

Exeter College

General further education college

Inspection dates	20-24 January 2014	
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding-1
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding-1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding-1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is outstanding because:

- Outstanding leadership, management and governance have improved teaching, learning and assessment and raised standards since the last inspection. College leaders have established a culture of high expectations in which lecturers are encouraged to innovate, and learners to have high aspirations.
- A very large majority of learners successfully achieve their qualifications and almost all learners progress to further education, training or employment once they have completed their course.
- Standards of almost all learners' work are high, and in many cases very high. Learners attending the excellent provision in The Michael Caines Academy, the REACH Academy and the Flybe Training Academy produce exceptionally high quality work.
- As a result of the highly motivated, skilled and experienced staff, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Lecturers provide learners with challenging work that prepares them extremely well for their next steps.
- The college uses its excellent links with schools, employers and other agencies to understand, and respond quickly to, the education and training needs of the local area.
- The bold strategy for improving learners' English and mathematics is ensuring more learners improve their skills in these subjects.
- Excellent care, guidance and support for learners, particularly the most vulnerable, ensure that they make good, and often excellent, progress. Support for learners is very well coordinated and helps many overcome problems which would otherwise prevent them from learning.
- Specialist vocational courses, often using exceptional facilities, provide learners with outstanding opportunities to work alongside, and learn from, industry leaders and specialists.
- Programmes of support and professional development for lecturers have had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, almost all lessons are now at least good and many are outstanding.
- Managers use sophisticated data systems and a detailed knowledge of courses to identify any that need to improve. When necessary, they take swift and effective action to raise standards.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in the small number of underperforming adult courses by ensuring that:
 - learners receive high quality advice and guidance
 - lecturers set and rigorously monitor targets
 - more of the outstanding teaching and learning strategies that are used elsewhere in the college are adopted on these courses.
- Raise the standards of foundation mathematics across the college by improving the consistency of teaching in mathematics lessons. Ensure that lecturers consistently plan lessons that provide opportunities for learners to apply mathematical skills in all subjects that they study.
- Improve lecturers' confidence to develop learners' understanding of diversity in society and the workplace so that learners are even better prepared for progression into employment and further education.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A very large, and increasing, majority of learners successfully achieve their qualifications and develop the skills needed to progress into employment, further education or training.▪ Learners on classroom-based courses have achieved consistently high results over three years. The results on these are now very high. The proportion of apprentices passing their qualification has risen since the last inspection and now a very large majority are successful. Most of the 14-to 16-year-old learners attending part-time courses at the college achieve their qualification.▪ Success rates for the large number of learners aged 16 to 18 on long courses are particularly high, with a very large majority successfully achieving their qualification. Outcomes for this age group of learners have improved most over recent years at level 3. Overall success rates for adult learners have risen steadily over three years and are now slightly above the national rate. However, the proportion of adults on long courses achieving their qualification has fallen slightly, but most still achieve.▪ Success rates for functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics have been consistently high for three years. In 2012/13, results for English functional skills continued to improve and are now very high. A higher proportion of learners achieve a grade A* to C in GCSE English or mathematics than the national rate.▪ Almost all learners make at least the progress expected of them, taking into account their prior qualifications, and a majority make very good progress. A very high proportion of learners on A-level and two-year vocational courses achieve high grades. The proportion of learners achieving a high grade at AS level has improved rapidly in the last two years and is now high. This is the result of lecturers providing increasing challenge for the most able learners.▪ Vulnerable younger learners, and those from poorer households, attend and succeed very well as a result of the targeted, sensitive and motivating support they receive. This increases their confidence and helps them to overcome significant problems which might prevent them from learning.▪ The standard of learners' work is consistently high and often outstanding. A high and increasing number of learners, particularly in engineering and catering, are successfully winning recognition for their exceptional skills in regional and national competitions. A very high number of learners make tremendous progress in developing the skills employers seek. In the specialist academies that the college has established with industry, such as The Michael Caines Academy and the Flybe Training Academy, learners' work is of an exceptionally high standard and an	

overwhelming majority gain relevant employment. Increasingly, employers are helping the college shape its curriculum and providing very high quality work experience placements.

- Lecturers and support staff give learners excellent information about the career opportunities open to them once they complete their course and skilfully raise learners' aspirations. As a result, a high and increasing proportion of learners progress to relevant employment as well as to the most demanding university courses.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and have led to the improved and very high outcomes for learners. Most lessons and training are at least good and a majority in health and social care, early years and play work, science and English are outstanding.▪ Lecturers plan their lessons and programmes very well and provide learners with an excellent variety of interesting learning activities which develop job-related skills. The classrooms, studios and workshops are very busy and productive places where the learners work together, discuss, calculate and create, thus making very good progress, improving their skills and deepening their knowledge and understanding.▪ In lessons where learners make most progress, lecturers use learning activities that are adapted to meet learners' individual needs. Carefully chosen activities engage the learners' interest and allow staff to assess progress quickly and intervene as necessary. For example, in a level 1 plumbing lesson, learners used well-designed learning materials to calculate the power output of common household appliances and made sensible decisions about fuses. They were delighted by their progress in mathematics.▪ The quality of discussion and the skilful way lecturers support learners to make confident verbal contributions are notable features of many lessons. Lecturers ensure that learners understand how current work relates to previous learning, develop their job-related skills and, where appropriate, explore moral and ethical implications. For example, in a level 3 law lesson, the learners maturely investigated the moral and legal issues in difficult and complex cases involving assisted suicide and rape.▪ Managers and curriculum leaders provide a very wide range of highly effective professional development for lecturers. The quality of this training, and the support lecturers receive, have contributed significantly to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. Improvement practitioners provide particularly good support to lecturers and other staff. Lecturers improve the range and effectiveness of their teaching strategies by regularly sharing their ideas with colleagues from other parts of the college and in their own team meetings.▪ Lecturers and trainers assess learners' work assiduously and provide learners with helpful guidance on how to improve. Learners act on this feedback and feel confident that their target grades are realistic while challenging them to work hard. Staff monitor and track learners' progress closely and, using this information, successfully encourage learners to aim for high grades and move on to further education and training.▪ Lecturers and support staff assess the needs of learners very promptly when they start their courses so that they know what help learners need. This help is provided promptly when learners start their course. Lecturers and support staff are highly effective at providing the outstanding personal and academic support learners need to overcome barriers to learning.▪ Lecturers and managers have worked hard with local secondary schools, advice and guidance providers and other specialists to encourage vulnerable young people, adult and community learners, and those who are unemployed to participate in education and training. Hard work and commitment with these learners have increased the proportion of young people from deprived areas in Exeter enrolling on, and achieving, a qualification.▪ Information technology resources are modern and exceptionally well used in many subjects by both lecturers and learners. Learners use the technology skilfully and thoughtfully to advance their own learning outside lessons and develop their own research and study skills.	Outstanding

- The majority of learners are improving their literacy skills. In all subject areas, for example, lecturers pay close attention to helping learners improve their English grammar and writing for specific audiences. Learners confidently apply numerical skills in science, early years, engineering, and health and social care programmes. They make less progress and have fewer opportunities to develop these numerical skills in the visual arts, and hospitality and catering. College managers are aware of this, as well as of some uninspiring teaching of mathematics in functional skills lessons, and are taking appropriate action to tackle these weaknesses.
- Across the college and training centres managers, staff and learners work together in a calm atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance. Many lecturers confidently promote an understanding of equality in their teaching and learners are increasingly aware of the importance of equality in modern Britain. However, not all lecturers are sufficiently confident to develop learners' understanding and appreciation of diversity.

Health and social care

16-19 study programmes

Outstanding

19+ Learning programmes

- Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care are outstanding. This is reflected in the excellent outcomes for learners, many of whom achieve high grades while gaining exceptional caring skills. As a result, a majority of learners progress onto further qualifications and into employment.
- Lecturers make exceptional use of their experiences in health and care employment to enthuse and motivate learners. As a result, learners understand the care sector well and acquire the valuable skills they will need for employment and promotion within the workplace.
- Highly skilled lecturers set work that challenges learners, regardless of their ability, to produce work of a high standard. Learners respond enthusiastically and present high quality work in a wide range of formats. Through a range of stimulating individual and group activities, learners successfully improve their knowledge, skills and confidence to adopt the team-working skills and initiative that employers in the care industries require.
- Lecturers use well-chosen, difficult questions that test learners' knowledge thoroughly and ensure that learners think hard before providing accurate and insightful responses. Through their answers, learners relate their knowledge of theory and practice to the caring professions and the service users with whom they work.
- Community and health providers offer a wide range of high quality work placements where learners confidently practise the caring skills they have learned and observe practitioners who provide exemplary role models. Learners further develop their knowledge of a wide range of health and caring professions, and the diversity of people's needs, through many different voluntary activities.
- Lecturers identify learners' skills and knowledge exceptionally well at the beginning of the course and use this information to set aspirational targets for all learners. Lecturers set work and assignments that ensure learners meet these targets.
- Lecturers' feedback on course work and assignments is timely, detailed and comprehensive; it clearly tells learners what they need to do in order to improve the quality of their work. Learners value the feedback they receive as it inspires and encourages them to produce work of a higher quality.
- Learners develop good English and mathematical skills and a large majority complete their functional skills qualifications early in their programme. Lecturers successfully teach the English and mathematical skills learners need in the health and social care industries. As a result, learners confidently apply mathematics to caring tasks, such as taking patients' temperatures and pulse.

- Pastoral care and learning support are excellent, recognising learners' often complex needs and responding to them swiftly. These contribute to a very large majority of learners remaining on their courses and producing work to a high standard. Specialist support, such as signing for deaf learners, is highly effective in enabling learners to take part fully in all activities. Staff provide highly relevant advice and support which prepare learners very well for progression to employment, higher education or further training.
- Lecturers very skilfully broaden learners' understanding of social diversity and other challenging topics related to the health and caring professions. Through reviewing the outcomes from serious case reviews, learners gain the essential insight and deeper understanding of safeguarding they require.

Early years and playwork

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Apprenticeships

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and lead to learners achieving outstanding outcomes. Lecturers set high expectations and learners respond by confidently demonstrating high levels of understanding of the early years sector and producing work of a high standard.
- Learners are highly motivated by their lecturers' enthusiasm and excellent vocational knowledge and experience. Lecturers provide well-planned and stimulating lessons in which learners develop a thorough understanding of complex issues in the early years sector. For example, a lecturer provided a lively and engaging explanation of important legislation, followed by a discussion in which all learners described links between the legislation and the professional practice that is expected of them in the workplace. Learners reflect on, and extend, their learning through the very high quality assignments and reflective journals they produce.
- Lecturers plan programmes exceptionally well to develop learners' job-related skills. All learners complete a two-week period of practical experience prior to joining their programme. This ensures lecturers identify learners' aptitude early in the course and helps them to provide work placements subsequently that suit learners' needs and aspirations well. As a result, learners develop excellent workplace skills.
- Learners develop personal and social skills very well through well-designed lessons and outstanding enrichment activities, as well as their work placements. These activities inspire a majority to progress to higher education, further specialist training or jobs in the early years sector.
- Learners improve their mathematical and English skills as a result of lecturers routinely incorporating these subjects into their lessons. For example, in one lesson, learners analysed the differences in growth rates of children from birth to three years old and explored these using both anecdotal and statistical evidence. As a matter of course, learners evaluate their own mathematics and English and seek help when it is required.
- Support for learners is outstanding. Lecturers set challenging targets that inspire learners to work hard. Lecturers diligently monitor learners' progress to ensure their coursework and practical work on placements are of a high standard. Learners receive detailed, regular feedback so that they fully understand what they have completed well and what they need to do to improve. As a result, many learners achieve high grades in their courses. Apprentices make excellent progress that is helped by the effective use of electronic portfolios by assessors to monitor progress, provide useful feedback and set stretching learning goals. Lecturers and learning support staff provide effective support that ensures a very high proportion of learners at risk of underachievement successfully complete their course.
- Learners develop a broad understanding of diversity through skilful use of resources that often provoke intense discussions and imaginative work. For example, in a level 2 lesson, learners

examined the promotion of inter-faith relationships between children and parents in a multicultural community. This resulted in learners using thought-provoking imagery to present their ideas.

Science

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. As a result, a very large majority of learners pass their qualification. At the start of the course learners receive aspirational, yet realistic, target grades which are used to monitor progress and to identify the support necessary to ensure they reach their full potential. On a majority of courses, particularly at A level, a high proportion of learners achieve high grades.
- Lecturers set very high standards and expectations. Learners are punctual and eager to learn. They are highly motivated by the enthusiasm lecturers have for their subjects. Learners value lecturers' academic expertise and the engaging activities they provide in lessons. Through these, learners develop a detailed understanding and enjoyment of the subject. In one chemistry lesson, for example, learners were captivated by a card game they played to match molar masses with compounds.
- Learners demonstrate excellent practical skills in carefully structured lessons that enhance learning and bring the subject to life. In one physiology lesson, learners dissected pigs' eyes to identify the location of the optic nerve. This vividly reinforced the theoretical understanding they had gained from a diagram in a previous lesson.
- Lecturers make very good use of technology in their presentations and practicals. Learners enjoy and value the variety of on-line quizzes and assessments that help them to learn. Lecturers' assessment of learners' work is excellent. Marking is thorough, returned promptly and clearly informs learners what they have done well and how they might improve their answers when responding to examination questions.
- Learners' progression to science degree courses is exceptional and many learners obtain places on the best university courses. Lecturers work closely with the city's university to promote progression to higher education. For example, over 20 AS-level learners are working on a DNA and ecotoxicology project with university staff. Learners wishing to enhance their applications to study medicine benefit from additional guidance, mock interviews with local doctors and work experience in a local hospital.
- The college has excellent, long-established links with local businesses and organisations which offer valuable work experience or visits. These show learners the career options in the sciences and help them with their choice of degree. For example, last year four physics learners, who were considering a career in engineering, gained valuable knowledge by working with a local company on a design problem to reduce waste from a moulding process.
- Support is outstanding and readily available through subject workshops and revision classes. Learners readily attend these to clarify their understanding of topics or to improve their grades. Accommodation for the science courses is adequate, but the college plans to improve this by moving the courses into new, purpose-built accommodation in the near future.
- Lecturers promote equality and the understanding of diversity well. The college provides opportunities for learners to be involved in promoting science to different groups and uses special events to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues; for example, by the inclusion of female scientists as role models in career and advice days.

Transportation operations and maintenance**16-19 study programmes**

Outstanding

19+ Learning programmes**Apprenticeships**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding, resulting in most learners, both in college and the workplace, achieving their qualification. Learners enjoy their studies and speak enthusiastically about their learning experience. Learners develop the excellent standard of skills that employers need.
- Lecturers plan learning activities extremely well to ensure that automotive technologies are understandable and that learners make excellent progress while having fun. In a level 1 lesson, learners acquired the principles of the electric motor by constructing simple motors using a battery, safety pins, wire and a magnet. All learners followed this by providing a detailed explanation of the function of an electric motor.
- In theory lessons, lecturers make very good use of information technology to add interest and enhance learners' understanding. For example, lecturers use graphics and animation to explain complex vehicle components in action. In the majority of lessons, learners develop and apply problem-solving skills as a result of lecturers encouraging them to analyse rigorously how components work. However, in a small minority of lessons and workplace assessments, lecturers provide answers too readily.
- Learners develop high-level practical skills using industry-standard tools and equipment with confidence. During a workplace assessment, an apprentice skilfully used advanced diagnostic equipment to identify a faulty component in an engine management system and then confidently replaced the component and reconfigured the system.
- The recently completed technology centre contains outstanding resources and equipment with workshops comparable to those of a modern independent garage. Learners use these well to enhance their skills. Lecturers are enthusiastic, with good commercial experience, and have high expectations of their learners. In a motor vehicle body repair session, learners cut away sections of a damaged car before skilfully reforming and reconstructing it to industry standard and tolerance.
- Learners receive very good support from caring lecturers and additional support workers which ensures that they progress well and achieve their full potential. At the beginning of the course, lecturers accurately assess learners' support needs and design programmes of study that meet these needs. Learners receive excellent pastoral support with a comprehensive series of tutorials which develop their wider life skills.
- Lecturers ensure assessments are very well organised, rigorous and timely. They return marked work promptly and provide comprehensive feedback that helps learners improve the quality of their work. English is taught well in engineering sessions and through separate functional skills lessons. As a result, learners' standards of English improve and learners develop their use of the language of the motor industry well. Learners develop a high level of accuracy in calculating dimensions, tolerances and quantities through their engineering sessions. In a good mathematics session, learners researched used car prices and successfully calculated the interest percentage payable on hire purchase over different periods.
- Learners work well together, are respectful, polite and share ideas with fellow learners. Learners clearly understand the importance of equality. However, lecturers do not always plan lessons to help learners to understand the diverse needs of the customers they will encounter in employment; for example, when learning about control systems, learners do not consider the adjustments required by a driver with disabilities.

Hospitality and catering

16-19 study programmes

Good

19+ Learning programmes

Apprenticeships

- Good teaching, learning and assessment ensure that learners make good progress. Learners are enthusiastic to learn new techniques and skills and most pass their qualification. Level 3 learners develop excellent practical skills, producing food to a high standard. Learners develop good customer service skills and enjoy working with the public.
- Learners in The Michael Caines Academy are trained by industry experts, have excellent periods of work experience and reach very high standards. As a result of the academy, many learners have gained employment with prestigious hotels and restaurants.
- Lecturers are highly skilled in ensuring learners produce dishes that represent current industry trends. The involvement of key employers helps staff to keep abreast of the latest techniques used by leading chefs. Learners are inspired by their lecturers' knowledge.
- Resources to support teaching are good. Learners develop customer service skills well in a busy restaurant and shop. They also provide catering for a range of different events where they produce a wide range of interesting and appetising food. However, in a minority of lessons lecturers do not always set work that stretches learners' skills and a few learners do not fully participate in these lessons. In a minority of practical sessions, a lack of customers results in a small number of learners having too little work.
- Lecturers' plan good lessons. Where learners make the most progress, teaching is engaging and lecturers test learners' knowledge well through careful questioning. Learners demonstrate their skills confidently; for example, learners demonstrate to their peers the different stages of making tortellini and ravioli. In a small minority of lessons, poorly expressed objectives do not help learners to improve in key aspects; they focus on the production of dishes, but not the professional standards or skills learners need to develop.
- Opportunities for assessments are mostly well planned and are outstanding for apprentices. Assessors skilfully plan menus together with head chefs to meet, and often exceed, the standards required to pass a qualification. Lecturers plan assessment for full-time learners well, but a small number of learners do not organise their time well during practical assessments.
- Support for learners is excellent. Lecturers carefully monitor learners and provide good feedback on the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve. Group tutorials help widen learners' knowledge and develop confidence. For example, discussions about mental health issues ensure learners gain an insight into the world around them and the challenges they may face once they are employed.
- Lecturers develop learners' English skills well but are less successful at improving their mathematical skills. In lessons where English and mathematics are taught separately, a good range of problem solving tasks allows learners to apply the use of English and mathematics in everyday situations. For example, learners explore the origins of empathy and sympathy when looking at the causes of homelessness. However, learners do not consistently learn how to use ratios, percentages and fractions in practical kitchen sessions.
- The advice and guidance given to learners are excellent. Lecturers give learners excellent careers advice and the wide range of visits, competitions and guest chefs raise learners' confidence and aspirations. Many progress into very good jobs.
- Staff promote the understanding of diversity well through enrichment and fundraising activities. Learners develop a good understanding of different ingredients used in dishes and how these relate to customers' diets.

Visual arts**16-19 study programmes****19+ Learning programmes**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. As a result, a very large majority of learners on most courses successfully gain their qualifications. Many learners achieve high grades. Learners enjoy their lessons, work diligently and develop good creative skills.
- Well-qualified lecturers set high expectations for their learners by planning and delivering lessons that stretch learners of all abilities. Learners make good progress. For example, in a life-drawing class, learners skilfully developed their first drawings of foreshortening to show weight distribution and tilts of the body in a seated pose. Elsewhere, learners developed good analytical skills by discussing a photograph of a physical landscape and extending the analysis to the metaphysical qualities of the image.
- The standard of practical work is good. For example, foundation learners produce lively and humorous animated films to promote eating five fruits a day. At level 2, learners develop competent making skills using a range of materials and are able to evaluate these competently. Fine art learners use drawing well to develop personal themes in sketchbooks.
- Most learners make good progress, particularly when they develop both creative and evaluative skills. For example, learners evaluate their textile samples and develop these into inventive garments, often recycling cast-off clothing. Old denim is shredded, fringed and then knitted to form a new fabric. In a minority of lessons learners make less progress, particularly where underdeveloped or over-ambitious planning inhibits learning. In these lessons, learners work at a slower pace, with an emphasis on fabrication rather than reaching higher levels of creativity through evaluation. As a result, some learners do not reflect sufficiently on their work or on planning their next stage.
- Resources in the Centre for Creative Industries are very good. High quality work by learners is displayed in the gallery and corridors, enhanced by intriguing quotations which inspire and question the creative process. Learners use the specialist textile, photography and sculpture studios well, often combining materials and processes. They use the electronic resources effectively for revision and independent study. However, some classrooms are too cramped for the larger groups of learners and, at times, this limits the effectiveness of learners' group work.
- Learners benefit from the broad range of enrichment activities. Active partnerships with local galleries, businesses and tourist attractions provide learners with valuable opportunities to exhibit work and to experience live arts projects. For example, the Meteorological Office is sharing data to inspire learners' work on climate change prior to an exhibition at their building.
- Assessment is thorough; lecturers provide clear written feedback to learners on how to improve. Assessment criteria are broken down into small sections and are helpfully mapped to particular tasks. This ensures learners have a clear understanding of the creative process they need to follow.
- Lecturers promote English well in lessons. Lecturers successfully reinforce and extend vocabulary. For example, in one lesson, learners compiled lists of adjectives to describe the form, colour and texture of a wrapped sweet before applying these adjectives to their own work. However, lecturers do not create sufficient opportunities to promote mathematics.
- Support for learners is good. Specialist support for dyslexia, dyspraxia and for hearing-impaired learners is timely and effective. Learners value highly the extra workshops they can attend and develop their work well in these. A high proportion of learners successfully progress to higher education as a result of the extensive guidance for university applications.

English and modern foreign languages

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and lead to excellent outcomes for learners, many of whom achieve high grades in their qualifications. Lecturers have high expectations of learners who produce work of a very good standard. All learners develop their personal and social skills very well by taking part in an extensive range of enrichment activities, for example by attending a modern languages club or acting as mentors in a reading scheme at a local school.
- Lecturers are well qualified and have excellent subject knowledge. They share their passion for their subject and enthuse learners. Many language lecturers and assistants are native speakers and use their knowledge well to challenge learners to fulfil their potential.
- Learners confidently assess and appraise their own work and that of others. They clearly enjoy their studies and work with enthusiasm. Modern languages lecturers make excellent use of the target language in class.
- Most learners extend their vocabulary, explore ideas and practise expressing their opinions exceptionally well as a result of well-planned group and pair work activities in lessons. Lecturers increase learners' understanding of classical texts particularly well by requiring them to make comparisons with current and contemporaneous world events and literature. In English literature, for example, learners very effectively evaluate Blake's poetry with reference to the late Georgian period. However, in a minority of language lessons, learners do not develop sufficient fluency in their speaking.
- Language learners develop their listening skills well in a weekly lesson in a computer suite. All learners make good use of materials placed on the virtual learning environment to read, view and provide critiques of a wide variety of additional texts and media.
- Lecturers assess learners' knowledge and skills very well when learners join the college and use this information to place learners on courses at an appropriate level. They skilfully negotiate aspirational targets with learners who fully understand what they must do to reach these. Verbal feedback from lecturers is encouraging and develops learners' speaking and analytical skills. Lecturers mark work promptly with clear and constructive feedback on what learners need to do to improve.
- Care and support for learners are outstanding. Lecturers know their learners very well and respond to their individual needs through making themselves available when help is needed, providing a sensitive tutorial programme and ensuring carefully targeted support. For example, all A-level learners receive support on the core academic skills they need to develop.
- Information, advice and guidance are excellent. Very high quality pre-course information includes video clips of lessons and induction appraises learners very well of their rights and responsibilities. As a result, learners are confident that the course they are studying meets their needs. The 'progression hub' has excellent links with local universities and employers and provides outstanding support. Learners are effusive in their praise of the support they receive when applying to university.
- Lecturers promote equality and the understanding of diversity well. Learners feel very safe and value highly the strong college ethos focused on respect, team work and learning from each other. The result is a very productive and supportive learning community.

Foundation mathematics**16-19 study programmes****19+ Learning programmes**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is reflected in high and improving success rates for learners on GCSE and functional mathematics. A high proportion of the learners use their success in GCSE and functional skills to progress to further study at a higher level or to obtain employment. Learners gain confidence using routine arithmetical operations and simple algebra. They build on their existing skills and a large majority make good progress, developing new knowledge and skills. In a small minority of lessons, teaching is dull and uninspiring and fails to engage and challenge all learners.
- Learners often overcome personal problems, which could be barriers to learning, because of the good support and care they receive from their lecturers. For example, learners benefit from the 'safe space' where they can go for help with their studies and their personal needs.
- A large majority of lessons meet learners' needs and interests well. Lecturers use their experience and expertise to plan stimulating activities that are relevant to learners' vocational courses. For example, in one lesson, learners worked well in groups to present the statistics from a survey as a graph.
- Learners make good progress in developing personal skills and qualities such as self-confidence, personal responsibility and communication with others. Less confident learners overcome an initial reluctance to participate fully in groups or present their ideas and thoughts to other class members. For example, one lecturer encouraged learners to work with peers to estimate the length and breadth of objects in class and then calculate the perimeter. Within classes, an atmosphere of mutual respect exists.
- Lecturers work with learners to set academic and personal targets that are specific, challenging and relevant. This ensures expectations are high and most learners strive to achieve high standards of work. However, strategies to improve attendance in some classes are not always effective and attendance is low. In a minority of lessons, learners do not develop the required problem-solving skills because they are too reliant on the lecturer providing answers.
- Learners benefit from well-qualified and experienced staff who design resources and lessons to meet their learners' needs well. For example, managers have re-arranged some lessons to be at a more appropriate time and opened an extra resource centre for independent study. Lecturers assess the academic needs of individual learners at the start of their courses and use this information well to adapt teaching to cater for individuals' needs. A comprehensive induction programme helps learners settle in, stay on course and make good progress.
- Lecturers assess learners confidently and well, and learners benefit from lecturers' positive verbal reinforcement. Lecturers test learners' knowledge well through careful questioning when coaching and set work that challenges learners to make further progress. In a large majority of lessons written feedback on assessed work is detailed and precise and helps learners improve. However, in a small minority of lessons, feedback is less helpful.
- Lecturers promote equality well in foundation mathematics programmes. For example, they devise resources and teaching strategies that are adapted well to meet individual needs. However, they do not always promote an understanding of diversity within lessons.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding. Governors and senior managers have established very clear values and strategic priorities for the college that foster excellence, innovation and a commitment to educating and training the local community. All staff are fully aware of, and actively promote, these priorities creating a common purpose and consistently high expectations

of learners. Staff and governors ensure the college comprehensively achieves its mission to be an outstanding, dynamic and thriving organisation, working with partners to provide inspirational education and training for the local community.

- The quality of accommodation and resources across most of the college is very high. Managers have skilfully established a strong identity for each of the college buildings. Strong partnerships with industry ensure students also have valuable access to other high quality resources across the city; for example, at the Barnfield Theatre and the Flybe Training Academy at the airport. These settings and partnerships further enhance the opportunities and vocational relevance of programmes for learners.
- Well-qualified lecturers with extensive, relevant expertise bring out the best in learners by using this expertly when teaching. Managers monitor lecturers' performance closely and deal effectively with poor performance. A robust performance management system ensures all staff are clear about their areas of strength, personal goals and institutional development priorities. An excellent professional development programme and timely, individual support significantly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The college's self-evaluation accurately identifies key strengths and priorities for development in most areas. Managers ensure that all staff are actively involved in reviewing their courses and take responsibility for making improvements. All managers have very good access to timely, reliable and accurate data enabling them to review learners' progress and maintain high standards.
- Managers act quickly and sensibly on the feedback they receive from learners through regular and informative surveys and focus groups. Learners are confident that their concerns will be carefully considered and that appropriate changes made to improve the provision.
- Governors, leaders and managers have made a very positive contribution to the educational, social and economic development needs of the region. Leaders, managers and governors achieve this by using their valuable links with the local community, schools and employers extremely well. Staff encourage participation in education effectively by delivering courses in a wide range of community venues. College leaders have been bold in their approach to improving learners' English and mathematics. They have introduced an extensive, but prudent, range of initiatives, which is having an increasingly positive impact on learners' achievements in these subjects.
- Governors provide excellent support and challenge to senior leaders. They possess an exceptional wealth of relevant expertise and comprehensively represent the interests of the region and local community. Governors take a leading role in setting and reviewing the strategy, financial priorities and improvement objectives. They hold leaders to account and ensure that the college has the capacity to continue to improve.
- The highly effective management structure within the college ensures clear lines of communication and accountability. Leaders and managers actively encourage all staff to engage in the continuous pursuit of excellence and innovation in teaching and create good opportunities to celebrate success. The quality of curriculum leadership and management is excellent and staff morale is high. These factors make a major contribution to sustaining outstanding teaching, learning and assessment.
- Learners feel safe around the college. Respect and tolerance are promoted well. All staff and governors receive suitable training and guidance on equality and diversity. Most staff actively raise learners' awareness of equality and diversity, challenge learners' perceptions and promote their awareness and understanding of the diversity of modern society. In a small minority of areas, lecturers are less effective at celebrating diversity or making learners fully aware of the diverse needs of customers that they will encounter in future employment. Leaders and governors monitor and review the performance of different groups of learners and take action to ensure consistently high outcomes for all.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Managers, governors and staff receive suitable induction and regular follow-up training in safeguarding. Staff actively

promote safe working practices around the college and carry out thorough risk assessments where necessary. These processes and activities help assure the well-being of all learners.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Exeter College

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	16-19 study programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1	1	1
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1	2	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	1	1	1	1	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1	1	1	1	1

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	1
Early years and playwork	1
Science	1
Transportation operations and maintenance	1
Hospitality and catering	2
Visual arts	2
English	1
Modern foreign languages	1
Foundation mathematics	2

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	14+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 5816 Part-time: 3352
Principal/CEO	Richard Atkins
Date of previous inspection	March 2008
Website address	www.exe-coll.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Contextual information

Exeter College is a large tertiary college with seven sites within Exeter and a training centre at Exeter International Airport which has been developed in partnership with a commercial airline. An extensive community learning programme is delivered in local venues throughout the city. The college provides courses to over 5,000 learners aged 16 to 18 and over 2,500 adults. The college is also a major provider of apprenticeships and provides a significant number of part-time programmes for learners aged 14 to 16. The number of learners aged 16 to 18, and the number of apprentices, have increased significantly in recent years. A significant proportion of learners live in Exeter, with an increasing number coming from towns and rural areas in the South West.

Exeter is a relatively prosperous city with several areas of deprivation. Employment levels are higher than average, although many people are in relatively low-paid jobs. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is low. Attainment in local secondary schools of five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is improving, but is still below the national rate.

The main industry sectors in the locality are service industries, public administration and specialist engineering.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Steven Tucker HMI
Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and nine additional inspectors, assisted by the vice principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.	

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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