

# Swindon College

General Further Education College

## Inspection dates

11–14 December 2018

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders have not secured sufficiently high standards across all types of provision.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has declined and is not consistently good within or across all provision types.
- Leaders and managers do not evaluate fully the effectiveness of initiatives to improve the quality of teaching.
- Managers' improvement plans do not focus sufficiently on the actions needed to raise standards.
- The proportion of learners on study programmes who achieve their qualifications is too low.
- The management and teaching of English and mathematics on GCSE and functional skills courses are weak, and too few learners achieve their qualifications in these subjects.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders have a clear strategy to meet local needs and raise learners' aspirations. They have introduced carefully considered changes to the curriculum and subcontracting arrangements.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of pastoral support and welfare facilities.
- Staff use their industry experience and subject knowledge well to develop learners' practical skills to a good standard.
- A high proportion of apprentices and adults gain their qualifications. Most apprentices achieve their qualifications within the allocated time frame.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Swindon College is a medium-sized general further education college based in the centre of Swindon in Wiltshire. Just over 1,100 learners aged 16 to 19 follow study programmes, and around 800 apprentices are on apprenticeship programmes. At the time of the inspection, approximately 700 adult learners were enrolled on full- or part-time courses. Across the academic year, around 4,000 learners are expected to enrol, and around half with subcontractors. This is similar to numbers in previous years.
- Learners attend the college from across Swindon local authority, Wiltshire, Gloucester and Oxfordshire. Swindon has a population of around 220,000. A vibrant jobs economy exists for skilled and unskilled workers. Employment rates are higher than in the wider south west of England or nationally. Conversely, Swindon has a lower proportion of the population with a level 2 qualification or above, including GCSEs in English and mathematics at key stage 4.

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

- Raise standards to be consistently high across all provision types.
- Raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - improving the processes that support teachers to become better teachers
  - ensuring that teachers identify what learners already know and can do, then provide sufficiently demanding work and opportunities to master and consolidate new knowledge and skills
  - ensuring that teachers check learners' understanding more effectively.
- Rapidly improve the management and teaching of discrete English and mathematics courses and ensure that vocational teachers are aware of the progress that their learners are making in these subjects.
- Evaluate the impact of new curriculum changes and initiatives taken to improve teaching. Use this evaluation to plan further improvements and monitor their completion closely.
- Increase the proportion of learners who gain their qualifications, including in English and mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the college has been through challenging times and leaders have failed to maintain standards. This is partly due to the many changes to staff and leadership. Leaders acknowledge that the quality of provision declined following the previous inspection. The current leadership team is making well-considered changes but has much to do. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement and outcomes for learners are not high enough. Although managers have taken steps to improve their monitoring of learners' progress, the leadership of study programmes requires improvement and provision for learners with high needs is not yet good.
- Since the last inspection, a large number of teachers and managers have left the college. A reorganisation of middle management in 2015/16 was unsuccessful. New middle and senior managers are now in place but are not yet able to demonstrate impact of their actions as they have been recently appointed.
- Leaders and managers do not fully evaluate the effectiveness of their initiatives to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, leaders and governors are not clear as to which of the many recent initiatives have contributed to raising standards.
- Managers have not implemented sufficiently effective processes for supporting teachers. Observations of lessons are not carried out as frequently as expected by senior leaders. Following these, not all teachers are given guidance on what they need to do to improve their teaching. When teachers are advised on how to improve their teaching, managers do not check that these improvements are made consistently.
- Managers do not use their evaluations of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to identify the precise improvements that need to be made. Improvement plans do not check and measure impact sufficiently well. Senior leaders and middle managers have a strong focus on implementing processes, for example a new progress monitoring system. However, they do not pay sufficient attention to the impact and improvements resulting from these processes. Too often, data is not readily available to inform improvements or is not used effectively enough.
- Leaders have been slow to deal with the weaknesses in English and mathematics that have caused too many learners to fail their qualifications in recent years. The current leadership team has invested in training specialist teachers in English and mathematics to teach GCSE. Leaders have also increased the number of specialist English and mathematics teachers.
- Leaders, governors and staff have maintained the college's long-standing practice of preparing learners for employment in the local area. A high number of learners leave Swindon's schools at the age of 16 without achieving high grades in GCSEs. Senior leaders ensure that these learners can choose from a wide range of vocational courses at the college. Apprentices are well served by their time on a college apprenticeship, and employers value the college's contribution to training their staff.
- Since the last major change of leadership in 2016, leaders have developed a clear vision for the college. They have built on the strong and durable relationships with employers in

order to ensure that apprenticeships and much of their adult provision meet the needs of local employers. Leaders have established collaborative relationships with other education providers, where competition had previously been the norm. They have used these partnerships well to develop a long-term plan to raise the number of people trained locally to fill the many technical level jobs available in Swindon. The college is well regarded by employers for the training it provides for local industries.

- Leaders have radically changed the curriculum for 16- to 19-year-olds with low prior achievement, with a clear aim of raising these learners' ambitions. They have introduced two-year study programmes to provide learners with a route to attaining full level 2 qualifications. The new study programmes have been carefully planned and are designed with a strong emphasis on developing the personal skills, behaviours and attitudes alongside vocational skills and knowledge. Leaders have successfully secured teachers' and managers' enthusiasm for this initiative, and learners are largely positive, with more staying on in their studies. However, it is too early to evaluate its success in preparing learners for higher level study or employment.
- Leaders have taken steps to reduce the amount of provision subcontracted out of Swindon in line with their strategic aims. While new subcontractors for 2018/19 will deliver training outside Swindon, leaders plan to move more of its adult provision back to the local area over the coming years. Leaders identified in 2017/18 that some of the largest subcontractors did not provide a service at the expected standard and ended most contracts. Leaders have ceased the subcontracting of apprenticeships.

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

- Governors have carefully managed the college's finances through challenging times in order to ensure that sufficient resources are available and the college is able to invest in the aims of its strategic plan.
- Governors bring an appropriate range of experience and expertise that they use well to define the strategic direction for the college. They have fully supported senior leaders in the changes they have made to the curriculum for 16- to 19-year-old learners.
- Governors have identified the need to pay more attention to their role in overseeing the quality of provision. Their role in challenging leaders to iron out variations in performance has not led to consistently high standards across all provision types. Currently, they do not get sufficiently detailed information about the quality of provision and teaching, learning and assessment. Reports do not provide governors with sufficient information on the success of improvement actions. A recently introduced quality standards committee, tasked with reporting to the board on whether the college is improving its provision and the standards reached by learners effectively, is a positive initiative, but it is too early to show impact.
- Governors receive regular and timely updates on safeguarding and provide the necessary support and challenge to senior leaders to provide a safe environment for learners.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have implemented clear policies and processes to safeguard learners. A recent

audit of safeguarding practice has identified in detail a small number of areas for further improvement, and leaders have a clear action plan in place to address them. Checks on staff are carried out carefully and recorded appropriately.

- Managers provide staff with safeguarding training regularly. They use this well to explore current issues faced by learners, such as the rise in county lines activity in Swindon and its impact on young people.
- Concerns about safeguarding are well-documented and followed up well by staff responsible for learners' welfare and safety. Learners are taught about 'Prevent' and safeguarding and can recall what they have learned. They understand the specific threats to their safety in the local area.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too inconsistent across different subjects and types of provision. A large minority of teachers do not identify well enough whether learners have improved their understanding of the subject matter or when they need more help. Consequently, too many learners do not develop or extend their knowledge swiftly enough. Often, teachers do not use information about learners' previous attainments in order to provide suitable learning activities. Teachers' expectations of what many of their learners can achieve are not high enough.
- Although staff conduct frequent reviews of learners' and apprentices' progress, they do not identify learners' and apprentices' existing strengths and weaknesses, particularly in their English, mathematics or academic skills. Teachers do not provide learners on study programmes, or learners with high needs on specialist courses, with sufficiently detailed and helpful feedback on their work that supports them to improve. As a result, too many learners and apprentices do not know what they need to do better or how to make improvements. Learners do not always develop the skills and knowledge of which they are capable. Learners' written work is often at or below the expected standard and does not improve quickly enough.
- Most assessors provide apprentices, and adult learners studying short healthcare courses on distance learning programmes, with highly effective feedback. This helps them to understand what they need to do to improve their assignment work.
- Most teachers and trainers use their considerable industry experience and subject knowledge well to ensure that learners and apprentices participate in well-paced and interesting practical sessions. As a result, learners produce work at industry standards and gain good skills. For example, learners on level 2 hairdressing and beauty therapy courses perform services such as cutting, foiled highlights and facials at the speed demanded by a salon. Learners who have high needs develop their coordination and creativity well when making props for their forthcoming Christmas theatre production.
- Most assessors plan off-the-job and theory sessions that reflect industry practice well. As a result, apprentices develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours to a good standard. For example, apprentices studying electrical installation develop a useful knowledge of their industry by discussing the difficulties and solutions they find when testing and diagnosing faults in domestic and industrial settings.
- Despite considerable investment by managers, the teaching of English and mathematics

GCSE and functional skills is weak. Teachers accurately assess learners' and apprentices' English and mathematics knowledge when they start their courses. However, they do not provide learners with appropriate activities to improve their skills. Teachers do not check learners' skills development well enough.

- Most vocational teachers and assessors set work that helps learners and apprentices gain English and mathematical skills relevant to their subject or vocational area. For example, early years learners gain useful budgeting skills when designing a nutritional weaning programme for babies. Although most apprentices develop their mathematics skills well, a small minority do not improve their written skills. Apprentices studying plumbing and automotive apprenticeships do not have the opportunity to practise their written skills, for example in technical report writing. As too many vocational teachers do not know the progress that learners are making in GCSE and functional skills classes, they are unsure how to help learners further.
- Staff provide learners and apprentices with good levels of pastoral and academic support. They work well with external agencies to identify the diverse range of potential challenges that can affect learners at the start of their courses. Where appropriate, managers meet with external professionals to discuss learners' needs, such as challenging behaviour or low prior educational achievement. Managers use their findings carefully in order to identify support needs and any required adjustments to learning programmes. Staff recently participated in useful training to raise their awareness of how to help learners who have dyslexia or Asperger syndrome.
- Managers and teachers provide parents and carers of learners on study programmes with regular information on attendance, improvements to their work and the progress they are making on their course. Staff also use a range of activities to improve communication between the college and parents, for example by sending newsletters, inviting them to course interviews with learners and encouraging them to attend the annual learner celebration event. A youth worker provides the parents of learners studying on the foundation learning programme with regular, useful feedback on their progress.
- Staff ensure that most employers are involved in the effective planning of apprentices' learning programmes and job roles prior to the start of the apprenticeship. Employers participate well in reviews of apprentices' performance, and they provide trainers with regular feedback on attendance, skills development and behaviours at work. Communication between college staff and employers is frequent and informative. However, a few employers would value more detailed information on apprentices' progress in their off-the-job training.
- Learning coaches work well with teachers to help them improve learners' and apprentices' understanding of diversity and life in modern Britain. For example, electrical engineering apprentices learn about equal rights and employment law. Level 3 learners on arts and media courses understand the importance of freedom of speech when producing visual recordings. Most learners and apprentices spoken to by inspectors demonstrated an appropriate understanding of the diverse community where they live. They recognise the importance of issues such as discrimination and radicalisation and know how to seek help if necessary.
- Teachers and assessors develop learners' digital skills well. For example, learners studying hairdressing at level 2 use a wide range of social media platforms to identify current and emerging hair trends. This inspires their practical cutting and styling techniques with

clients. Adults studying sports at level 2 use a range of digital skills well to produce innovative posters about the importance of data protection. Plumbers use mobile device applications to convert flow rate pressures between metric and imperial units.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Learners and apprentices enjoy their time at college. They have positive attitudes to their learning and show respect for each other, visitors and staff. Learners' behaviour in college is good. They are aware of, and follow, the college's code of conduct.
- Learners gain useful practical skills and produce good standards of practical work. Learners gain a good understanding of working in their chosen vocational sector. For example, accounting apprentices handle issues around customers' bad debt and credit management confidentially and sensitively. Learners on level 2 hospitality and catering courses communicate authoritatively with their team when adopting the role of the head chef in a busy college restaurant. Learners with high needs develop good social skills that are valuable in their everyday lives. For example, learners on foundation learning courses learn housekeeping skills such as how to make a bed and clean.
- Learners develop relevant vocational vocabulary. For example, automotive learners can explain the use of appropriate software to retrieve manufacturers' data settings for specific vehicles.
- The proportion of learners attending their courses has improved and is high in most areas. However, attendance is too low in discrete English and mathematics classes.
- Apprentices are clear as to how their apprenticeship will prepare them for their career path. They develop good customer care skills and can communicate with a wide range of clients. They are professional, well presented and represent their employers positively. Learners on level 3 and access to higher education (HE) courses receive useful help from staff on how to apply to university. However, most learners on study programmes in their first year of study and learners with high needs are unsure of their next steps or long-term career aspirations as staff have not explored these with them well enough.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities that help them to balance their vocational studies with leisure activities and to understand their wider rights and responsibilities within society. For example, learners with high needs who undertake the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award improve their confidence and resilience. Teachers use a wide range of trips, visits, competitions, work experience and visiting speakers to motivate learners and link theory well to work place practices. For example, learners studying beauty therapy at level 3 visited a professional health spa in Budapest to compare the treatments with those in England. Apprentices have been successful in intercollege regional and national skills competitions in brickwork and carpentry.
- Learners and apprentices make good use of a wide range of useful support services that help them remain well and healthy. A well-being centre runs workshops on topics such as sexual and mental health and road safety that learners find beneficial. A chaplaincy team helps learners explore spirituality. The student engagement team signposts learners with mental health concerns to trained counsellors. However, due to high demand, there is a waiting list. Not all part-time adult learners are aware of the wider central services that exist, so they cannot take full advantage of the support.

- Most apprentices and learners have a good understanding of the risks of extremism and radicalisation and know how to report concerns. For example, they are aware of local risks associated with knife crime, county lines, and people trafficking. Because of the information they receive from their teachers, learners know about the potential dangers that exist online and how they can minimise their impact.

## Outcomes for learners

## Requires improvement

- The proportion of learners on study programmes and apprenticeships who achieved their qualifications declined over the last four years. Despite this, the proportion of apprentices and adults who gained their qualifications remained high in 2017/18, and most did so in the time they were allocated. The proportion was too low for learners on study programmes.
- The proportion of learners on study programmes who achieved certificates and diplomas in their core subjects in 2017/18 increased but was not high enough in most subject areas. In contrast, most learners on level 2 diplomas in professional cookery, level 3 public services and level 3 applied science achieved their qualifications.
- The number of learners remaining on their courses has increased this year, but is still not high enough on study programmes. A large minority of learners aged between 16 to 19 leave without achieving their intended qualifications, although many gain sufficient confidence and skills to find alternative courses or go into work. The overwhelming majority of adults, learners with high needs and apprentices remain on their courses.
- Over the last four years, managers have successfully increased the numbers of learners with previous low attainment who go on to study at level 2. Around two thirds who completed level 2 in 2017/18 continued to study at level 3 this year. A large proportion of learners who completed level 3 study programmes in 2017/18 went on to study subjects related to their courses at universities across the UK.
- A high proportion of intermediate and advanced apprentices achieved their qualifications in 2017/18, especially in construction, plumbing and heating, and hairdressing. However, none of the 54 apprentices on level 4 and 5 management or construction management, or level 2 property maintenance apprenticeships subcontracted to either Geeson Training or Track Training Limited, achieved their qualifications.
- Too few learners on study programmes or adults gained functional skills qualifications in English or mathematics in 2017/18, and this proportion declined from the previous year. It was very low for adult learners with the subcontractor, Learning Curve. The proportion of 16- to 19-year-olds who improved their English or mathematics GCSE grades to 4 and above has increased but is still too low.
- Few differences existed in the achievements of groups of adults or learners on study programmes in 2017/18. However, there were differences in achievement between groups of apprentices, including between genders and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those without. Learners with high needs on study programmes have a higher rate of achievement than their peers.
- Almost all adults studying certificates or diplomas achieved their qualifications in 2017/18, although the very small proportion who achieved at level 3 was not high enough. Almost all adults on access to HE healthcare achieved their qualifications in 2017/18, and nearly



all went on to study degrees at Oxford Brookes University.

- Most learners, including those with high needs, who left college gained employment or went on to further or higher education. Most apprentices continue to work in their chosen sector, and many embark on successful careers with large multinational employers.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### Requires improvement

- The numbers of learners declined significantly since the previous inspection. However, managers successfully reversed this decline in 2018/19 and recruited more learners on to higher level courses. Around a third of learners now study at level 3, two thirds at level 2 and a very small number at entry or level 1.
- Managers have been slow to improve the quality of study programmes. The quality of teaching is not consistently good, and not enough learners gain their qualifications.
- A large minority of teachers have low expectations of their learners and fail to take account of the range of learners' prior knowledge and skills when providing tasks and activities. Too many learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not provide appropriate activities to develop individual learners' knowledge and skills to the highest levels or to raise their aspirations. Most teachers do not set learners targets to help them to improve their vocational, English, mathematics and digital skills.
- The progress of learners in English and mathematics is too slow because teachers do not provide work that enables learners to gain and practise the knowledge and skills they need. Not enough learners pass qualifications in these subjects at a higher level than they have previously achieved.
- Managers have developed a clear policy for all learners to complete work experience, but this is not being implemented fully. Not enough learners are aware of plans for their own work experience, including those in the second year of their courses, because staff have not yet shared these with them.
- Teachers focus well on developing learners' social and personal skills to prepare them effectively for employment. A recently introduced programme to develop learners' personal characteristics, such as determination and self-motivation, has had a positive impact on learners' attitudes. A range of work-related activities, such as visiting speakers from industry and visits to employers help learners understand the realities of working in their chosen sectors.
- Staff provide effective additional learning support in most subjects. This helps learners who need support to progress as well as their peers. For example, in level 2 food and beverages, learners successfully reviewed their work following a practical assessment because of the relevant amount of intervention from support workers. This allowed them to identify what they could do better.
- Most teachers know their learners well and provide a safe, supportive learning environment. In tutorials, teachers provide useful information on mental health, health and safety and enterprise that learners find valuable. The tutorial programme ensures

that learners are aware of how to stay safe online, and of ways to stay healthy.

- Learners are aware of the risks of radicalisation, extremism and potential local threats, including street crime and drugs. They know how to report concerns.

## Adult learning programmes

**Good**

- Typically, around a third of adult learners attend full-time courses, including access to HE in healthcare, with the remainder on part-time courses. The large majority study at level 2. Around half of adults complete short courses at level 2 with subcontractors in Yorkshire and Dorset, although at the time of inspection, only a small number of adults were enrolled on newly subcontracted programmes. A small number of adults complete healthcare qualifications via distance learning programmes.
- Adult learners benefit from a wide range of accredited courses, which help them to improve their employment prospects, change career, or improve their language. Those on full-time courses study alongside their younger peers on study programmes. They learn new skills in subjects for which they have a talent or deep interest and were unable to follow previously. For example, learners who left school due to family care needs or financial pressures are now studying courses in visual arts and aspire to progress on to higher education. Others are improving their English and mathematics to support their aspirations and help their families.
- Managers work well with local business networks and employers to develop courses to meet local skills needs. Programmes to help unemployed adults back into work are organised in collaboration with Jobcentre Plus. These successfully help learners to improve their lives and their prospects. For example, learners on a construction skills certification course have gained the mandatory qualifications requirements to work on construction sites, which has improved their prospects of employment in the industry.
- Managers and staff provide a range of useful healthcare courses via distance learning. Almost all learners complete these successfully. Adults working in local schools and care settings develop and improve their working practices. For example, school administration assistants understand the reasons behind the children's behaviour and use a range of techniques to help them improve.
- Teachers on access to HE courses use their knowledge and experience well to help learners make progress quickly. Learners develop skills and knowledge of health-related topics effectively, in addition to the valuable study and research skills needed at university. The standard of learners' work is high, including their written English, and most have gained confidence in their ability to achieve. Most access to HE learners progress on to local universities after their courses.
- In practical subjects, learners develop useful industry-standard skills and adopt good health and safety practices. For example, in hairdressing and media makeup learners understand the potential impact of a range of chemical products they use on clients.
- Teachers provide most learners with detailed and useful verbal feedback, which helps them improve their work. Teachers mark written work frequently and accurately but do not consistently help learners focus on any gaps in their skills and knowledge. They do not give learners sufficient strategies or additional exercises to help them to correct errors or make further improvements.

- Too many teachers of adult learners on study programmes do not set work that makes them think deeply about subjects. Teachers do not check that learners have understood each topic sufficiently before moving on to the next. However, on part-time courses, teachers set learners more meaningful and demanding work. For example, in accountancy, teachers set useful scenarios about credit management which encouraged learners to work well in teams, solve problems together and produce their findings.
- Most learners develop their English and mathematics skills well through the vocational topics they study. Teachers effectively develop learners' technical vocabulary. Learners with English as additional language find this particularly beneficial. A large proportion of adults taking GCSEs in English and mathematics achieve a grade 4 or above, or equivalent. However, not enough adults on functional skills courses achieve their qualifications.

## Apprenticeships

**Good**

- Around the same proportions of apprentices study at levels 2 and 3, with a small number studying healthcare at level 5. Around a quarter of apprentices are on new standards-based apprenticeships. Almost half of apprentices follow apprenticeships in construction-related subjects or engineering, including automotive engineering.
- Staff plan and manage the apprenticeship programme very effectively with employers. Assessors work closely with employers to tailor the programme to suit the needs of their businesses and the interests of the apprentice. Employers are fully aware of their commitments and responsibilities to provide on- and off-the-job training, which contributes to the vast majority of apprentices achieving their qualifications. Most apprentices remain in full-time employment after completing their apprenticeship. Many take on additional responsibilities at work due to the skills and knowledge they gain. For example, business administration apprentices confidently support the work of absent and more senior colleagues.
- Leaders and managers provide a broad range of apprenticeships to meet local skills shortages. They work with large multinational employers and National Health Trusts to support their workforce development, as well as with smaller employers in support of the local economy. Staff work closely with employers to identify roles in their business that could be filled by apprentices, particularly in industries with skills shortages or an ageing workforce. Most employers acknowledge the positive benefits that apprentices bring to their businesses.
- The large majority of apprentices make at least expected progress and a few make more rapid progress. They produce work of a good standard. Healthcare assistant practitioner apprentices' work is of a very high standard for this point in their programmes as a result of teachers' high expectations. Advanced carpentry and joinery apprentices complete national competition standard work that refines their skills and accuracy to a very high level.
- The quality of the majority of teaching, learning and assessment on apprenticeships is good. Most teachers set sufficiently demanding work based on apprentices' starting points. Those apprentices with prior experience and knowledge complete more complex work. For example, electrical installation apprentices work on highly complex site plans to allow them greater challenge in measuring, estimating and overcoming technical

problems. In a small number of areas, including childcare, brickwork, and plumbing and heating, teachers set tasks that are too undemanding for the most able and confident apprentices. Therefore, these apprentices do not always reach the standards of which they are capable.

- Apprentices are clear about their career development and are ambitious to pursue careers in their chosen industry. Apprentices develop skills and behaviours valued by employers, such as professionalism, confidence and maturity. They present themselves well and represent their employer positively in the workplace and at college. They display a strong work ethic and are self-confident and reliable.
- Apprentices understand how to keep themselves safe, and they appreciate the risks of local concerns such as people trafficking. They know the importance of following company processes when security risks are heightened at their organisations. Accounting and business administration apprentices understand the need for maintaining customer confidentiality with data and information.

### Provision for learners with high needs

### Requires improvement

- One hundred and four learners with high needs, all with education, health and care (EHC) plans, attend college. Around a third of learners follow specialist courses in foundation learning, while the remainder attend full-time study programmes.
- Staff do not focus sufficiently on developing learners' knowledge and skills in order to secure employment, achieve their potential or increase their independence. Consequently, learners are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers and support staff do not set learners targets that are challenging enough or link well with outcomes in EHC plans. Learners are not always clear about the different targets they need to work on to make progress or improve. Staff do not record the small incremental steps that learners make towards achieving outcomes such as independence or skills for employment. While the recently introduced electronic management information system records the progress of learners with high needs effectively, it is not yet used carefully enough.
- Too many learners do not have enough opportunities for meaningful work placements or work experiences that challenge them sufficiently because staff have not planned these. Learners are not well prepared to make choices about their future careers. They fail to develop their independence skills swiftly enough due to the lack of work experience.
- Learners with high needs do not benefit from specialist impartial careers information, advice and guidance. Most learners do not have clear plans for their next steps or career progression once they leave the college. Staff broaden learners' understanding of different career options, but learners do not receive individual advice and guidance to help them define specific plans for their futures.
- Learners benefit from a range of different experiences. They understand more of the world they live in and make friends because of the activities they take part in. For example, they enjoy planning visits to the rail museum, participating in theatre productions, supporting primary school children with craft activities and attending residential weeks aimed at understanding army life.
- Managers have developed valuable partnerships that bring benefits to learners. For

example, learners with high needs help local primary school children practise their nativity play and plan their sports day. As a result, learners at the college improve their communication, behaviour, and attitude to learning.

- Staff, learning support staff and teachers gather a good range of information early in learners' application to the college in order to assess their additional learning needs quickly and accurately. Individual good-quality support is provided as soon as they start their programmes. Learners reduce their levels of anxiety and settle quickly into life at college.
- Staff provide learners with a good range of pastoral support. As a result, learners are happy at college and make good progress with managing their behaviour. They develop their confidence and language skills because of the useful and effective support they receive. Most learners gain good social skills that are valuable in their everyday lives.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	130849
Type of provider	General Further Education College
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	5934
Principal/CEO	Mr Stephen Wain
Telephone number	01793 491 591
Website	<a href="http://www.swindon.ac.uk">www.swindon.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)	73	88	663	512	392	101	4	6
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	218	122	197	259	-	46		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	104							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	PeoplePlus Group Limited Quality Transport Training Limited The Skills Network Limited Stone Maiden Limited							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal for 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 learners, staff 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

Helen Flint, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Tucker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Penny Mathers	Ofsted Inspector
Lyn Bourne	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Tom Hallam	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Green	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Rowley	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Griffin	Ofsted Inspector
Denise Olander	Her Majesty's Inspector

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### **Learner View**

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### **Employer View**

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