learning and work experience for students. The very productive partnerships and the excellent working relationship with the city council contribute very effectively to the

development of training opportunities, which meet local and regional needs very successfully.

■ The quality of the apprenticeship provision has declined since the previous inspection and it now requires improvement. Leaders and managers have taken appropriate action recently to increase the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications. Consequently, most current apprentices are making at least the expected progress. However, the time taken to achieve remains too long for around one third of apprentices.

■ Leaders' and managers' actions to improve the proportion of students on study programmes who achieve higher grades in GCSE English and mathematics and in a minority of advanced-level courses have not yet been fully successful.

The governance of the provider

■ Governors provide thorough challenge and effective support to senior leaders and managers. They make good contributions to the improvements made. Governors are clear about the college's strengths and weaknesses and they direct managers to take action where they have concerns.

■ Governors use their wide range of skills, experience and links to local communities – particularly the business community – to guide the college's strategic direction and to monitor progress and performance. Governors maintain an appropriate balance in their focus on students' experiences and on the financial and other challenges which require their attention.

■ Link-governor arrangements with curriculum and support teams are particularly effective. They have contributed successfully to improvements, for example, in English and mathematics subjects. Staff benefit from opportunities to engage with governors and the external experience they bring. Governors celebrate actively the success of staff and students.

■ While governors receive reports on the performance of all aspects of students' experiences, the information in the reports is not always presented in ways which are easy for them to understand.

Safeguarding

■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

■ Staff are supported by the college's highly skilled safeguarding team to ensure that students feel safe. The monitoring and recording of safeguarding concerns is very thorough. Consequently, students are provided with high levels of support to help keep them safe. For example, students at risk of a forced marriage are found a safe place to live.

■ The safeguarding team has highly effective relationships with a wide range of safeguarding agencies such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the police. This contributes to the safe and supportive environment for students.

■ Students feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe online and from the risks

associated with radicalisation and extremism. They are clear about arrangements for reporting concerns relating to their safety. Managers ensure that they protect students from a range of safeguarding concerns, including self-harm, homelessness and child sexual exploitation.

- Leaders have a 'zero-tolerance' approach to bullying. The widely publicised and appropriately used mediation processes and early interventions contribute to the very low number of bullying incidents.

- The designated safeguarding leads, college managers and staff benefit from relevant training. Leaders, governors and staff receive appropriate training and regular updates on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, all staff are clear about their responsibilities and the procedures for reporting concerns. Managers consult with the police to ensure that the 'Prevent' duty action plan, including critical-incident and bomb-threat action plans, are comprehensive and meet requirements.

- Managers carry out the appropriate checks on all new staff, including disclosure and barring service checks. There is comprehensive scrutiny of job applicants' suitability.

- Teachers' focus on health and safety is effective. Students' and apprentices' knowledge and understanding about safe and healthy working practices in lessons and in workplaces are good.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment   Good

- In the large majority of lessons teaching methods and learning activities engage students very successfully. Well-paced and carefully structured activities maintain students' interest and stimulate learning. This results in keen students, who develop knowledge, skills and understanding and make good progress. For example, in information and communication technology (ICT) and in science lessons students develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to work independently. They plan, research and analyse, and produce assignment work of a high standard.

- Teachers effectively use learning technology to support students both in and out of lessons. Consequently, students develop their ICT skills and apply them appropriately. For example, business students are able to produce analytical graphs when comparing and contrasting sales figures.

- Teachers and support staff identify accurately those students who need extra or specialist support. Students who need specialist support receive good-quality support, which ensures they achieve as successfully as their peers.

- Teachers develop students' English and mathematical skills effectively in lessons. For example, students improve their communication skills by participating in activities that challenge them to listen, and speak more clearly and confidently. Students develop their mathematical skills in vocational contexts, such as calculating the cost and selling prices of food in the restaurant, and the cost of colouring hair in the salon.

- Teachers promote equality and celebrate diversity very effectively. Students have a clear

understanding of equality and diversity and how to apply them in work contexts. Staff and students demonstrate positive behaviour at all times. For example, hairdressing students discuss styles for ethnic and black hair types. Beauty students know how to support clients who cannot remove clothing in public salons for religious reasons. Apprentices, in reviews with assessors, discuss equality of patient care in residential-home settings.

- A small proportion of teachers make poor use of the information available about students' and apprentices' starting points. They do not use this information to plan work so that students and apprentices make the progress of which they are capable. Consequently, the least able struggle to keep up and the most able make slow progress. Monitoring and recording of students' progress is not consistently good.

- A very small minority of teachers and assessors do not correct systematically errors in written English. Consequently, a minority of students and apprentices continue to make errors and do not improve the standard of their written work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare   Good

- Students show high levels of respect and tolerance to each other, to teachers and to visitors. Students' behaviour is very good. Students demonstrate an in-depth understanding of life in modern Britain. They respect people from different cultures and backgrounds, and this makes the atmosphere in the college welcoming and friendly.

- Students enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding through an extensive range of voluntary events in the local community. These include the BBC music project, the 'Wolves in Wolves' city plinths project, and the Prince's Trust Severnside housing project. Students' involvement in cleaning up and repairing items in the local cemetery with the armed forces was valued highly by the community.

- Students develop the technical knowledge, skills and terminology they need for their chosen job or career. Students benefit from work-related activities in practical work environments. As a result, they work to challenging commercial standards and meet exacting deadlines.

- Students who have SEN and/or disabilities make very good progress towards their personal goals. They develop their independence very successfully through external work experience or supported internships.

- Most students and apprentices develop effective communication skills and the behaviour they need for work. They receive positive feedback from employers for the knowledge and skills they develop. For example, they increase their communication skills when dealing with customers and develop appropriate team-building and problem-solving skills. Apprentices grow in confidence and make good contributions to their employer's business.

- Students and apprentices feel safe in the college and in the workplace. They demonstrate and adhere to healthy and safe working practices in practical lessons, in workshops and in the workplace. Students know who to report any safeguarding issues to if they arise.

- A high proportion of students make progress in developing their English and mathematical skills in specialist and vocational lessons. Teachers plan activities that allow them to apply and reinforce the skills they need for work. All students, including those who have already achieved grades A* to C (or grades 9 to 4), complete additional English and mathematics refresher activities regularly as part of their programme of study.

- Most students benefit from thorough assessments at the start of their programme, which include an assessment of their starting points in English and mathematics, and skills testing in their chosen subjects. Students who speak English as an additional language are assessed in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, to ensure they study at the most appropriate level. Students who require additional specialist support have their needs assessed during the transition period, so that they receive support quickly.

- Staff work very effectively with a wide range of external services to provide effective impartial careers information, advice and guidance at the start of and during students' programmes of study. This helps most students to make the correct choice of course. A high proportion of students and apprentices progress successfully to the next stage of their career.

- Most students and apprentices have an understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and know where to go to share any concerns. However, in a small number of instances they do not know how to apply their understanding in their working and everyday lives.

- Attendance rates, while improved overall, remain too low in English and mathematics lessons. Where students do not attend, this has a negative impact on their progress and their opportunities in achieving higher grades in GCSE English and mathematics qualifications.

Outcomes for students   Good

- Leaders and managers have rectified successfully most of the weaknesses that were identified at the previous inspection. Achievements have risen since the previous year and are now high for students aged 16 to 18, for students who have SEN and/or disabilities, and for adults.

- A large number of students now achieve their qualifications in hairdressing, beauty therapy, and English and mathematics at foundation level. The differences that existed between levels and subjects have been largely eliminated. Only a very small number of subjects now have low achievement rates, for example science and some AS-level subjects.

- Students and apprentices make very good progress in developing their practical skills in their chosen subjects. Students and apprentices work to high-level industry standards because they benefit from coaching and support from knowledgeable and well-qualified staff. Consequently, the vast majority of students progress to further study, higher education or employment. Most apprentices gain permanent employment with their employer following completion of their programmes.

- Since the previous inspection, the proportion of students aged 16 to 18 who achieve their qualifications has increased, with the exception of the previous year in 2015/16. The majority of students on study programmes, who account for more than half of the college's cohort, make the progress expected of them from their starting points. A high proportion of students gain their qualifications, but students on advanced-level courses do not always attain the grades they are capable of achieving. A high proportion of students who attempt functional skills examinations in English and mathematics are successful. However, too many students do not improve their GCSE grades in English and mathematics.

- Achievement for adult students has improved since the previous year and is now high, particularly on vocational courses. These include leisure and tourism, education and training, construction, health, public services and care, and preparation for life and work courses. Achievement rates are lower in a small number of courses such as access to higher education. Students develop English and mathematical skills that are relevant to their subjects. The proportion of adults who achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics has improved but still requires further improvement.

- The vast majority of students for whom the college receives high-needs funding make very good progress. They make excellent progress in developing their practical, employability and communication skills. They also develop their confidence and independence very successfully and achieve their qualifications.

- Managers' strategies to narrow gaps in achievement rates between different groups of students have been successful. Students who have SEN and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds are as successful as their peers. Mixed-race and Black Caribbean students now achieve as well as their peers, too. There are no significant differences between the proportion of males and females who achieve their qualifications. Young people who are looked after, and who had very low attainment rates at school, make good progress in relation to their starting points. Most who stay on their course achieve their qualifications.

- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications by their planned end date has fallen since the last complete year and is low. Apprentices on advanced-level courses achieve better than apprentices on intermediate-level courses. Most apprentices in the current year are making the required progress and are developing the technical knowledge and skills they need for work.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes   **Good**

- At present, 1,688 students aged 16 to 19 follow a range of vocational and academic programmes from level 1 to level 3. Just under half of students study at level 3. The largest numbers are in health, social care and public services, creative arts, construction, and preparation for life and work. A very small number of students study A or AS levels.

- Teachers use a wide range of teaching techniques to stimulate students and provide

interesting lessons. As a result, students enjoy their lessons. Teaching builds on previous learning effectively. For example, students in A-level English literature study classic plays very successfully. The teacher used effectively timed activities, a quiz, and targeted and follow-up questions to identify what happens in each act of the play.

- Most students make good progress towards their targets. They develop good vocational and technical skills which meet employers' standards. Managers and teachers monitor students' progress systematically and help those at risk of failing to achieve. Students benefit from a wide range of effective support. As a result, they attend regularly, are motivated to learn, overcome personal barriers to learning and behave appropriately.

- In the majority of lessons students develop the English and mathematical skills they need for work and further studies. For example, hairdressing students identify the commercial cost of partial and full colouring of hair. They work to industry timings and standards; they understand the impact of using too much of a product or running over time. Travel and tourism students make good progress in learning new terms when exploring the origins of 'dark' tourism which is based on historical events. They question and discuss the term 'thanatourism' and how it is derived from the Greek word 'thanatos'.

- Students benefit from relevant work experience and a range of enrichment activities that develop their interpersonal skills and social conscience. For instance, students in creative studies took part in the college's annual overseas work-experience programme to Florence.

- Careers information, advice and guidance are impartial and effective. As a result, a high proportion of students stay on their course to the end and progress to further study, higher education, or employment.

- Students enjoy coming to college, feel safe and want to learn. Students demonstrate mutual respect for each other and staff. They understand the importance of listening to each other's views and respecting their diverse backgrounds. Students value highly the way they are treated by staff and have a strong sense of community.

- Students understand equality of opportunity and diversity, which teachers appropriately make part of vocational lessons. For example, travel students are able to discuss eloquently how the industry has changed over time to reflect gender equality in job roles.

- In a minority of lessons teachers do not set sufficiently challenging work for students. They do not use students' starting points and ongoing assessments to plan learning to challenge individuals to achieve their potential. This slows down the progress that students make, particularly the most able – who do not always achieve their expected grades.

- In a small number of lessons teachers do not develop students' English and mathematical skills sufficiently. The feedback that students receive does not always identify English and mathematical errors. Consequently, students do not know how to improve their work.

- Attendance in English and mathematics lessons is too low.

- Most students have a sufficient understanding of the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism, but they cannot always articulate how these may apply in

their own lives or at work.

Adult learning programmes   Good

- At present, 2,060 students aged 19 or over are on a range of courses from entry level to level 4. The largest number of students study a range of vocational courses, basic English and mathematics, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), employability skills, and access to higher education courses. The majority study at levels 1 and 2.

- Most students enjoy their learning, are highly motivated and make good progress as a result of the interesting and engaging activities that teachers provide. As a result, students make good progress, have high aspirations and achieve their goals. For example, construction students use 'Google-classroom' and 'Moodle-online' resources to help them in their revision and prepare for assessment.

- Students develop the practical and technical knowledge and skills they need for employment. They produce high standards of work. For instance, in motor vehicle, students use the appropriate tools and working methods to remove and repair a radiator. Hairdressing students colour expertly, cut and style hair, and give appropriate care advice to clients. Students follow healthy and safe working practices in workshops. They are familiar with assessing risks and know how to minimise risks when working in the college or at work.

- Students on employability programmes develop good work-related skills that enable them to secure employment or move on to other training programmes. Students on the 'Get Ahead' programme for lone parents develop very good communication skills and improve their confidence and self-esteem.

- Most students benefit from helpful feedback of their work. This helps them to develop their understanding and make improvements. For instance, in 'access science' students are encouraged to expand their answers and include graphs. Students in counselling at level 2 receive feedback that encourages them to develop more sophisticated responses to clients and achieve higher grades.

- The majority of students receive impartial information, advice and guidance prior to the start of their programme. In the current year, the number of students who stay on their course, particularly in functional skills English and ESOL, has improved and is high.

- Students benefit from the very good support they receive from staff. This has enabled them to overcome significant barriers to learning. For instance, students who have mental health problems receive good support from specialist staff.

- Students are able to describe and interpret what British values mean to them. For instance, in English lessons students wrote highly articulate and personal letters to their Member of Parliament explaining why they thought British values should be taught in schools. Students have a good understanding of a range of equality and diversity issues. For example, in tutorials using examples from their own experience to illustrate their views, they discuss gender inequality. They show high levels of respect for their teachers

and each other.

- Leaders and managers have developed good working relationships with a range of partners, including the city council, Jobcentre Plus, local voluntary organisations, and the probation and prison service. They provide flexible and responsive programmes that meet local needs and priorities very effectively. Staff are very successful in engaging students from areas of high deprivation in the city who need to develop the knowledge and skills they require for future employment.

- In a small minority of lessons, less confident students do not make the progress of which they are capable because teachers do not plan carefully enough to meet their individual needs. For instance, teachers do not always encourage some of the quieter and less confident students in ESOL lessons to participate and practise their speaking.

- The proportion of students who stay on access to higher education courses to the end, and who progress to higher education, is low.

- Attendance, though improved, is still too low on access to higher education courses, where punctuality is also poor.

- A minority of students, particularly those on employability and part-time vocational courses, do not have a good understanding of radicalisation and extremism.

Apprenticeships   Requires improvement

- At present, 964 apprentices are studying towards both frameworks and standards. Of these, half are aged 16 to 18, a quarter are aged 19 to 23 and a quarter are 24 or over. There are 825 apprentices studying frameworks in eight vocational areas – which include engineering, hairdressing, construction, and health and social care. The majority of these are at levels 2 and 3, with a small number at a higher level. There are 139 apprentices on the new standards in four vocational areas. Most of these are at level 2.

- Too often, assessors do not plan realistic timescales for framework completion. In too many instances this leads to a lack of pace and slower progress for apprentices. Assessors do not always review the targets set previously in order to identify apprentices' progress. In the majority of framework programmes, apprentices' targets do not enable them to complete by the planned end date. Assessors tend to set targets that focus on unit completion rather than on personal targets for skills development based on apprentices' individual starting points.

- On standards apprenticeships, assessors set targets that are more individual and negotiated. As a result, apprentices focus on their academic and skills development which is of considerable benefit to them.

- Teachers and assessors in both on- and off-the-job training do not use a range of activities that sufficiently challenge the most able apprentices. Often, their questions are not sufficiently probing and do not thoroughly check apprentices' understanding. Too often, many apprentices do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve the standard of their written work because teachers and assessors do not

provide sufficiently helpful feedback.

- Managers have taken appropriate action to improve the quality of the apprenticeship provision. Consequently, the majority of current apprentices are now on track to complete by their planned end date. The number of apprentices that completed their programme last year was affected by a number of employers going out of business, or apprentices being dismissed because of poor attitudes to work. A significant minority of apprentices are continuing in learning past their planned end dates in the current year.

- Managers have recently introduced electronic portfolios so they can check apprentices' progress online more efficiently, and ensure appropriate actions are put in place if they fall behind. Managers and assessors provide support to those at risk to help them to achieve.

- Assessors check health and safety carefully and reinforce healthy and safe working practices in sessions. Apprentices show a good awareness of safe working practices when in college or with their employers. Apprentices' understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism is basic.

- Most teachers and assessors plan a broad range of practical tasks and activities. As a result, most apprentices develop the technical knowledge, skills and understanding they need for work. For example, engineering apprentices use computer-aided technology to design ventilation systems bespoke to customers' needs, and electrical apprentices install electrical and data cables in offices at the local hospital.

- Teachers and assessors plan effective on- and off-the-job training which enables many apprentices to undertake specific tasks appropriate to their job role. For example, hairdressing apprentices benefit from specialist wedding-day hair advisers to refine specific skills to professional standards. They analyse different hair structures and make recommendations about cutting and reviving damaged hair.

- Apprentices develop their technical knowledge, skills and understanding in the workplace and many take on extra responsibilities as they progress. Apprentices in both standards and frameworks make a valuable contribution in their workplace. For instance, in an engineering company, apprentices work directly with customers to develop bespoke ventilation systems. Apprentices are motivated and enjoy both their employment and the apprenticeship programme. They attend regularly and standards of behaviour are good.

- Apprentices develop good personal skills which increase their confidence to manage a range of workplace situations. Apprentices develop self-confidence when speaking with internal and external customers. For example, marketing apprentices plan and provide the necessary resources for an external conference. Apprentices enjoy their learning and most remain employed in the sector in which they are training. However, the number who progress to a higher-level apprenticeship is low.

- Managers establish effective and productive relationships with large and small employers throughout the region. Consequently, they develop programmes which develop the skills of local residents to a higher level, and provide a workforce for priority areas of employment, such as engineering. Staff involve employers in course design whenever opportunities arise. For example, for the hairdressing standards apprenticeship at level 2,

employers liaised with staff to select the most appropriate optional units for their requirements and the future career aspirations of the apprentices.

Provision for students with high needs — Good

- At present, there are 269 students who have SEN and/or disabilities. Of these, 95 are enrolled on specially designed 'futures' courses, with the remaining 174 students following a range of full-time vocational courses.

- Students become more independent as a result of good-quality teaching. Teachers and support staff are ambitious for their students and have high expectations. They use questioning very effectively to prompt and encourage reflection, and to motivate students to think for themselves. Students are given sufficient time to process information before they respond.

- Students benefit from well-qualified and experienced college staff, who work successfully with external specialist services. The local sensory team regularly provides strategies to support and monitor the progress of students with visual or hearing impairments. Staff work closely with educational psychologists, and speech and language therapists. As a result, students make good progress.

- Students follow a carefully structured transition programme when they start their college course. Staff work closely with a wide range of organisations, local authorities, and specialist staff to ensure that all additional needs and outcomes on education, health and care plans are considered carefully. Teachers plan appropriately for students' life after college. Students benefit considerably from impartial and external careers information, advice and guidance. Consequently, the number who progress to further study or employment is high.

- Students feel safe and show a good understanding of health and safety in practical workshops. Students understand the importance of e-safety and the risks associated with social media. For example, on travel training the trainer checked the learners' understanding of how to keep safe and how to recognise appropriate adults to seek help from if needed.

- Teachers plan very effectively for the development of students' English and mathematical skills within vocational, pre-employment and practical sessions. For instance, students working on a National Trust woodlands conservation project develop successfully map-reading skills. They learn how to use a compass and estimate distances and times.

- Students develop their communication skills to a very high standard. Teachers and support staff use a very wide range of approaches, aids and assistive technology, when appropriate. Teachers plan activities that encourage small-group work, and peer- and self-assessment that build students' confidence for life after college. Students across the range of provision become more confident in speaking out, and access enrichment activities independently in the community. For example, students on vocational programmes take an active part in sports and skills competitions.

- Leaders and managers use very successfully funding for students with SEN and/or

disabilities. Students benefit from investment in additional resources which enhance their learning. These include tablet computers with specialist applications, the building of two personal-care suites and a sensory-reduced environment for students with autistic spectrum disorder, and for those with challenging behaviour.

■ Leaders and managers ensure that curriculum pathways meet closely the individual needs of students. Students develop the skills they need to prepare them for life after college. For instance, students benefit from excellent travel training, work experience and pre-employment opportunities, including internships, to develop the skills they need to progress into work.

■ In a minority of lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able students. Teachers in these lessons do not provide more complex activities to extend students' learning. Consequently, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.

■ In a very small minority of lessons, teachers do not plan the resources they require to ensure that the needs of young adults are met. Consequently, they make slow progress.

■ In a minority of lessons, managers do not ensure that students have the support they require to ensure their specific needs are met.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130484
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of students	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all students over the previous full contract year	6,132
Principal/CEO	Claire Boliver
Telephone number	01902 836000
Website	www.wolvcoll.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	
Total number of students (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	490	688	444	926	754	435	-	9

Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	245	275	71	244	1	18

Number of traineeships	16–19	19+	Total
	6	1	7

Number of students aged 14 to 16	-
Number of students for which the provider receives high-needs funding	269
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Chapters Hairdressing Avensys JS Consultants

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal, curriculum and quality, 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 in the college and off site. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Andrea Machell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Ofsted Inspector
Barbara Hughes	Ofsted Inspector
Liam McGrath	Ofsted Inspector
Sylvia Farrier	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Goodwin	Ofsted Inspector
Bryan Davies	Ofsted Inspector

Learner View

Learner View is a website where students can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other students think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for students of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted