

# The Cornwall College Group (TCCG)

General further education college

## Inspection dates

14–17 May 2019

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>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>	Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for learners	<b>Requires improvement</b>	Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Good	

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders' and managers' initiatives to improve quality have yet to show a significant impact. Teaching, learning and assessment and students' achievements are improving, but are not yet good enough across all programmes and training routes. Governors have not challenged leaders and managers sufficiently to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The proportion of students who achieve high grades in GCSE English and mathematics is low. Too few students have gained their functional skills qualifications this year. Not enough students on study programmes improve their English and mathematics skills quickly enough.
- Tutors responsible for students who have high needs do not accurately identify their students' starting points or suitable targets to help them to improve their skills. Consequently, many students do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Students, especially those aged 16 to 19, do not attend their lessons regularly enough. Attendance at English and mathematics GCSE and functional skills lessons is particularly poor. Too few tutors have sufficiently high expectations for their students or provide useful feedback that helps them to improve their work.

### The provider has the following strengths

- The current principal, senior leaders and governors have worked relentlessly to secure financial sustainability for the college.
- Apprentices develop a wide range of new skills and knowledge that they apply effectively in their workplaces. Students learn much from the expertise tutors bring from their time as industry practitioners. Most students develop good practical skills and master the technical language of their subject.
- Good pastoral support helps students stay and complete their course. Staff place a strong emphasis on ensuring that students and apprentices keep physically and mentally well.
- Leaders and staff maintain very good and productive relationships with employers and partners in the community. As a result, students take part in a wide range of productive additional community and work-related learning activities.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- The Cornwall College Group (TCCG) is a very large general further education college with seven campuses in Cornwall and one in Devon (Bicton Campus). It also provides education and training in outreach centres and with many local employers and partners. The college offers courses in 14 subject areas, including an extensive land-based curriculum, reflecting the rural economy it serves.
- Around 14,000 students study at the college. Around two thirds study at the two largest sites, Camborne and St Austell. Just over a third of students study at the Stoke Climsland, Bicton and Rosewarne sites, with lower numbers at Saltash, Falmouth, Newquay and at the Sisna Park Centre in Plymouth. Just over half of the students aged 16 to 18 joined the college in 2018 without a GCSE at grade 4 or above in English and mathematics. The college offers part-time provision for 46 learners aged 14 to 16 who attend entry level and/or foundation learning routes. These students are placed at the college by the local authority and were out of scope for this inspection.

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

- Governors must enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by challenging leaders and managers to secure the required improvements in teaching, learning and assessment and in the outcomes for learners.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good or better across all subject areas and provision types, including for students who have high needs.
- Leaders, managers and teachers must ensure that a greater proportion of students achieve their qualifications and make progress according to their potential.
- Leaders and managers should support teachers to identify accurately the academic starting points for students who have high needs. They should ensure that teachers use this information to plan learning and assessment that effectively meet students' needs.
- Teachers must raise their expectations of their students and apprentices. They should provide them with detailed and helpful feedback so that they know how to improve the quality of their work.
- Teachers and trainers must ensure that a higher proportion of students and apprentices achieve good GCSE grades or functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics.
- Leaders and managers should improve students' and apprentices' attendance at lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the college has undergone a period of considerable financial difficulty. Two principals have left the college in relatively quick succession. The current interim principal has been in post for around five months. Current governors and senior leaders have worked tirelessly and very successfully to deal with very significant financial problems, including considerable accrued debt. As a result, the college is now in a stable financial position and is debt-free.
- The college is in a period of transition. Leaders and managers have rightly prioritised improving the financial stability of the college across the past two years. More recently, they have introduced many changes designed to improve the quality of the teaching and learning. These initiatives are beginning to show improvements to the majority of the weaker courses. However, they have yet to show significant impact across all provision types and subjects. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment are not yet consistently good. Although most students are now making the progress that they should, it is too early to see improvements in outcomes for students, particularly in the achievement of English and mathematics qualifications.
- The principal and senior leaders provide a clear strategic direction for the college. They communicate effectively their vision for the role that the college will occupy in the region. They rightly recognise that they must support staff in all vocational areas to raise their expectations for students' progress and experiences. Staff understand the improvement agenda set by senior leaders. In the majority of cases, staff are beginning to meet the raised expectations of the principal, governors and senior staff. Improvements are evident in several subjects, for example public services, information technology/digital technologies, engineering, professional cookery, land-based studies, trowel and wood trades, and animal care. But, at the time of inspection, improvement actions have yet to show a significant impact in most other areas.
- Leaders do not have reliable management information relating to students' progress and achievements. As a result, team leaders and curriculum and senior managers lack data relating to students' progress, students' achievements and the performance of subcontracted provision. For example, during the inspection, calculations of in-year achievements were not always accurate. Also, managers did not monitor accurately the off-the-job training hours for apprentices on standards-based courses. Staff are improving the accuracy of data, but improvements are not yet widespread or sustained.
- The quality of leaders' and managers' self-assessment has improved in the past year, but the current report does not identify many of the weaknesses in provision. Managers are beginning to hold subject and team leaders to account for course performance, but such measures are at an early stage. Measures to ensure that subject and team leaders take better responsibility for the self-assessment of their programmes are not yet showing impact in all areas of the college. Quality improvement planning has improved considerably. The current quality improvement plan sets realistic targets for improvement, with clear and timely milestones for review at senior and curriculum levels.
- Senior leaders and staff have worked hard and successfully to improve the reliability of financial management information. Financial data provided to the principal, senior leaders

and governors is now accurate. As a result, leaders and governors can make well-informed decisions about income and expenditure. For example, the newly established suite of financial key performance indicators allows effective oversight of monthly income staff costs, site utilisation and other measures. Managers monitor and use high needs funding carefully. However, they have not yet ensured that staff determine students' starting points accurately in this provision.

- Communications are good between staff and managers and across the college's many sites. Senior staff have kept staff well informed about the financial status of the college and the measures needed to improve financial viability. Staff have received clear messages about the need to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and students' experiences. In many areas, however, staff have not yet improved their teaching and learning practice sufficiently to improve students' outcomes.
- Morale is high among staff. Almost all staff are proud to work at the college.
- College managers ensure that provision meets employers' needs. Nearly all employers appreciate the highly responsive ways that college staff and managers shape provision to meet skills and employment needs.
- Leaders and staff maintain very good and productive relationships with partners in the community and businesses. Managers in schools, higher education institutions, the county and other councils, the chamber of commerce and local enterprise partnership value highly the part played by the college in the region. Such relationships mean, for example, that the college provides tailored provision for groups of students unable to engage in formal learning in other settings or who might otherwise remain out of employment, education or training.
- Leaders and managers have a clear rationale for the small number of courses provided through subcontractors. Some courses are in specialist areas that the college cannot provide such as groundworks and fencing. Others meet the needs of students whose personal circumstances make it difficult for them to attend the main college sites.

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

- Governors have worked very hard and extremely effectively to secure a stable future for the college. They have very high levels of financial skill and experience and have applied these to good effect. However, the considerable efforts that governors have had to make to secure a future for the college mean that they have not given adequate attention to improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Arrangements, for example a clear and purposeful sub-committee structure, are now in place to broaden the expertise of the governors regarding curriculum planning and quality improvement.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- College managers and safeguarding staff maintain clear records. Appointments at all levels are subject to suitable safe recruitment practices.
- Any safeguarding concerns that staff or students report are dealt with quickly. Such cases are pursued to resolution, with good records kept of outcomes.

- Staff and students have received appropriate safeguarding and associated training. However, the majority of students and apprentices do not have a good recollection of their induction training. For example, they do not always recognise or know how to remain safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Too many tutors do not plan and teach courses well enough to ensure that their students extend their subject knowledge and achieve their qualifications. For example, at times teaching focuses too narrowly on producing minimal work to meet awarding body criteria. Too many students spend time in lessons completing work they should already have finished rather than learning more about their subject. These factors limit the breadth and depth of their knowledge in the subject.
- Too many tutors, particularly of courses for students who have high needs and of study programmes, do not have high expectations for their students. On these courses, tutors do not plan learning and activities that challenge students to produce work of a high standard. In English GCSE and functional skills courses, tutors allow the majority of students to submit disordered and scruffily presented portfolios of their written work; on a minority of courses in engineering and hairdressing and beauty, students' professional practice is not developed well enough to ensure that they are prepared for industry. For example, in hairdressing and beauty level 2 practical sessions, students do not always provide their clients with advice on the correct professional products to use at home.
- A high proportion of tutors do not use feedback well enough to help students improve their work and behaviours. In these cases, feedback does not focus the learner on the specific knowledge or skill they need to develop. In a minority of cases, tutors do not check that students have acted on their feedback. This contributes to students not achieving high grades or being challenged to develop wider and deeper knowledge of their subject. A minority of tutors provide useful feedback which focuses students on their next steps. These tutors intervene quickly to help consolidate students' knowledge and provide them with strategies to improve their work.
- Too much teaching in English and mathematics is not good enough. In functional skills and GCSE courses, tutors rely too heavily on giving students past papers to practise, rather than teaching them the knowledge they need to build on their prior skills and securely learn. Tutors do not provide them with feedback so that they know what they need to do to improve. This is particularly apparent in provision for students who have high needs, adults and apprenticeships, where tutors do not identify the knowledge students have before they start their course.
- While most tutors are highly experienced, college leaders have not ensured that enough are well trained or have teaching qualifications. Leaders have recognised the importance of increasing the number of tutors who are trained and qualified. They are now ensuring that tutors participate in good-quality training and development. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is beginning to improve.
- Most tutors check the knowledge and skills their students already have when they start their course. For example, in performing arts provision at St Austell, each student has an individual session with the singing teacher to establish a practice and training regime. This helps them to improve their singing. However, not all tutors carry out this type of

assessment effectively or use the information about their students' prior knowledge well enough when they plan their teaching. As a result, not all students make enough progress in developing new skills and knowledge on their course, particularly students who have high needs.

- Students benefit from the expertise tutors bring from their time as industry practitioners. Adult students on dog-grooming courses improve their employment prospects because of the precise techniques they are taught to deal with a wide range of different dog temperaments and coats. Public services tutors from military backgrounds use their expertise in team-based exercises to develop students' ability to carry out fieldcraft and military operations confidently and safely. Equine tutors use their knowledge of preparing horses for competitions and shows to ensure that students and apprentices can do this to a high standard for their employers.
- Tutors use their contacts with industry effectively to provide students with a wide range of visiting specialists and the opportunity to meet and work with employers. As a result, students gain valuable insights into their industry. Level 3 agricultural engineers at Bicton visited a flax manufacturing production line in France to see how what they have learned about agricultural engineering is put into practice. They have also broadened their knowledge of engineering by visiting aircraft and marine engineering companies. Agricultural apprentices at Bicton get very clear advice from local vets about how to gain accreditation on their own farms to administer medication to their livestock.
- Tutors and trainers in the majority of study programmes, adult provision and apprenticeships plan and teach courses that enthuse students. Through these, most students develop good practical skills and master the technical language of their subject. This is particularly notable in apprenticeships. At St Austell, level 3 catering students confidently supervise level 1 and level 2 students to produce high-quality meals in a restaurant. Horticulture students and apprentices gain credibility in their industry by learning and using the correct Latin genus names of plants. Many students on adult programmes have successfully set up their own business because of the industry standard knowledge and skills they have developed on their course. Apprentices mostly develop technical skills that they apply competently when working for their employer.
- Most students are well prepared for employment or further education. Tutors on academic study programmes prepare students well for higher education; as a result, many move on to university level courses.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

- Too few students attend their classes often enough. Students' attendance is particularly low for those aged 16 to 18. Attendance at English and mathematics GCSE and functional skills classes is very low. This means that students on study programmes and apprenticeships do not make good progress in developing their English and mathematics skills. Recent actions taken by managers and staff have resulted in slowly improving attendance rates for younger students. Most adult students have high rates of attendance.
- Most students behave well in the classroom and around the college sites. They are courteous to visitors and treat each other and staff with respect. Most students arrive at lessons punctually and ready to learn.

- Students and apprentices receive good-quality advice and guidance on entry to the college. This helps to ensure that they enrol on the most appropriate course or programme. However, although most students stay on their course, too few achieve their qualifications. Those students on study programmes receive comprehensive independent careers advice. They participate in many relevant career-related activities. For example, students at the Bicton and Stoke Climsland sites receive careers advice and guidance from an extensive number of employers, such as local experts in tourism, hospitality, farming, horticulture, the fire service, and engineering and manufacturing companies. As a result, they are well informed about the career opportunities available and prepared for their next steps. Support for students applying to universities through UCAS is appropriate.
- Students who have high needs do not receive enough help from staff to inform their decision-making. As a result, too many students repeat learning programmes, do not improve their skills and knowledge quickly enough and do not progress to the next stage of their learning and development.
- Students and apprentices benefit from a well-planned tutorial programme. This includes frequent and often helpful reviews of their progress with their tutor. Students also take part in group tutorial sessions and learn about topics such as British values, how to stay safe, developing resilience, and positive mental and physical well-being. However, students and apprentices do not have a consistently good knowledge of these topics. Managers do not measure well enough the quality of the tutorial programme.
- Apprentices develop good practical and technical skills. Many are motivated to undertake further and higher levels of study. At the Stoke Climsland and Bicton sites, students and apprentices in animal care and hospitality develop high levels of confidence when communicating with their peers and customers. Students who have high needs and who attend supported internships develop a good range of new technical vocabulary; they use this language competently in the workplace. However, apprentices who have previously achieved a qualification in English and/or mathematics at the required level do not routinely develop these skills further during their training.
- Most students on study programmes, including students who have high needs, benefit from external work experience and/or work-related learning. Students improve their team-working skills, learn how to accept and respond to feedback from colleagues at work, learn to use their initiative, and work more independently. The college 'Upskill programme', for students who have achieved an English and mathematics GCSE qualification at grade 4 or above, enables students to improve their knowledge and application of skills. For example, students studying on academic and vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 build on their existing English and mathematics skills when undertaking subject-specific learning activities that enable them to apply the new learning to their course work.
- Students who participate in community activities and commercial projects with local employers enhance their creativity and deepen their subject understanding by applying their learning in real settings. For example, at the Rosewarne site, and in conjunction with a local dairy farmer, students use their knowledge and skills to help to grow stinging nettles in poly tunnels. They learn the benefits of using the freshly grown nettles to wrap around and enhance the flavour of a cheese made at the dairy. This results in a unique-tasting, specialist food product.
- Students, including those who have high needs, and apprentices understand how to keep safe and what to do if they have concerns regarding their safety or that of their peers.

They work safely during practical sessions, at work placements and in community settings. This includes students working in high-risk industries where they participate in potentially hazardous activities, such as handling livestock and using chemicals, large farm machinery, and powerful engineering and manufacturing tools and equipment. Students studying equine, hospitality and catering, beauty therapy and public services have a good understanding of the importance of having a healthy, balanced diet and the benefits of participating in exercise to keep fit and healthy.

- Many students have informed staff of their barriers to learning, such as mental health issues and learning difficulties. They benefit from good pastoral support from staff that helps them to stay on programme. Staff place a strong emphasis on supporting students and apprentices to stay physically and mentally well. Specialist staff on each campus organise additional learning activities designed specifically around the needs of students at that location. This includes drug and mental health awareness and study skill sessions. The learning advice team provides students with very effective support and helps them to stay on programme and achieve their qualifications. A Cornwall-wide restorative justice initiative, which the college is part of, is helping students to deal with conflicts, at college, work and home, by adopting strategies to help to find solutions to problems.
- Students and apprentices do not have a sufficiently good understanding and knowledge of the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism. They learn about these topics during their induction to the college, but the majority of tutors do not reinforce or recap the learning during the remainder of their course. For example, at the Rosewarne site, students have a poor understanding of radicalisation and extremism and of the current issues in their local area.

## Outcomes for learners

## Requires improvement

- Achievement rates for adults and students on study programmes in 2017/18 were poor. Leaders and managers have started to act to drive improvements. They have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in many subject areas and strengthened their quality assurance oversight of individual subject areas. As a result, most current students on academic and vocational courses are now making at least appropriate progress. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this improvement work on the outcomes for current students' achievement of qualifications.
- The proportion of apprentices on framework and standard-based apprenticeships who have completed their apprenticeships within the planned timescale is too low. However, although still too low, the proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship has improved in each of the past three years. A high proportion of apprentices in engineering and business administration achieve their qualifications.
- The proportion of students and apprentices who make good progress in their English and mathematics qualifications is too low. Students on study programmes do not make enough progress in improving their GCSE English and mathematics skills from their starting points. As a result, the proportion of students on study programmes achieving GCSE grade 4 or above in English and mathematics is far too low. Too few students achieve functional skills qualifications.
- Managers do not have a good understanding of the proportion of students and apprentices who go into education, training or employment after completing their

courses. They do not collect and analyse information about the destinations of students and apprentices who leave the college. As a result, they are unable to identify whether students and apprentices leaving the college are successful in their careers.

- Students and apprentices with a learning difficulty or disability, including students who have high needs, achieve less well than their peers. College managers are not fully aware of the causes of these differences in achievement.
- Leaders and managers do not have an accurate view of the progress that students who have high needs make from their starting points. This is because staff do not complete thorough assessments of students' existing skills and knowledge at the beginning of their course. Too few students who have high needs achieve their qualifications in English and mathematics.
- Study programmes students studying on level 3 vocational qualifications make progress that is in line with expectations. A high proportion of these students move on to higher education courses at the college or in universities.
- Most students produce work that is at the right standard for their level of study. Apprentices produce work that meets industry expectations. Apprentices on higher-level apprenticeships, particularly in engineering, animal care and horticulture, produce work that is of a good standard. The small cohort of adult students studying furniture-making and foundation art and design produce practical work of a high standard.
- Students develop a wide range of valuable and useful vocational skills during their studies. For example, in veterinary nursing, students care successfully for animals with acute health needs. In media production, students produce high-quality promotional videos.
- Most students who have high needs achieve their main qualification. However, too often this is a certificate or an award which is not challenging enough for them.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### Requires improvement

- At the time of the inspection, TCCG had over 3,000 students following study programmes across eight college sites. Around a quarter study on level 1 courses, a third at level 2 and the rest on level 3 courses. Most students study on one of the wide range of vocational programmes. The main areas covered are digital media, information technology (IT), public services, hairdressing and beauty, early years, land-based subjects, engineering and hospitality. Land-based courses take place at three specialist sites, Bicton, Stoke Climsland and Rosewarne. The majority of students continue to study English and mathematics as part of their study programmes. A small cohort of A-level students study at the St Austell site.
- Leaders and managers ensure that students are enrolled on courses that meet the principles of 16 to 19 study programmes. Students without a grade 4 or above in GCSE English and/or mathematics follow relevant courses in those subjects.
- On too many courses, managers and vocational tutors have low aspirations for students. Tutors do not provide learning activities that inspire students to learn new skills and knowledge and achieve the highest grades. Tutors do not provide feedback that challenges students to extend or deepen their understanding. Students spend too much

time in class completing assignments and working through the pass, merit and distinction criteria. As a result, students become bored. Tutors do not stimulate or challenge them sufficiently to make rapid progress.

- Teaching is not consistently good in GCSE English and mathematics courses. Managers have not yet supported staff to improve their practice sufficiently. In the few instances where stronger teaching and learning occurs, managers do not encourage tutors to share their practices with their peers. Managers have not been able to guarantee a consistent team of tutors for the students attending these courses. This disrupts learning and has a negative impact on students' progress and means that they do not develop the skills and knowledge they need.
- Students' attendance at English and mathematics GCSE lessons is too low. Tutors do not make sure that students record and present their work in an organised way. As a result, students find it difficult to reinforce or revise their learning, and too few current students make the progress expected of them towards achieving a GCSE grade 4 or above.
- Tutors use their industry experience well to help students develop good practical and vocational skills. These reflect current industry standards. Most students studying on vocational courses make good progress from their starting points. Students understand and make good use of subject technical language. Students studying level 3 animal management at Bicton, horse management at Stoke Climsland, level 3 media and film at St Austell and art and design level 2, media, film and games level 3 at Camborne demonstrate high levels of practical skills.
- Most tutors on A-level courses teach students well. For example, in English literature, tutors use an innovative approach to help students recall plot and characters through a series of cartoons. Tutors in A level mathematics use creative teaching methods which inspire students to investigate and solve mathematical problems. Most students studying A levels are making good progress.
- Most students benefit from external work placements. Tutors and managers have secured very high-quality work placements for students on the animal management and arboriculture courses at Bicton and Stoke Climsland. Students record the new skills they develop in work placement diaries, which employers then sign to confirm. Work placements for students in catering and beauty therapy reinforce and develop new vocational skills, confidence, team-working and resilience.
- Most students complete relevant work-related activities if they do not have an external work placement. For example, students studying games design level 3 at Camborne produced a high-quality promotional game for the military recruitment office. However, a small minority of students do not have external work experience with employers or work-related activity. This slows their development of skills and attitudes for employment.
- Most students are respectful towards their tutors, and fellow students. They work collaboratively with staff and peers. At college, on work placement and in work settings, they demonstrate the appropriate professional conduct. For example, students develop their customer care skills, front-of-house and kitchen skills well in the 'Cloisters' restaurant at St Austell. Arboriculture students at Rosewarne develop confidence in working safely at height and with dangerous equipment.
- A high proportion of study programme students move on to employment, apprenticeships or further and higher education.

## Adult learning programmes

## Requires improvement

- The college provides courses for adult students at most of its sites. At the time of the inspection, TCCG had over 3,500 adults studying on courses. A few subcontractors offer provision to adult students in community settings. Around half of adult students enrol on programmes at level 2, and the remainder are divided equally between entry level, level 1 and level 3 courses. Most adult students follow vocational programmes, English, mathematics and employability courses, and access to higher education courses.
- Most of the teaching, learning and assessment for adult students is effective. However, a few tutors do not use information they collect about students' abilities at the start of the course well enough. As a result, they do not devise teaching and assessment strategies that ensure that students make rapid progress. At times, teaching and assessment are pedestrian and uninspiring. Too many tutors do not know how well students are achieving and what progress they are making in developing their skills and knowledge.
- Occasionally, tutors do not routinely or thoroughly check students' knowledge and understanding before moving on to the next theme. As a result, students do not develop the technical knowledge and vocabulary for the level of their course.
- Not enough tutors evaluate students' progress effectively. Tutors' feedback on adult students' work is too often cursory and congratulatory rather than constructively identifying how adult students can develop their learning further and excel. As a result, students do not know their strengths and weaknesses or how much progress they are making. They are often unclear about how to complete their course projects. They do not learn how to critically evaluate their own work.
- Leaders' and managers' efforts to improve provision are hindered by a lack of reliable management information. The data currently available does not give a clear picture of students' progress and the impact of their learning on the development of skills and knowledge. Consequently, parts of the provision are not performing as well as others. For example, student achievements in functional skills English, mathematics, business administration, law, and for adults previously not in employment, education or training, are low.
- Leaders and managers have developed and are extending successfully the curriculum. This gives adult students flexible options for learning. The courses and levels offered meet the personal and professional needs of adult students who want to gain new vocational skills, achieve qualifications and get jobs. However, the provision is less successful at meeting the needs of those who have few or no qualifications or who were previously disengaged from education and training.
- The large majority of tutors use their professional experience and expertise very well to help adult students develop vocational and professional skills. Students value highly the knowledge, support, advice and guidance they receive from tutors. As a result, they become confident and competent students. Most adult students on vocational and professional courses gain skills which help them to get jobs, start new businesses or go on to the next level of training. For example, students on the personal trainer and floristry courses do particularly well to gain full- or part-time employment in their respective sectors, and catering students learn to cope with the demands of busy kitchens and work accurately at speed.

- Students attend their learning sessions regularly and punctually. Their behaviour on college sites is excellent. Most adult students receive good-quality information, advice and guidance to make sound choices about their careers, aims and next steps. Adult students feel safe in the college.

## Apprenticeships

## Requires improvement

- Around 2,000 apprentices work and study across Cornwall and Devon. TCCG offers apprenticeships across 10 subject areas at levels 2, 3 and 4. Most apprentices study on agriculture, horticulture, animal care, engineering, manufacturing, business, administration and law. The majority of apprentices study on apprenticeship frameworks and around a third study on apprenticeship standards.
- Apprentices studying on apprenticeship standards have an insufficient understanding of the component parts of their programme. For example, often, they do not know what their end-of-course assessments will require of them or how they can achieve more than a pass grade. This affects apprentices' ability to aim for high grades and to focus their efforts on what they need to do to improve.
- Tutors' feedback on apprentices' work is not of a consistently good quality across the different subjects. In too many cases, tutors do not extend or develop apprentices' wider knowledge and understanding.
- Many provide no feedback on apprentices' written work, or feedback that is ineffectual. However, tutors' oral feedback to apprentices following practical work is helpful and sufficiently critical.
- Tutors' reviews of apprentices' progress do not provide a complete enough picture of apprentices' learning, development needs or well-being. The vast majority do not evaluate how well apprentices are developing skills, knowledge and behaviours. Reviewers do not set clear and precise targets to help apprentices to improve their work. For example, too many reviews say only that 'good progress has been made' or target dates are 'on-going'. At times, records of reviews are illegible.
- Many apprentices do not get enough help to achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. Apprentices spend too much time completing practice test papers. They do not receive enough help from tutors to master new skills.
- Managers do not have enough oversight of apprentices' off-the-job training. They do not know enough about its content, quality or the contribution it makes to what apprentices learn. There is no effective system to record and monitor the hours apprentices attend training. Managers therefore do not know if all apprentices are receiving the amount of off-the-job training to which they are entitled, and which is a requirement of their apprenticeship.
- Apprentices develop a wide range of new skills and knowledge that they apply effectively in their workplaces to benefit their employers. Apprentices develop highly relevant off-the-job skills that they can apply to the workplace. Apprentices work independently in workshops and can explain clearly the skills they have developed and how they apply these at work. For example, in construction, apprentices working on a high-specification housing project practise in college the techniques needed to install large steel-frame windows.

- Employers value the skills developed by apprentices. They make a significant contribution towards improving their employers' business. This is particularly important in the cases of the many small, family businesses where apprentices work, which benefit greatly from the apprentices' input. In a few cases, apprentices receive financial bonuses and rewards for their good performance at work.
- Apprentices work with employers who value and trust them with high-profile, challenging business projects. Often, apprentices are involved in developing new products or services. For example, higher-level engineering apprentices are developing new electrical testing systems that will increase their employer's capacity considerably.
- Apprentices benefit from additional courses and learning experiences that their employers provide and that enrich their apprenticeship programme. Apprentices studying agriculture, visited Parliament to discuss Brexit with members. They developed further their confidence to travel independently and their debating skills.
- For the majority of apprentices, assessment is limited to mathematics and English and does not include enough information to ensure that tutors know apprentices' starting points. Consequently, tutors cannot judge the overall progress that apprentices make in developing new skills, behaviours and attitudes. However, staff in business and professional and advanced healthcare practitioner courses assess apprentices' skills and knowledge on entry to the programme thoroughly. Tutors use the results of the assessments to identify correctly the existing subject knowledge and skills of apprentices. They use this information to plan learning that meet the apprentices' development needs closely.

### Provision for learners with high needs

### Inadequate

- Leaders and managers have increased the number of students in receipt of high-needs funding at the college. At the time of the inspection, TCCG had 444 students with education, health and care plans; 173 of these were in receipt of high-needs funding from four local authorities. One hundred and thirty-seven students with high-needs funding followed foundation learning programmes designed to meet their individual needs, and 36 students were on a range of vocational and academic study programmes from entry level to level 3.
- Leaders, managers, tutors and support staff do not have high enough expectations of what students who have high needs can achieve. Managers have not ensured that the curriculum, particularly for students who have complex learning needs, develops the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need. As a result, too few become more independent. Most students remain on their programmes and attend well. However, too few students achieve their qualifications at the end of their programme, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Managers and most tutors and support staff do not have an accurate view of the progress students make. Tutors on foundation learning programmes do not assess students' starting points when they enrol on their courses. Consequently, they do not set targets or plan learning to ensure that students achieve as they should. Most students do not know their strengths and weaknesses or how much progress they are making on their courses.
- Too few tutors on foundation learning programmes are suitably qualified or have the expertise to make sure that students benefit from high-quality learning sessions. This is particularly the case for students who have complex learning needs.

- Most tutors do not plan and teach well enough to ensure that all students learn at the appropriate level or rate. Most tutors and staff do not set students sufficiently challenging learning activities. As a result, students who study on level 1 animal care do not develop the skills they need to move on to the next level of their programme. A minority of students repeat the same programme at the same level the next year.
- Most tutors do not provide students with the feedback they need to help them to improve their written and practical skills and behaviours. As a result, students do not know what they need to do or how to improve their work. A minority of tutors provide students with helpful feedback on their written work and speaking and listening skills. As a result, these students improve their writing and increase their vocabulary.
- Around half of the students on vocational, academic and foundation learning programmes have not yet received sufficient advice and guidance from staff to plan their next steps. Managers have made recent improvements to the support and guidance that students receive. They have developed arrangements which enable students to move on to their next stage in their learning or careers quickly. However, it is too early to see the impact of these actions.
- The majority of students on vocational programmes at the Camborne, Bicton and Stoke Climsland sites benefit from effective learning support. However, only a minority of students improve their independence at the expected rate and experience a reduction in the support they receive from staff.
- Managers have acted to increase the number of students who participate in external work placements. Currently, only a minority of students who have high needs benefit from well-planned, relevant placements. They receive frequent, helpful feedback from their supervisors in the workplace and develop essential skills for life and work. For example, students on foundation learning programmes, when working as receptionists as part of a supported internship, confidently welcome visitors and manage the reception area. A few students secure volunteering and paid work after they finish their placements.
- Most students with high needs feel safe when in college and in their workplace. They know how to report any concerns. Students work safely in all learning settings. For example, students studying hospitality and catering know the importance of personal hygiene, and they can use knives and catering equipment safely in the college café, restaurant and training kitchen.
- Managers work effectively with local authority staff to identify the young people attending college who have education, health and care plans. They ensure that the students who have high needs receive the agreed additional support and resources.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	130627
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	17,000
Principal/CEO	Dr Elaine McMahon
Telephone number	01726 226557
Website	<a href="http://www.cornwall.ac.uk">http://www.cornwall.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)	642	1125	848	1565	1242	1080	79	1122
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	496	430	258	600	17	208		
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	173							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Cornwall Care Ltd Cornwall Marine Network Fencing and Construction Training South West Highways SWSA Academy							

## Information about this inspection

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

### Inspection team

Denise Olander, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sheila Willis	Senior Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Light	Senior Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Beynon	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Crombie	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Ward	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrea Dill-Russell	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Pemble	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Flint	Her Majesty's Inspector
Maria Navarro	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kenneth Merry	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Tucker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sara Hunter	Ofsted Inspector
Thomas Hallam	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Lacey	Ofsted Inspector
Gavin Murray	Ofsted Inspector
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