

Moulton College

Specialist further education college

Inspection dates

30 April – 3 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

- Actions taken by governors, leaders and managers have not rectified most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.
- Managers have not improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which has declined since the previous inspection.
- Teachers' expectations of students are too low and, as a result, too many students make insufficient progress.
- Students' attendance is poor across most programmes and is particularly low in sport, English and mathematics lessons.
- Teachers do not provide students with sufficient feedback that helps them to improve.
- Teachers' development of students' English and mathematics is insufficient, and too few achieve GCSE grades 9 to 4 in these subjects.
- Managers do not use data well enough to judge accurately the impact of actions that they have taken, or to inform future actions for improvement.
- Students on vocational programmes, for whom the college receives high needs funding, do not benefit from teaching that meets their specific learning and support needs.
- The quality of students' written and practical work on study programmes at levels 2 and 3 is not good enough.

The provider has the following strengths

- A recently enhanced board of governors and new leadership team have changed the culture of the college so that it focuses on the student and staff experience; as a result, staff turnover has decreased, and staff morale has improved.
- Leaders and managers have rectified the health and safety and safeguarding concerns identified at the previous inspection.
- Leaders and managers have rectified the poor behaviour identified at the previous inspection; students now behave well around the campus and in most lessons.
- Adult students on distance learning programmes and those on stonemasonry, sports massage, floristry and furniture-making courses benefit from high-quality teaching and make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Moulton College is a specialist land-based college that offers programmes in a range of subject areas including animal management, equine studies, agriculture and sport. It also offers courses in construction. The college has a satellite centre in Higham Ferrers which offers animal care and construction, and a centre in Daventry which provides construction courses for a small number of students. At the time of the inspection, the college is not recruiting new apprentices, and apprenticeship provision is not within the scope of this inspection.
- The college attracts students from across Northamptonshire including areas of high deprivation. The predominant employment sectors include wholesale and retail trades, manufacturing, administration and health and social work. The proportion of people who have qualifications at levels 2 and 3 is in line with the East Midlands region but is slightly below the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Use data and self-assessment processes more effectively, so that governors, leaders and managers know accurately what improvements have been made and what they need to do to secure future improvements.
- Ensure that students attend lessons frequently, particularly in English and mathematics lessons.
- Improve the training and support given to teachers to ensure that teachers:
 - have high expectations of what students can do and achieve so that they produce written and practical work of a high standard
 - provide challenging and stimulating activities that inspire and motivate students, so that they make good progress
 - provide useful feedback to students so that they know how to improve.
- Ensure that teachers of students who have high needs on vocational programmes understand students' learning and support needs, so that they support students to develop their skills and knowledge well.
- Managers and teachers should improve the development of students' English and mathematics as a high priority by:
 - supporting vocational teachers to develop students' understanding of English and mathematics within the context of their vocational programmes
 - improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics lessons, so that students make good progress and receive a good preparation for their examinations.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The leadership and management of the college have undergone significant changes since the previous inspection, with an interim principal joining in May 2018 and a new senior leadership team starting in September 2018. The majority of curriculum managers and teaching staff are new to their roles, following a period of high turnover of staff, which leaders have now stabilised.
- The new leadership team have had a short time to make a positive impact on all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. They have not rectified most of those weaknesses. Curriculum managers, the majority of whom are new in post, are not yet sufficiently experienced in their roles to secure the rapid improvements required.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has declined since the previous inspection. Although arrangements for improving the quality of teaching and learning are in place, the pace of improvement has not been sufficiently swift. Too much teaching is not good enough. A new lesson observation process is in place, but it is too early for managers to use this effectively to identify where teaching, learning and assessment are strong.
- The strategy that managers have put in place for improving students' English and mathematics, has not had enough impact. Too many students do not make sufficient progress in developing their skills in these subjects and too few pass their qualifications. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics is poor.
- The use of management information to inform governors, leaders and managers about progress against targets is weak. Leaders and managers do not use data effectively to judge and evaluate the impact of their actions, or what they need to do. For example, they do not know the progress that students are making or the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers' self-assessment does not provide sufficient analysis of the data available and, as a consequence, leaders and managers do not have a detailed understanding of the progress they are making. Self-assessment is often too generous in terms of grading and does not reflect accurately weaknesses that need to be rectified. Too often, progress against actions is a record of what has been done and not what has been achieved.
- Leaders and managers gather more detailed information about students' destinations, but they do not use this information effectively to identify weaknesses or plan future actions. For example, they do not apply their knowledge to inform curriculum planning. Managers have a weak understanding of how many students progress from one level of learning to the next within the college.
- Leaders and managers have been successful in rectifying the poor behaviour of students that was identified at the previous inspection. Students' behaviour around the campus, and in most lessons, is good.
- The culture of the college, led by the interim principal and governing body, is now strongly focused on improving the student experience and supporting staff at all levels to meet this objective. As a result, staff turnover has decreased, and staff morale has improved. Managers have not yet filled important posts, such as that of the careers

advisor and the programme manager for supported learning.

The governance of the provider

- Since the previous inspection, the expertise of the board has improved. An experienced chair and new board members are in place to meet the skills gaps identified in audits. For example, a new governor with safeguarding experience and a governor with teaching and learning expertise in the sector are on the board.
- Governors focus strongly on the student experience and have prioritised resources in order to have a positive impact on this. For example, they have supported actions to improve teaching and learning and to increase the numbers of pastoral support staff. However, these actions have not had sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- Governors understand the need to challenge senior leaders to secure the improvements required but do not have sufficient range of data in order to do this effectively. They have, with the senior leadership team, set ambitious targets for improvement which they monitor frequently, but the progress against these targets is too slow.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors, leaders and managers have given safeguarding a high priority. They have strengthened safeguarding practices very effectively, through appropriate training for managers and staff, so that they are clear of their responsibilities and assess risks more effectively.
- Those staff involved in recruitment have received appropriate training on safer recruitment and they apply this effectively when recruiting staff. Managers carry out relevant checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with young people and vulnerable students. They check that references are valid and that gaps in employment are acceptable.
- Staff have a good understanding of how to keep students safe, particularly in relation to local issues. For example, they have received training in recognising 'county lines' activities. They are more confident in supporting students to stay safe from local risks, such as grooming and exploitation. However, too many students do not have sufficient understanding of the 'Prevent' duty, radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve and do are not high enough on study programmes. As a result, they plan lessons that are not sufficiently challenging for students. In too many lessons, teachers do not help students to develop their theoretical knowledge or practical skills to a sufficiently high standard.
- Staff assess students' skills and knowledge at the start of their programmes and share this effectively with teachers. However, too few teachers on 16 to 19 study programmes and on programmes for students with high needs use this information effectively to teach

lessons that help students to make good progress.

- In study programme lessons, teachers do not use assessment activities well enough to ensure that students develop their understanding of subjects. Too often teachers focus on the requirements of external assessments and not enough on developing the broad range of skills and knowledge that students need to be successful in the workplace.
- Teachers on study programmes and those on programmes for students with high needs do not routinely provide students with feedback in lessons that is precise or specific enough to help students understand what they need to do to improve. Teachers often give undeserved praise in these lessons.
- Teachers' feedback is frequently too positive, superficial and imprecise. As a result, students do not understand how to improve their performance in subsequent assessments. On distance learning programmes for adults and in floristry, stonemasonry, sports massage and food and drink programmes, assessment is frequent and helps students know how to improve their work.
- Not all staff in animal care and equine studies demonstrate strong subject knowledge. As a result, they do not relate theoretical concepts to practical situations well enough. In a minority of cases, they are unable to respond appropriately when students give incorrect answers to questions or draw incorrect inferences from their own experiences.
- In floristry, stonemasonry, furniture making and sports massage courses, which mostly adult students attend, teachers have appropriate expectations of students, teach lessons that are suitably challenging and help students to develop their knowledge and practical skills well. Students on level 1 courses develop good practical skills. For example, at Higham Ferrers, students can work to industry tolerances when building brick walls, and animal care students work well together to identify risks in the rodent room.
- Staff take appropriate action to identify early those students who need extra help with their studies. They swiftly provide learning support assistants to work with these students. However, staff do not routinely document support needs well. Subsequent reviews, although frequent, lack detail and do not support these students to improve. Too often, teachers do not use learning support assistants effectively in lessons. As a result, these students do not achieve as well as their peers.
- Most vocational tutors do not understand the specific learning needs of students who have high needs. They do not routinely make appropriate adjustments to meet those needs. Support is effective on specialist programmes for students who have high needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

- Attendance in classroom-based lessons is too low, particularly in construction and sport. Although teachers and newly appointed pastoral support officers have put interventions in place, attendance has decreased across all levels of learning and all curriculum areas. Attendance in English and mathematics lessons is particularly poor and has decreased.
- Teachers in vocational lessons do not routinely plan to develop students' English skills, including grammar and spelling, or their understanding of complex terminology within vocational lessons. As a result, students are not well prepared for further study or their future careers. Students' development of mathematics in vocational lessons is often too slow and, as a result, they are not well prepared for further study or employment. In a

minority of lessons students develop basic mathematics related to their future careers.

- The standard of students' written work is too low in most areas. The written responses of students on level 3 programmes are often too brief and lack the depth expected at this stage of their course. Teachers do not encourage students sufficiently to produce high standards of work at their first attempts.
- Students, including those students who have high needs, do not have access to high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance. There has not been a careers adviser in post this academic year. Recently, managers have obtained careers advice from an external agency, but this has not yet been available to students.
- Managers and teachers do not know how many students on 16 to 19 study programmes have completed external work placements. In areas where external placements are difficult to secure, such as construction, plans to ensure that students have a good understanding of working in the sector are insufficient.
- Students' behaviour around the campus has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good. However, in a small minority of lessons, particularly when teachers do not challenge students well enough, students become distracted and demonstrate low-level misbehaviour. This occurs in, for example, sports and plumbing courses.
- Students benefit from a broad range of enrichment activities across curriculum areas. Most curriculum managers organise visits and activities that help students to gain a broader understanding of their vocational area and career opportunities. For example, students on food and drink programmes visit high-profile food companies and sports students offer massages at the London Marathon.
- Staff provide effective pastoral support to students. Students feel that staff care for them well and value them. They appreciate the support they receive from their personal tutors. Students know whom to contact within the college if they need help and they are confident to do so. Staff refer students effectively to external agencies, such as mental health support, Young Carers and counselling, whenever appropriate.

Outcomes for learners

Inadequate

- In 2018/19, the number of students remaining on programme has increased but remains too low. On animal management and sports programmes, the proportion of students who leave the course early has increased and is too high. Too few students on two-year level 3 programmes complete their first year of study.
- Too many students on study programmes do not make enough progress in their vocational subjects. Managers and teachers do not have a good oversight of, and do not record, the progress of individual students. As a result, teachers are unable to identify students who fall behind in their studies and so do not support them to achieve. Managers and tutors on distance learning programmes set clear targets and monitor students' progress well. These students make good progress.
- The standard of work on study programmes is not good enough, particularly at levels 2 and 3. Teachers do not challenge students sufficiently to produce high standards of written or practical work to industry standards. Too many students on study programmes have to repeat their written work and, as a result, are not on track to complete within

planned timescales.

- The proportion of students who achieve grades 9 to 4 in GCSE English and mathematics is low. Too many students do not make sufficient progress in developing their skills and knowledge in these subjects. Managers do not monitor students' progress in these subjects effectively.
- The achievement gap has increased over the previous three years. Male students, who make up approximately two thirds of the student cohort, perform less well than female students. Students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not perform as well as their peers. Students from a White background achieve better than learners from a black and minority ethnic background.
- Managers and teachers do not have a detailed understanding of student destinations. A recent report carried out by an external agency indicates that the majority of 16- to 18-year-olds and adult students move on to positive destinations. However, the proportion of students who progress from one level course to the next is not identified accurately. Managers do not use this information effectively to inform actions or curriculum planning.
- Students on adult learning programmes produce written work of a high standard which meets the requirements of their course. Adult students on floristry, stonemasonry and furniture making courses produce high quality practical work which meets industry standards. Students on distance learning programmes produce work of a high professional standard.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

- The college has 1,350 students on study programmes, mainly on land-based, sport and construction courses. Just over a half of the students study level 3 programmes, with one quarter studying at level 2 and the remainder at level 1 or below.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment on study programmes is inadequate. Too many teachers have low expectations of what students can achieve and do. In theory lessons, teachers do not link learning to practical situations and the workplace well enough. Consequently, students are not well prepared for higher levels of study or employment.
- Too often, teachers provide practical learning activities that are inappropriate for the level of study, particularly in the equine, animal management and construction areas. In these subjects, students do not develop their practical skills swiftly enough, and do not know the industry standards that they should be working towards.
- In theory lessons, too few teachers plan to meet the different needs of students. Teachers do not routinely use information gathered on students' abilities at the beginning of their course, to ensure that the work they set is interesting and challenging. Consequently, the standard of work that students produce, particularly on programmes at levels 2 and 3, is too low and students do not make enough progress.
- Teachers do not ensure that students understand topics before moving onto the next learning activity. The range of assessment activities teachers use is often limited, and the

questioning techniques used by teachers are not effective in checking learning.

- Feedback on students' written work is frequently too positive. As a result, students do not know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Managers and teachers do not have an overview of the proportion of students who attend relevant work placements. Teachers do not support students to link activities, carried out on work placements or in commercial activities, to their programmes of study. Students do not routinely complete work placement workbooks or evaluate their learning outside the classroom. As a result, they do not develop an understanding of how they might apply the skills they learn in future employment.
- Managers have not been effective in improving the English and mathematics of students on study programmes. Teachers in vocational lessons do not plan effectively to support students to develop their English and mathematics. They do not encourage students consistently to use terminology relevant to the workplace. They do not identify spelling or grammatical errors to help students to improve their work.
- Teachers do not monitor students' progress sufficiently well. Too many students have not completed assignments in the planned time, and teachers do not consistently intervene or set targets for them to complete these swiftly. Students frequently work on referred work during timetabled lessons, and in work experience lessons, for example, they do not complete the work planned.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers plan learning activities effectively so that students develop their knowledge and skills and make good progress. In these lessons, particularly in furniture making and floristry, students produce work of a good standard.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- The college currently has 631 adult students, of whom just over half follow distance learning programmes. Areas studied include business administration and customer service. Approximately a third of adult students study on short or part-time vocational courses, and the remainder learn alongside students aged 16 to 18 on study programmes.
- Teachers on distance learning programmes plan their courses well and support students to develop good skills and knowledge. In floristry, furniture making and sports massage, teachers provide students with interesting tasks and activities that motivate students to practise and refine their skills. As a result, they make at least their expected progress.
- Teachers use effective assessment practices on distance learning programmes. They monitor and track students' progress frequently and intervene swiftly if students fall behind. Consequently, most students make good progress in their learning and achieve their qualifications.
- Students on distance learning programmes and those on floristry, stonemasonry and furniture making programmes, benefit from well-qualified and experienced tutors. These tutors use their subject knowledge very effectively to help students develop industry standard practical skills. They support them to produce high-quality written work. Teachers in these subjects provide students with helpful feedback on their work so that they know how to improve.

- The vast majority of students on distance learning programmes develop good English skills which help prepare them well for future training and employment. A few teachers in vocational lessons do not use the information that they receive at the beginning of the course, on students' English and mathematics, to plan learning effectively. As a result, not all students make enough progress in developing their English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not plan learning well enough for the few adults who learn alongside students on 16 to 19 study programmes. The activities set do not inspire or motivate students and they lose interest and become distracted. As a result, students in these lessons do not make sufficiently good progress.
- Staff do not provide detailed careers advice and guidance for all adult students. This inhibits their planning effectively for further study or employment.

Provision for learners with high needs

Inadequate

- The college currently has 83 students for whom it receives high needs funding. Students follow a range of employability, personal development and vocational courses. Sixteen students are on supported internship programmes. Sixty-five students are on vocational courses, of whom 12 learn on mainstream programmes and the remainder study in specific vocational groups.
- Leadership and management of the high needs provision are ineffective. Managers have been unsuccessful in appointing two key posts in this area and their actions to improve quality have not had enough impact.
- Teachers do not use the information they receive about students' abilities at the beginning of their courses to plan learning activities effectively. Too many vocational staff do not have a good understanding of students' specific learning and support requirements. They do not make appropriate adjustments to their teaching so that students, including those with complex needs, make good progress.
- Students do not receive or have access to impartial, high-quality careers advice or guidance so that they can make informed choices about what they can do when they complete their course.
- Assessment practices, particularly in vocational lessons, are insufficiently rigorous. Too often, teachers' questions check only basic understanding and they do not encourage students to extend their learning, including for the more able students. Most of the specialist, supported learning teachers use assessment strategies appropriately, and they record students' achievements and progress well.
- In vocational lessons, teachers do not provide learning support assistants with sufficient direction and, as a result, they do not support students well enough. Students too frequently do not take an active part in learning activities or make enough progress in their learning.
- The quality of students' work is not good enough, particularly that of the more able students. Teachers do not help students to develop their written skills, including improving their spelling and grammar. Feedback on students' written work lacks sufficient detail to help students understand how to improve.
- On most programmes, teachers adhere to safe working practices and risk assessments

are in place. However, too many staff do not communicate specific risk assessments and behaviour management plans for individual students. As a consequence, not all staff understood these assessments and plans, particularly in vocational lessons.

- Students access work experience that is relevant to their vocational areas of study and, for students with more complex needs, teachers provide useful placements at the college. Students on supported internships develop their employability skills well through appropriate placements.
- Most specialist teachers on supported learning programmes understand students' needs and plan learning appropriately. Students on these programmes develop their independence and employability skills well. For example, students develop their interview skills. Teachers provide effective 'travel training' to develop students' confidence in travelling to college and work. Teachers use support staff on these programmes effectively to promote learning and manage behaviour.
- Teachers use activities in vocational lessons to help students improve their mathematics. For example, in carpentry lessons, students successfully estimate measurements and in cookery they weigh ingredients and calculate cooking times.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130772
Type of provider	Specialist further education college
Age range of students	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all students over the previous full contract year	4.037
Principal/CEO	Ann Turner
Telephone number	01604 491131
Website	www.moulton.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)	245	96	328	475	777	60	5	2
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
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	83							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	VLUK							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of curriculum and quality improvement, 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

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