

Gloucestershire College

General further education college

Inspection dates

20–21 September and 5–6 October 2016

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Students are highly motivated, with good behaviour, a clear sense of purpose and a courteous attitude to peers, staff and visitors.
- Students make good progress as a result of engaging and well-designed teaching, learning and assessment.
- Teachers focus well on developing students' and apprentices' employability and vocational skills, and ensuring that they are suitably prepared for progression to further study or the world of work.
- Students on vocational courses have good access to accommodation and resources that accurately reflect the industries in which they hope to work.
- Achievement rates on apprenticeships have been consistently high and continue to rise.
- Curriculum management is particularly strong; heads of school have a clear sense of ownership and drive to continue raising standards.
- Governors and the leadership team continue to ensure sound financial management and innovative approaches to securing additional project funding.
- The wide practice of integrating students who have high needs into mainstream provision is beneficial to the students and helps raise awareness of equalities more widely across the college.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Gloucestershire College is a very large general further education college with three main campuses in Cheltenham, Gloucester and the Forest of Dean. Provision ranges from entry to degree level. It includes study programmes for students aged 16 to 19, adult provision, apprenticeships, provision for students who have high needs and traineeships.
- Gloucestershire is a largely affluent county, but some of the wards served by the college have high levels of socio-economic deprivation. The schools in Cheltenham and Gloucester have sixth forms and so the college faces significant competition for students at the end of their GCSE courses. Competition is less fierce in the Forest of Dean. Students attending the college have much lower prior attainment than school leavers in Gloucestershire overall. Less than a third of students recruited on to study programmes at the college have achieved a C grade or above in both English and mathematics GCSE prior to commencing their course.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should continue with their initiatives to raise standards further, focusing on those areas where achievement rates are not yet high enough. In particular, they should:
 - ensure that managers prioritise any known weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly where there are variations across campuses
 - continue providing support to teachers to gain maximum value from target-setting and progress-monitoring software
 - train all staff in how to provide a consistently high quality of verbal and written feedback to students
 - identify and share best practice associated with extending the skills of the most able students, and providing further support for any individuals that might be struggling.
- Governors and leaders should see through the strategic project to develop new opportunities for post-16 provision in the Forest of Dean.
- Managers should work with their teaching team to:
 - identify new strategies for raising apprentices' awareness of British values and the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation
 - identify and share more widely across the teaching team those strategies which are most successfully developing students' literacy and numeracy and which maximise their chances of successfully achieving their qualifications in these subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and governors set a clear strategic direction for the college. They work very successfully with a range of partners, employers, higher education institutions and the local enterprise partnership (LEP) to ensure that provision focuses clearly on meeting the needs of students and the local employment priorities of Gloucestershire. Through highly effective partnerships with schools and the local council, managers have drawn up innovative plans, and secured funding, to create a new campus in the Forest of Dean, significantly improving the longer-term opportunities for students living in the area.
- Senior leaders, managers and governors have high aspirations for students, apprentices and staff, a clear sense of purpose and the determination to continue the significant improvements that they have successfully overseen in the past year, through focused and effective self-assessment and quality improvement initiatives.
- Senior managers strive hard to ensure that students gain a high level of industry-related skills, and progress into further learning and employment in local industries such as engineering and electronics. For example, managers have worked collaboratively with large international employers, the LEP and higher education institutions to secure additional funding to provide industry-standard equipment to support high-level training and employment opportunities for their students. The college has also secured additional funding to develop its engineering resources to a very high specification, further attracting partners and businesses.
- Leaders and governors have worked successfully to ensure the financial stability of the college. Over the past two years they have overseen a challenging financial situation, which has necessitated a substantial reduction in staffing, and a major realignment of the budget. Throughout this process, the college has maintained a sound financial rating.
- The operational management of the curriculum is particularly effective. Heads of school work as a cohesive team, and are clearly empowered to drive forwards improvements. They are very aware of the ongoing challenges faced by each individual subject area and work to a clear set of performance objectives. They receive suitable support and challenge from senior leaders, as well as having access to accurate performance data and attending effective review meetings to monitor progress accurately and to continue to develop improvement strategies.
- Senior managers have strengthened and successfully integrated performance management and the quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment. The process is clearly defined, robustly monitored and effectively links appraisal and performance management with support and coaching. Managers use lesson observations and themed learning walks well to support teachers, share good practice and plan training, all of which are valued by staff. Where teachers are underperforming, or are new to teaching, they receive good support and training that enable them to grow in confidence.
- Managers and staff benefit from a culture of continuous professional development and sharing of good practice. Newly appointed or promoted managers have received very good support through a specialised coaching programme. New members of staff feel supported and encouraged by managers and colleagues and enjoy working at the college.

Teaching staff enjoy a range of collaborative activities, for example, to learn new teaching techniques, as well as the opportunities to contribute to learning communities and in-house college guidance booklets.

- Innovative management and strong links with local agencies support students who have high needs very well, enabling them to access and enjoy a wide range of learning opportunities, leading to qualifications and employment.
- Leaders promote a culture of equalities and diversity well across the college. Managers have developed clear guidelines and resources to support students' understanding of British values and the 'Prevent' duty, clearly linking it to the college values and learning ethos. In lessons, teachers do not always focus enough on helping students extend their understanding of these topics.
- While leaders and managers have focused hard on strategies to raise achievement rates in English and mathematics, particularly for GCSE and functional skills qualifications, these have not yet been fully successful. Leaders recognise this as an area for continued focus.

The governance of the provider

- Governors bring a valuable range of skills and expertise to the board. They are confident about the ability of the senior management team, the strategic direction of the college and the positive progress that has been made over the last year.
- Governors acknowledge the hard work and effective management that has resulted in the college maintaining a strong financial position over time. They are well informed and have a good understanding of key strengths and areas for improvement across the college. They provide effective challenge by asking searching questions of senior leaders and they review the college performance against agreed key performance indicators regularly.
- Governors perform their role as link governors well, often engaging with activities during the college day, such as learning walks. They also carry out their responsibilities effectively in relation to maintaining the safety and welfare of students.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The college is a safe and welcoming environment. Managers have developed appropriate policies, procedures and strategies to underpin the college's approach to safeguarding, promoting the safety and welfare of its students and raising awareness of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation.
- All staff, including governors, the designated safeguarding officers and teachers, receive suitable and timely training. Managers maintain strong links with other local organisations to ensure that they receive appropriate information about any emerging risks that might have an impact on students' welfare. Effective links are in place with local agencies to ensure that vulnerable learners are well supported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are effective in helping students to achieve and realise their ambitions. In the best lessons, teachers set high expectations for all students, plan learning well and make good use of the results of initial assessment to meet students' individual learning needs. Teachers make particularly good use of challenging and targeted question and answer techniques to elicit information and check understanding. Students who have high needs receive good-quality teaching that helps them to achieve realistic and relevant targets, based on a thorough understanding of their individual barriers to learning.
- In the small proportion of less effective lessons, particularly at the Cheltenham campus, teachers fail to meet the needs of all students, particularly the most able and those at level 3.
- Teachers are well qualified and experienced; they are passionate about their subject and impart their knowledge and understanding with enthusiasm. The college's observation of the teaching and learning process has helped teachers to improve their practice through the identification of weaknesses and effective follow-up support to help them meet the college's expectations.
- Initial assessment is thorough and most students are on a programme which meets their needs and interests. The college's additional learning support provides a range of appropriate interventions to ensure that all students achieve as well as each other and that students who have special educational needs receive appropriate support to help them progress and learn. Learning support assistants help students who have specific learning needs to enable them to progress in lessons. The college's range of assistive technology for students who require it is extensive and well used.
- Information, advice and guidance to help students who have high needs to make the transition from school to college are particularly effective. Students on A and AS levels and BTEC diploma courses, as well as adult students on access to higher education courses, receive good support with their applications to university. Students are able to articulate their next steps well and have a clear idea about career progression.
- Teachers are beginning to make increasingly effective use of the college's recently introduced procedure for the electronic recording of students' targets and progress. As a consequence, teachers and students are now more able to identify how much progress students have made, and what they still need to do to achieve their learning goals. Though this initiative is beginning to have an impact in most of the college's curriculum areas, a minority of teaching staff, particularly in engineering, construction and health and social care, have yet to exploit the full benefits of this tool. Target setting for a minority of apprentices is insufficiently challenging and fails to provide them with effective opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge fully.
- Assessment of students' work is good and helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to make improvements. The quality of written feedback on students' work is generally good, although a few examples of poor quality feedback were evident in a minority of vocational study programmes.
- Teachers' correction of errors in spelling and punctuation in students' written work is not consistently effective. Many teachers integrate literacy and numeracy skills well, using the

extensive range of learning materials developed by the college's team of teaching improvement managers. However, too much variation exists in how effectively teachers in different subject areas promote English and mathematics in their teaching sessions. The development of high-level specialist and technical language for students on A and AS levels and access to higher education courses is good.

- The development of employability skills is good. Most students on study programmes benefit from a good range of meaningful external work experience placements or work-related activities. Students on academic programmes benefit from a range of enrichment programmes that promote their readiness for work or higher education. Apprentices quickly become indispensable to their company's workforce. The involvement of employers in reviewing and planning learning is very effective. Employers set challenging work-related targets to meet business objectives and apprentices' needs, providing good opportunities for them to progress well and develop occupational skills.
- Teachers integrate employability topics very effectively with the main programme of study across most subject areas. The tutorial programme for full-time students is effective in promoting employability skills. Students who have high needs participate in a wide range of learning activities appropriate to their personal needs and aspirations.
- Teachers make good use of a range of learning resources and materials that celebrate diversity and that reflect a multiracial society. Students are respectful of each other and work well together in class. Teachers integrate fundamental British values and equalities topics well during most lessons, and particularly well on discrete programmes for adults.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- The significant majority of students at the college and on workplace learning programmes are highly motivated and demonstrate good behaviour and a courteous attitude to their peers, staff, employers and visitors. Students work well together and collaborate effectively in lessons. As a result, students develop a positive attitude to their study; they grow in motivation and self-confidence, and develop a sense of pride and achievement in their work. Students on the second year of their programmes are particularly good at recognising and explaining the progress they are making in relation to the targets that staff have set them.
- Most students successfully develop the knowledge, skills and work-related insight they require to progress to work or to further or higher-level study on completion of their college course. For example, students aged 16 to 19 undertake a programme of continuous professional development, work experience or work-related activities that help provide them with skills such as job search, curriculum vitae writing, preparing job or university applications and interview techniques.
- Staff reinforce to students, in particular those on study programmes, the importance of developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, and where appropriate, attempt to secure a qualification in English or mathematics.
- Students in most areas have a good understanding and appreciation of the significance of adopting and developing professional standards in their learning programme. For example, in hair and beauty, business and catering, students adopt a professional

demeanour and dress code when attending college.

- Students on vocational courses have particularly good access to accommodation and resources that accurately reflect the industries in which they hope to work. Teachers also have suitable industry experience. These factors help to ensure that students develop a realistic and informed insight into the world of work.
- In a small minority of areas, students are less well prepared for the world of work. For example, in construction disciplines, students do not always demonstrate sufficient awareness of wearing suitable protective overalls, or of protecting surrounding areas against spillage or splashing.
- Students are clear about actions they should take in the event of any safeguarding concern. They feel safe around the campuses, and adopt a suitable approach to assuring the safety and well-being of themselves and others. Staff also work hard to ensure that students are suitably aware of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Staff are particularly good at integrating those students who have high needs into mainstream programmes. This provides valuable opportunities for these students to develop their interpersonal skills, and also helps raise the profile of equalities across the college community. It also contributes to students enjoying their programmes and, as a result, they make very good progress.
- Students develop a broad range of additional skills through the wide variety of classroom and workplace activities. These include developing individual initiative, team working, critical thinking and interpersonal and communication skills. These opportunities help enhance the students' employability skills and future job prospects.
- Attendance and punctuality in most lessons are good. In a small minority of lessons, particularly for those on study programmes, attendance is too low. Staff are aware of this, and have suitable strategies in place to follow up any student whose attendance is below that expected by the college.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Over the past three years, achievement rates for students aged 16 to 19 on study programmes have fluctuated significantly. In 2014/15, achievement rates declined and were too low. Leaders and managers recognised this dramatic decline and took prompt action to redress the balance and raise standards. Most of these initiatives have been effective. As a result, in 2015/16, achievement rates improved significantly and are now generally good on level 1 programmes, A levels and level 3 extended diplomas. Achievement rates also improved, but are not yet high enough, for students at level 2, on other level 3 programmes and also for students undertaking GCSE English and mathematics. The proportion of students achieving level 1 functional skills in English and mathematics is good; however, at level 2, achievement rates are too low.
- In 2014/15, students on level 3 study programmes did not make sufficient progress relative to their prior attainment. Provisional data for 2015/16 indicates an improved picture, with students now making the expected progress.
- Achievement rates for adults on most courses, including GCSE English and mathematics, have remained high. The main exception to this is for functional skills, where achievement

rates for adults are too low.

- Most learners on apprenticeships have consistently performed particularly well. Achievement rates for learners on apprenticeships at all levels, and across the age ranges, have remained high, and in 2015/16 they continued to rise.
- On study programmes, there is generally no significant difference in the performance of different groups of learners. There are some variations on adult programmes and apprenticeships. On adult programmes, White British learners tend to perform better than others; similarly, those learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not perform as well as others. On apprenticeships, there are some variations in the performance of different groups; for example, female apprentices tend to perform better than male apprentices, and those learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally do not achieve quite as well as other apprentices.
- Managers are fully aware of those areas which continue to require improvement, and also those areas where there are any discrepancies between the performance of different groups. They have a suitable range of strategies in place to promote improvements. They also have access to timely, detailed and accurate information and are highly focused on the continuing drive to raise standards.
- The standard of students' work is generally high, particularly on level 3 programmes. Teachers set high expectations and devise suitably challenging tasks and activities to help students develop their knowledge and skills. Students take pride in their work and develop increased levels of confidence as they progress. For example, students on a bench joinery lesson produced some highly creative wooden arched window frames that clearly demonstrated their skills in using a range of different joinery techniques.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The college has around 3,200 students on 16 to 19 study programmes, spread across most subject areas, with pathways from entry level to level 3. It also has around 80 students on traineeship programmes.
- Leaders and managers set high expectations of staff to provide students with high-quality study programmes. Following a decline in the outcomes of students in 2014/15, managers have successfully implemented strategies which have improved retention, raised the quality of provision and significantly improved outcomes in 2015/16. All managers and staff remain strongly focused on continuing to maintain and improve the quality of provision.
- Students benefit from effective information, advice and guidance prior to commencing their programmes. Teachers work closely with students to devise a personalised programme, taking into account students' interests, initial starting points and career aspirations. On a small minority of occasions, teachers do not use the results of initial assessment well enough to plan learning or to ensure they take into account students' individual needs.
- Students are enthusiastic about their learning. They feel safe around college, enjoy their

learning and are motivated to do well. They develop confidence, behave well in lessons and around the college and show a high level of respect for each other and for college staff. Teachers develop a positive rapport with students, which helps motivate them to engage with their learning.

- Students make good progress in lessons and are keen to demonstrate their new-found knowledge and skills. Teachers check understanding well, encouraging students to give examples to illustrate the depth of their knowledge. Written feedback is effective on most programmes, but in a minority of vocational areas, teachers do not always provide sufficiently detailed feedback to enable students to make good progress.
- The majority of teachers set and monitor progress against appropriate targets for students, who are aware of their objectives and the improvements they are making towards achieving their goals. However, in a small number lessons, targets are not always challenging enough for the most able students. Similarly, in a few lessons, not all students fully understand the instructions they receive from teachers, and therefore struggle to engage fully with lesson activities.
- Students take pride in their learning and produce a good standard of work. Teachers encourage them to adopt a professional approach to their work. For example, in areas such as business, hair and beauty and catering, students are required to follow a strict dress code, in line with the expectations they would find in the workplace. Students clearly feel proud of their appearance and professional approach.
- In vocational areas, students have particularly good access to well-equipped accommodation and resources, as well as technically skilled and experienced teachers; this helps students develop good technical skills. For example, level 2 carpentry students ably demonstrated how to create a stud wall using advanced cutting skills.
- Students are generally punctual to lessons; however, in a small number of lessons, attendance is too low.
- Students benefit from effective careers advice and guidance and a broad range of work experience opportunities and work-related activities which help prepare them well for their next steps. For example, the college has purchased a property in Gloucester, which has provided the opportunity for construction students to develop their skills through a renovation project. This has broadened their experience and enhanced their employability skills and future job prospects. Similarly, air cabin crew students recently attended a major airline's recruitment event and teachers are now supporting them as they prepare for interview.
- Students develop their literacy and numeracy skills well in vocational lessons at the Gloucester and the Forest of Dean campuses. For example, in a business studies lesson, teachers encouraged students to develop their communication skills through presenting their research findings to the rest of the group. At the Cheltenham campus, vocational teachers tend to be less effective at supporting and developing students' literacy and numeracy skills in lessons. Teachers ensure that students without a high grade in GCSE English or mathematics follow suitable courses, although too few students successfully achieve a grade C or above.
- Staff plan and manage study programmes effectively, with clear progression pathways. A high proportion of students successfully progresses to further study, employment, university or apprenticeships on completion of their course.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- The college currently has around 1,300 adult students undertaking courses from entry level to level 4. The significant majority of students are on programmes at levels 1 and 2.
- Leaders and managers demonstrate a very good understanding of the needs of the communities served by the college. For example, staff work closely with employers and Jobcentre Plus to tailor courses to meet the skills needs of the region. As a result, unemployed adults refresh and improve their skills and significantly increase their chances of gaining employment.
- Employers value the increased confidence and skills that students bring to the workplace. In addition, those managers delivering English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses are working closely with a local charity to deliver a pre-ESOL introduction to the college for local Syrian refugees.
- Teachers create a safe and inclusive environment for students, many of whom have been out of education for some time. This approach helps increase students' confidence and raises their aspirations.
- Teachers plan well to meet the needs of all students. The feedback they provide is suitably detailed and developmental. Students know what to do to improve their performance. This allows students to take responsibility for their learning and enables them to make good progress.
- Teachers use their enthusiasm and subject knowledge skilfully to provide a positive and constructive learning environment. As a result, most students are highly motivated by their programmes of study and work independently with focus and enthusiasm. In a few vocational areas, teachers do not always set sufficiently high expectations and professional standards, for example in relation to wearing overalls in some of the construction workshops.
- Teachers use a suitable range of techniques to help extend and develop learning. For example, in an A-level mathematics lesson, students were set a very challenging and complex mechanics question. The teacher skilfully designed his line and range of questioning to challenge students and reinforce thinking and understanding.
- Teachers encourage students to use self-evaluation and peer review effectively to monitor their own learning and progress. For example, in a plastering lesson, students were able to evaluate each other's rendering skills and identify areas for improvement.
- In a small minority of lessons, particularly at the Cheltenham campus, the pace of lessons is sometimes too slow and does not engage all students. In these lessons, teachers do not challenge all students sufficiently and do not consistently personalise learning to develop fully all students' vocational skills. Similarly, on occasions, teachers fail to provide additional activities that would help the most able students develop their skills further.
- In a few sessions observed, attendance was too low, and below the college target.
- Teachers employ good strategies to help raise students' awareness of British values. For example, in an ESOL lesson, the teacher carefully crafted a debate around human rights, in particular women's and children's futures, when discussing different cultures,

encouraging students to share their life experiences in other countries.

- Students receive good careers advice and guidance from staff which help them make informed decisions about their next steps. Access students particularly value the knowledge and experience of their teachers when they are making choices about university. As a result, students have a good understanding of the range of progression options available to them. A high proportion of students successfully achieve their goals and progress to further or higher education or employment.
- Teachers are generally good at supporting and developing students' literacy and numeracy skills in lessons. A relatively high proportion of students who undertake GCSE English or mathematics successfully achieve a grade C or above. However, the proportion of students who successfully achieve their functional skills in English or mathematics, particularly at level 2, is too low. In a few instances, teachers make spelling and grammatical errors in the resources they give to students.

Apprenticeships

Good

- The college currently has around 1,270 apprentices in seven subject areas, the largest of which are engineering and building services. The majority of apprentices are studying at intermediate level.
- Liaison between the college and employers is good. Apprenticeship programmes meet local needs and fulfil the principles of the apprenticeship framework. Most employers are happy with the quality of teaching and learning their apprentices receive. As a result, employers regularly enrol new apprentices each year through the college.
- College staff maintain very good links with employers, particularly in engineering, motor vehicle and construction. This results in good employer input into the curriculum.
- Employers work closely with assessors in supporting apprentices to acquire new skills. There is particularly good communication between training coordinators and workplace supervisors in building services. This has a positive impact on learners' experience leading to good coordination of on- and off-the-job training.
- Employers are fully involved in reviewing apprentices' progress and helping to set meaningful job-related targets. As a result, apprentices develop very good occupational skills, produce high standards of work and make a good contribution to the business.
- Most apprentices produce work of very high standards in the workplace and in college. They are professional and confident, communicate well and work collaboratively with colleagues to meet business needs. For example, catering apprentices lead on the organisation and development of menu choices.
- Trainers and assessors make good use of well-designed questions to encourage reflective thinking, helping apprentices to review the skills they develop and relate theory to practice. As a result, they are developing as confident learners.
- Staff develop effective individual learning plans for most apprentices which help to ensure that they have suitable targets, and know what they need to do to make progress. For a small proportion of apprentices, staff do not always use the target-setting process sufficiently well to maximise their progress.

- Apprentices benefit from helpful, developmental and constructive feedback from trainers and assessors on their progress. Staff provide most apprentices with useful questions on their written work to encourage them to improve and deepen their knowledge and skills. In a small minority of examples, feedback on how apprentices could improve is not as informative. As a result, apprentices are less clear on how to continue developing their skills.
- Apprentices benefit from high-quality, relevant vocational experience at work. They have access to a good range of industry-standard equipment and resources that support their learning.
- Many apprentices benefit from additional qualifications that help them improve their vocational skills and equip them well to do their job to industry standards. For example, catering apprentices have the opportunity to complete a masterclass in cookery; engineering apprentices are able to acquire qualifications in operating plant equipment; and in plumbing, learners are able to apply for their construction skills certificate upon successful completion of the health and safety module.
- Trainers and assessors support apprentices well to develop the literacy and numeracy skills they need for their jobs. Assessors use information from initial diagnostic assessment well to help design the most appropriate support and guidance for each apprentice. As a result, most apprentices successfully achieve the English and mathematics qualifications they require to gain their apprenticeship.
- Apprentices receive good support, guidance and encouragement to progress to higher-level apprenticeships and more advanced job roles. Most apprentices have aspirational career goals and clear plans for the future.
- Apprentices have a detailed and thorough understanding of how to stay safe from harm at work. They know how to prevent accidents at work. They also receive suitable information about the risks posed by using the internet but have only limited insight into the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- The college currently has around 280 students in receipt of high-needs funding, drawn primarily from four local authorities. Of these, 225 students have education, health and care plans. Students undertake a broad range of provision, ranging from discrete entry level courses through to level 3. A small cohort of students are also undertaking supported internships.
- The college offers a comprehensive range of special educational needs and disabilities provision. Leaders and managers have implemented an effective and broad curriculum for students who have high needs. It is firmly rooted in relevant legislation and good practice and provides high-quality provision for a broad cross-section of learners.
- Staff maintain a wide range of strong partnerships with local organisations to ensure that students who have high needs receive suitable support, both in college and outside. For example, leaders and managers work effectively with the local authority and feeder schools to develop programmes that challenge and develop individual students.
- Information, advice and guidance to help students make the transition from school to

college are particularly effective. Students are able to use technology to gain a 'virtual experience' of life at the college, which helps familiarise them with the college prior to attending for the first time. Information, advice and guidance staff attend students' reviews at school and help students, their parents and carers to explore and understand the next steps in education or training.

- Students undertake a wide variety of learning activities appropriate to their personal needs and aspirations. These help them develop their independent living skills and participate in a range of community and leisure pursuits.
- Staff arrange specialist support to ensure that it fulfils students' education, health and care plans. Teachers are fully aware of the individual needs and targets of their students, and can discuss and explain how they address their needs. Students speak highly of the support they receive and of how teachers encourage them to achieve.
- Staff integrate the most able students with high needs into mainstream provision well. Where necessary, these students benefit from additional learning support or study skills mentoring that help them to succeed.
- Teachers use a range of skills and teaching methods well to engage students. They encourage students to contribute to discussions, articulate their needs or concerns, present their opinions and make choices. In a small number of lessons, teachers offer insufficient challenge for students on lower-level courses or at the early stages of their learning.
- Students make good progress in their lessons, including those in mainstream provision, and most successfully achieve their qualifications. For students taking qualifications in mathematics and English at level 1, achievements are good; however, at level 2, achievements in these areas are too low.
- A wide range of resources, including adapted technology, enables students with specific barriers to learning to make good progress at college. This provision helpfully supports students with financial difficulties and social and behavioural barriers to remain in learning.
- Staff receive good continuous professional development to ensure that they understand their students' needs and can best support them. Managers provide good guidance to non-specialist teachers who deal regularly with students who have high needs in-filling into their lessons. This helps provide them with the confidence and knowledge they need to respond appropriately to the specific needs and behaviours of the students who have high needs.
- Students are able to understand the world of work through focused lessons that concentrate on opportunities such as volunteering and skills development. The college's supported internships are very helpful in enabling students to develop employability and independent living skills.
- The majority of students who have high needs progress onto higher levels or more challenging courses at college, and a significant proportion successfully progresses into work, or work-related activities, and learning. Information, advice and guidance are less effective to support students' transition beyond college.
- Students feel safe at college. Staff provide them with useful strategies that help them manage their own behaviour in college and in their everyday lives.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130683
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	9,834
Principal/CEO	Matthew Burgess
Telephone number	01452 563 451
Website	www.gloscol.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 learners (excluding apprenticeships)	524	601	1,138	1,944	1,539	894	52	528
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	432	292	223	286	12	25		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	71		11		82			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	280							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal, curriculum and quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of 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

Peter Nelson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jai Sharda	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rosy Belton	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kate Brennan	Ofsted Inspector
Tricia Collis	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Deane	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Lacey	Ofsted Inspector
Alun Maddocks	Ofsted Inspector
Susanne Maher	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Murrie	Ofsted Inspector
Nikki Sendell	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Joanna Stokes	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Tucker	Ofsted Inspector
Daisy Walsh	Ofsted Inspector

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Learner View

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Employer View

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