

# Yeovil College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number:</b>	107546
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Alex Falconer HMI
<b>Last day of inspection:</b>	20 April 2012
<b>Type of provider:</b>	General further education college
<b>Address:</b>	Mudford Road Yeovil Somerset BA21 4DR
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## Information about the provider

1. Yeovil College is a medium-sized general further education college serving South Somerset and North and West Dorset. The main campus is in the town of Yeovil, but smaller centres in Shaftesbury and Bridport provide vocational programmes mainly in engineering, construction and hair and beauty. Currently, the college has recruited nearly 3,000 learners on learner responsive programmes and over 1,400 on employer responsive programmes. It offers courses in 14 of the 15 subject areas. Subject areas such as preparation for life and work, science and mathematics, health, public services and care and arts, media and publishing recruit the largest numbers of learners. Most learners, both part time and full time, take intermediate or foundation programmes. However, a significant proportion of 16 to 18 year olds and adult learners are on advanced programmes such as GCE AS and A levels and BTEC national diplomas. The number of apprentices recruited has increased steadily over the past few years and currently over 550 are registered. In addition, the college is involved in National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training for over 250 people in local workplaces, has a popular part-time programme for over 250 local school pupils and has developed higher education programmes in collaboration with four universities.
2. The region served by the college has low unemployment but low wages for those in employment. The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training has increased recently and the college is working in collaboration with schools and colleges in the South West of England to encourage these young people to gain qualifications. Around 3% of the learners at college come from minority ethnic backgrounds. This proportion is higher than that in the communities served by the college. Four local secondary schools have recently become academies. The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE A\* to C grade passes in the area is below national average. The college mission is 'to inspire and lead our community through excellence in providing learning and pathways for progression'.
3. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Agusta Westlands
  - Sunseeker International
  - Somerset Partnership
  - DS Smith Launceston
  - Southern Print
  - Screwfix
  - Somerset Care
  - Poole Council
  - Dorset County Council
  - TOD.

4. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the college:

- Side by Side Training
- Advance Future Training
- Windmill Training
- Yeovil District Hospital.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
<p><b>Provision for young learners:</b> 14 to 16</p> <p>Further education (16 to 18)</p>	<p>521 part-time learners</p> <p>184 part-time learners 1,529 full-time learners</p>
<p><b>Provision for adult learners:</b> Further education (19+)</p>	<p>150 full-time learners 1,383 part-time learners</p>
<p><b>Employer provision:</b> National vocational qualifications (NVQs) in the workplace Apprenticeships</p>	<p>701 learners</p> <p>784 apprentices</p>

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	1
Equality and diversity	2

<b>Subject Areas</b>	
Health, care and public services	2
Science and mathematics	3
Engineering work- based learning	2
Visual arts and media	2
Business, administration and law	2

## Overall effectiveness

- Yeovil is a good college that makes a significant contribution to the education and training of people in Somerset and Dorset. Outcomes for learners are broadly satisfactory but have improved over the past few years. Learners taking apprenticeships make very good progress, but those on AS levels and some GCSEs do not make the progress expected of them. The self-assessment report acknowledges that this is an area for improvement and effective strategies are in place to improve outcomes at AS and GCSE. Over the past three years college managers have worked hard to develop more vocational and work-based learning opportunities that meet local and national skills shortages. The college uses its outstanding partnership working to consult and provide a wide range of courses for learners aged 16 to 18 and adults. Teaching, learning and assessment have also improved and are now good. Learners enjoy their work

and gain useful skills and confidence that stand them in good stead to progress to further study or employment.

6. The college has a wide range of academic, vocational and work-based learning provision that meets the needs of foundation and intermediate learners as well as those of advanced learners. Progression rates to further study, higher education and employment are good. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory and pastoral support is good, as is individual support for those with additional learning needs. However, learners' progress in literacy and numeracy is not always linked to rigorous reviews and measurable targets. Leadership and management are good and managers have a clear vision of the role the college plays in its community and beyond. The management of safeguarding is outstanding and learners feel completely safe in the college and the workplace. Equality and diversity are well promoted in the college, but teachers do not always use opportunities in lessons to discuss equality and diversity issues. Quality assurance and self-assessment are well developed and the college self-assessment report, although lengthy, accurately identifies key strengths and areas for improvement. However, work-based learning is not sufficiently analysed in the self-assessment report. The collection and use of users' opinions are satisfactory. Full-time learners' views are extensively sought and acted upon. Employers' views are sought through regular contact.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory and are improving. Success rates for learners on long courses are broadly at national averages. Outcomes for learners on work-based learning are much improved and the success rates for apprentices were outstanding in 2010/11. Outcomes for pupils aged 14 to 16 are good and success rates are high on GCE A-level courses.
- A good proportion of learners complete their courses, but the proportion successfully achieving their qualifications varies too much across curriculum areas. Managers and teachers recognise this and are working hard to improve low achievements on GCE AS courses.
- Progression to further study, employment and higher education is good. Learners benefit from the college's focus on improving literacy, numeracy and employability skills and make the progress expected from their prior attainment.
- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved and are now good. The quality of teaching and learning still varies, however, and a minority of lessons remain satisfactory rather than good. Experienced staff provide effective support to help teachers to improve and to spread good practice. The college self-assessment report acknowledges this variation and the need to continue with this work.
- Assessment is now good and most learners receive good feedback on how they can improve their standards. Systems are in place to ensure that learners reach the required standards to achieve their qualifications.

- In most lessons, learners are set challenging and relevant tasks and they work hard. They enjoy their work and rapidly develop improved skills and understanding. In a minority of lessons not all learners are sufficiently challenged and progress is slower. Not all teachers effectively promote equality and diversity in their work.
- Many teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to support learning, but some need to develop this aspect of their work further. Accommodation and resources to support learning are generally good. Some areas are very well equipped and there are excellent displays to create stimulating environments for learning.
- The college meets the needs and interests of the learners well. A wide breadth of provision provides clear progression routes. In addition to a good range of academic and vocational courses, the college has developed more work-based learning provision across Somerset and Dorset, outreach to young people not in education, employment or training, courses for unemployed adults and higher education provision.
- A large number of learners attend the well-established enrichment programmes. They benefit from recreational activities alongside those with a strong emphasis on developing employability skills and work-orientated projects. Enrichment programmes also promote social cohesion and self-esteem through competitive sport, competitions, and off-site subject-related visits.
- The college has outstanding partnerships with community groups, local employers and international connections. These are very successful in developing the academic and vocational curriculum and meeting local, national and international priorities. The college uses these partnerships to evaluate standards, select and write curriculum content, and develop programmes to match changes in employment patterns and practices.
- Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral support and group tutorials promote learners' well-being and additional support needs effectively. Learners who are assessed with literacy and numeracy needs are well supported, but their progress is not monitored sufficiently. Similarly, a minority of progress reviews are not focused enough on measurable targets to help learners progress.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior managers and governors have a clear commitment to high standards, with a realistic view of the challenges the college faces. The college has a clear vision of its role within the local and regional community.
- The management of safeguarding is outstanding. The commitment of staff at all levels is impressive with many examples of exemplary practice. Learners feel safe, valued and supported. The overall promotion of equality and diversity is good, but these are not always promoted well enough in lessons.
- The self-assessment process is effective in identifying strengths and targeting areas for improvement. The quality improvement plan is well conceived and forms part of a coherent improvement tool which is rigorously monitored at all levels.

- Learners' surveys are used extensively to inform improvement and feedback is appropriately taken into account by the college. The views of employers are gathered through regular contact, but the work-based learning provision as a whole is not sufficiently evaluated in the self-assessment report.

### **What does Yeovil College need to do to improve further?**

- Make sure that AS learners receive rigorous support and direction so that the achievement rates improve and they successfully progress to GCE A-level study.
- Share good practice across the college to ensure that all lessons have sufficient pace and challenge to ensure that learners fulfil their full potential and make excellent progress.
- Ensure that learners are set and meet challenging targets as part of their progress reviews to enable them to meet their aspirations and achieve their qualifications at the highest level possible.
- Continue to increase the value of self-assessment through more systematic feedback from employers. Increase the focus in self-assessment on employer-responsive provision.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- approachable and friendly teachers
- knowledgeable teachers with good experience in industry
- the wide range of enrichment opportunities
- personal support by teachers
- the college environment where they feel safe and valued.

#### **What learners would like to see improved:**

- more space in the canteen
- speedy return of assignments with more feedback
- more information and involvement with student union.

### **Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What employers like:**

- the way the college is responsive to meeting employers' needs
- managers, teachers and support staff who make every effort to ensure that communication is effective
- flexible arrangements so that training, support for learners and qualifications meet learners' and employers' expectations.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

7. Yeovil College has good capacity to make and sustain improvement. The college has a clear vision, appropriate policies and the commitment of staff at all levels to sustain improvements. Key areas of the college have seen consistent steady improvement since the last inspection. The quality of provision, leadership and management and equality of opportunity have all improved and are now good. Teaching is now good. Arrangements to promote improvement are now effective and are having a positive impact. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory and success rates for learners have improved over the past three years. However, inspectors now judge current learners to be making good progress in their studies. Outcomes for apprentices have improved markedly, but outcomes for around 175 learners on AS programmes remain below national averages. Retention rates have improved. Opportunities for learners in academic, vocational and work-based learning programmes have increased and the college uses its highly-developed partnership working to develop the breadth and depth of its curriculum offer. Leaders, governors and managers share a refreshingly open view of the college's areas for improvement and work well together to resolve them. Managers form a coherent, well-trained group who have guided the college through a difficult period of financial adjustment whilst maintaining staff morale. Staff are positive about the college and demonstrate their passionate commitment to learners achieving success.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 3**

8. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory and are improving. The proportion of learners successfully achieving their long qualifications in 2010/11 was broadly at national averages for similar colleges. Outcomes for learners aged 16 to 18 were slightly better than those for adult learners. However, outcomes for learners on work-based learning programmes were good and those for apprentices were outstanding. The proportion of apprentices achieving their qualifications by the due date was significantly above the national average. In addition, outcomes for Train to Gain and its successor programmes were also good. Most learners completed their courses in 2010/11 and retention rates were at, or above, national averages. Overall, learners' progress, as measured by value-added calculations, is in line with that predicted from their prior attainment. Those who receive additional learning support make good progress and their outcomes have improved over the past three years.
9. Success rates on A-level subjects and advanced vocational subjects were at or above national averages in 2010/11. However, some poor achievements on GCSE mathematics and some AS-level subjects adversely affected achievement rates in 2010/11. In the main, learners' achievements on foundation and intermediate programmes are at national averages. The self-assessment report recognises that learners' achievements vary too much in GCSE and AS subjects and managers have put in place actions to address this. Recent AS module



results show that some improvements have been made, but it is too soon to judge the full impact of the actions taken. Outcomes for pupils aged 14 to 16 on part-time vocational courses are good and many progress on to full-time study at the college. The proportion of learners progressing to further or higher education and employment is good and has improved over the past two years.

10. The standards achieved by current learners and trainees in their written assignments and practical work are good. They make good progress, enjoy their studies and training and successfully develop the skills that will equip them for employment or further study. Attendance during the inspection was satisfactory and good in some areas. Managers and teachers place great emphasis on safeguarding and health and safety in the college. Learners report that they feel completely safe in the college and in the workplace. Inspectors observed safe working practices in laboratories, studios and workshops during the inspection.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

11. Teaching, learning and assessment have improved and are now good. Programmes of learning are well planned. Teachers and learners have uniformly good working relationships. Learning support assistants generally provide effective support for the learners in their care. Learners benefit from the friendly and welcoming atmosphere in lessons and across the college. In the small number of lessons that were judged to be outstanding, learners worked really hard and were effectively pushed and challenged by their teachers to reach their full potential and enjoy their work. For example, in a sports lesson, college learners worked with pupils from a nearby special school to help them to benefit from a fitness regime. Both sets of learners were working hard and enjoying their session. The college learners experienced the challenge and satisfaction of helping the pupils to utilise fully the sports equipment and feel the benefit of exercise.
12. Much of the rest of the teaching across the college is good and provides sufficient challenge and enjoyment for learners. Most learners make good progress and their written and number skills are well matched to their programmes of study. Lessons are purposeful and learners can explain their work. They are keen and their teachers help them to work quickly and accurately. Small-group and paired work are used well to help learners learn and gain in confidence. For example, in a science GCSE lesson, learners worked in pairs using video clips to discuss how viruses enter the body and cause infections. They learned well from each other with good guidance from their teacher.
13. A minority of lessons were judged to be only satisfactory and a very small number inadequate. In these lessons, the pace is often pedestrian and not all the learners are sufficiently challenged by, or interested in, the tasks their teachers set for them. Sometimes teachers do not demonstrate sufficiently good technical teaching skills. For example, a minority of teachers failed to use

questions effectively to check if learners had understood the topic or to extend their learning and understanding. A small number of lessons did not go to plan at all and the learners did not learn enough. Advanced practitioners and subject learning coaches provide good support and professional development to teachers following graded lesson observations. Inspectors observed some good promotion of equality and diversity in lessons, especially in health and care, but in others subject areas teachers missed opportunities to discuss current equality and diversity issues in both lessons and progress reviews.

14. Assessment is good. Learners' work is assessed fairly and marks awarded by teachers reflect closely the standard of the work. Generally learners receive sufficient comment and feedback from their teachers to enable them to improve their work, although this was not uniformly good in all areas inspected. Internal and external verification procedures are thorough and ensure that learners achieve the standards that are required of them to achieve their qualifications. Learners' feedback is very positive about the teaching and assessment they receive, but a few would like to have their work returned more quickly.
15. Most teachers use ICT well to promote learning, but this is not consistently good. Learning resource centres provide learners with good access to computers. In some areas, such as health and care and art and design, a wealth of electronic learning and assessment materials are available and learners and teachers routinely use the college virtual learning environment (VLE) to submit and assess work. In other subject areas, learners' and staff use is less regular and less effective. Electronic whiteboards and projectors are available in many rooms and in some lessons were used well by the teachers. However, in a minority of lessons teachers used the technologies as little more than a means of projecting text onto a screen.
16. The college accommodation provides a good environment for learning. Some recently-developed accommodation, such as the arts block and the hairdressing salon, is excellent. Many rooms make good use of stimulating displays, including learners' work, to enliven learning and encourage discussions among learners. Some areas need modernising, but the college has substantially improved its accommodation in recent years and has a building programme in progress to upgrade accommodation for GCE A- and AS-level learners.
17. The college has a wide breadth of provision with clear progression routes. A good range of academic and vocational courses for learners aged 16 to 18 and a variety of both part- and full-time programmes for adult learners are offered. Over the past few years the college has developed higher education programmes in collaboration with four universities. In addition, work-based learning opportunities have substantially increased and the college has a good range of training provision for apprentices. In 2010/11 over 700 learners were on NVQs in the workplace. Managers have successfully collaborated with an employer in Shaftesbury to develop vocational training to meet local needs. The college is actively developing similar provision in Bridport and leads local

initiatives to meet the needs of young people not in education, employment or training.

18. Outstanding and well-established enrichment programmes are well attended by a large number of learners. The activities have a strong emphasis on developing employability skills through work experience, visiting speakers, and work-related projects. The enrichment programmes also promote social cohesion and healthy lifestyles through activities such as competitive sport, skills competitions, and visits.
19. Partnerships are outstanding. Successful collaboration with schools, colleges, employers, local authorities, universities and other organisations have contributed successfully to the range of programmes the college offers to meet the education and training needs in Somerset and Dorset. In addition, recent and developing higher education collaboration and initiatives in China have also widened the reach of the college. Managers and teachers use these collaborations to develop new and relevant curricula that reflect changing patterns of employment. They use employers' expertise to inform curriculum content and to put in place specific training and appropriate assessments. The development of print training has been particularly successful, as has the development of vocational training in Shaftesbury and Bridport. The college provides part-time vocational training for secondary pupils in collaboration with local secondary schools and has a well-developed partnership with the local NHS Trust to provide NVQs in the workplace.
20. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is good and learners receive good personal support for their studies. Group tutorials for full-time learners are good and tutors focus appropriately on helping learners develop their personal and social skills along with preparation for further study or progression to employment. Pastoral staff provide good care and support for learners' well-being and personal development. Learners with additional learning needs are quickly assessed and the support they receive enables them to make good progress. However, the progress of learners with low literacy and numeracy skills is not always fully monitored. There is insufficient collaboration between subject teachers and pastoral and support staff to ensure that these learners are making the best progress they can. In addition, progress reviews and individual learning plans are not sufficiently focused on ensuring that learners are set realistic and measurable targets to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

21. Leadership and management are good. The Principal and senior managers have a clear commitment to high standards and are realistic about challenges the college faces. Targets are challenging and they are monitored well at all levels. The college has a clear understanding of local and regional priorities. Leaders make good use of data and market information to inform development and improvement. The capacity of managers has been significantly increased since the last inspection with well-considered appointments and extensive training.

22. The college is supported well and rigorously challenged by its governors. They receive appropriate training and timely updates where necessary. Governors have a clear view of the college, its strengths and areas for improvement. They receive detailed, relevant and wide-ranging information prior to their monthly meetings. The audit committee monitors the financial management of the college well and has appropriately supported the significant reorganisation of resources following changes in government funding. Lead governors are in place to monitor the legislative commitments of the college, for example in safeguarding and equality and diversity. Governors are rigorous in reviewing their own activities and in ensuring the accountability of senior staff.
23. The promotion of safeguarding is outstanding and has a high priority at all levels within the organisation. The college meets government requirements with regard to safeguarding. All staff, including governors, support staff and volunteers, are subject to appropriate checks prior to appointment. A single central record is maintained within the human resources department. The training of staff in safeguarding is particularly good. Rigorous policies are well articulated through clear handbooks and training. All staff receive first level safeguarding training and, in 2010/11, around a third of the staff chose to undertake an optional intermediate level qualification in safeguarding. Learners receive appropriate awareness training in safeguarding at induction and through the tutorial programme. They have a good recall of their rights and responsibilities to others and have confidence in the college's procedures. The safeguarding team demonstrates an impressive commitment to its role. College safeguarding managers have good, proactive links with the local safeguarding board. Incidents are effectively dealt with and learners with complex safeguarding needs have received appropriate support. The college is one of the first nationally to be designated a You're Welcome College under a National Health Service scheme to provide young people with friendly health services. Appropriate health and safety arrangements are in place both on-site and off-site and learners are well informed about applying safe practices. Overall, the college has created an environment where learners feel safe, valued and supported.
24. The promotion of equality and diversity is good and is central to the college's core values of inclusivity and support for community cohesion. The Principal chairs the active equality and diversity group which draws upon partnerships with faith and ethnic minority organisations to inform its work. Governors have received training in equality and diversity and a vice principal reports directly to them on a regular basis. The profile of staff employed by the college broadly reflects the local population. The college has had some success in encouraging the appointment of staff who may act as role models. For example, there are now two women engineering tutors. In addition, a significant improvement has been secured in the achievement of learners in receipt of additional support. Suitable policies and procedures to eliminate bullying and harassment are robustly applied. Where incidents have occurred, they have been dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner through well-established procedures. Equality and

diversity are satisfactorily promoted through the curriculum and there are examples of good practice. However, the explicit promotion of equality and diversity in subject lessons is far from consistent.

25. Engagement with users to support and promote improvement is satisfactory. A twice-yearly on-line learner survey provides a valuable range of numerical evaluation of learners' perceptions and this is widely used to shape actions for improvement. Learners and staff readily quote examples where feedback has been acted upon, for example in the planning of new accommodation, the provision of improved catering and an automated cash dispenser on the main site. Learner representatives are in place for most courses, but learners in some off-site work-based settings are unaware of how to make their views known. Employers' views are collected through annual questionnaires, but there is insufficient structured feedback from them. The college recognises in its self-assessment that feedback arrangements with employers require improvement.
26. Self-assessment is well established. Since the last inspection, arrangements have improved significantly and now form part of a coherent planning and improvement cycle. The lesson observation system is well established and support following graded observations helps teachers to improve and reflect upon their practice. Self-assessment makes suitable use of a wide range of data and feedback from users. The latest self-assessment report is largely accurate and matches the grading of inspectors in most cases, although not all areas for improvement receive sufficient evaluation. The document is too long and lacks sufficient focus on the employer-responsive provision. College managers recognise the need to improve this. Faculty and college evaluations are used in the development of the well-considered quality improvement plan. The current plan identifies well the areas for improvement and sets out credible actions. The quality improvement plan is rigorously monitored at governor, manager and curriculum level. Targets are clear, challenging and regularly reviewed.
27. The college uses its available resources well to secure value for money. Since the last inspection, changes to government funding have reduced the income of the college. Resulting staff redundancies were managed with particular sensitivity and staff morale has remained generally good. The impact of the changes on the service to learners has been well managed. The college's financial position is sound. Managers have taken a firm strategic decision to maximise the use of income to maintain services to learners and support the development of resources. The college has been able to increase its presence in the region with the development of centres in Bridport and Shaftesbury. Progression into higher education is supported by the college's well-equipped and welcoming higher education centre in Yeovil. Overall, resources for learning are at least satisfactory and in some cases they are exceptional, particularly in employer-responsive areas such as composite technologies. Appropriate emphasis is placed on sustainability, in both the range and reach of the provision.

## Subject areas

### Health, care and public services

### Grade 2

#### Context

28. Yeovil College offers full-time courses in health and social care, childcare and uniformed public services to approximately 355 learners aged 16 to 18. In addition, some 139 part-time learners study health and social care and childcare. There are 23 learners aged 14 to 16 are on the New Society and Health Diploma. Most of the 188 work-based learners are on vocational programmes.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners on work-based provision are outstanding. Trainees' achievements were above national averages in 2010/11 and were outstanding in childcare apprenticeships. Outcomes for college-based courses were good especially on the BTEC first diploma in health and social care, A-level health and social care double award and on the intermediate award in caring for children.
- Learners develop good personal and work-place skills and participate well in voluntary and community activities. Their attendance and punctuality are very good in health and social care and childcare and good in uniformed public services. The proportion of learners completing their programmes is above national averages. A high proportion of learners progress each year to further study, higher education or employment.
- Learners enjoy their studies and are enthusiastic about the opportunities offered to them. An initial assessment of learning needs is completed on entry and is effective in supporting learners' aspirations. Learners gain experience in a large range of settings including sheltered housing, centres for learning and physical disabilities, nurseries, hospitals and the penal system.
- The standard of learners' work is good, and outstanding on the award in caring for children. Learners produce high-quality, often word-processed, assignments. They are confident in their knowledge and use appropriate technical vocabulary, especially when writing about equality and diversity. Assessment feedback is very effective in helping learners to improve their grades. Assessors are very effective in supporting work-based learners.
- Teaching and learning are good and some lessons are outstanding. Teachers plan their lessons well and make effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) to aid understanding. The teachers organise learning well and set tasks that meet the full range of learners' abilities. Learners are helped to explore difficult and sensitive topics such as child abuse and abuse of vulnerable people. In a minority of lessons, teachers talked for too long and did not always check learners' understanding.

- Accommodation and resources are good. Learning resources on the college VLE are well developed and highly valued by learners. The intranet is used well in tutorials and is very effective in supporting learning. A minority of teachers do not make full use of the potential of electronic whiteboards to help learners understand topics and make good progress.
- Outstanding partnerships with schools, the local hospital, health and social care providers, a very large range of voluntary organisations, charities and employers enrich the curriculum. Communication with employers supporting work-based learners is responsive and highly effective.
- Pastoral support is very good. Learners value the highly-supportive approach of teachers and assessors in building their self-esteem and employability skills. Learners receiving additional learning support contribute confidently in lessons. Support for these learners is effective, they achieve well and make good progress.
- Leadership and management are good. Regular staff meetings to discuss the progress of individual learners are used effectively to ensure intervention to raise retention and achievements. Staff are developing a better understanding of targets and national averages, but do not yet make full use of all the data available to them in self-assessment reports.
- Arrangements for, and the promotion of, safeguarding are outstanding and widely understood by learners and staff. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively through the curriculum and within community activities. Teachers use valuable opportunities to encourage learners to share their family histories, particularly those educated in other countries.
- Learners feel very safe and like the inclusive atmosphere of the college. They find the staff very supportive and are proud of their achievements.
- The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and identifies the key strengths and areas for improvement. However, it lacks detail on the full range of courses offered in health, care and public services. Actions taken to improve teaching and learning are improving the overall quality of learners' experiences.

### **What does Yeovil College need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure all teachers check learners' understanding in lessons and are confident in using technology to support learning.
- Make sure that teachers are confident to use the full range of management information in self-assessment.

## Science and mathematics

## Grade 3

### Context

29. Just over 280 learners study science and mathematics courses, the majority of whom are 16- to 18-year-olds on full-time courses. At intermediate level, GCSE mathematics, GCSE psychology and GCSE human physiology and health are offered. GCE AS- and A-level courses are available in biology, chemistry, mathematics, further mathematics, physics and psychology. A national diploma course in applied science is also offered.

### Key findings

- Outcomes are satisfactory overall. Success rates on A-level courses improved in 2011 and are now high. More than half of A-level learners achieve A\* to B grades, especially those studying A-level mathematics and further mathematics. AS courses, especially psychology and mathematics, have low and declining success rates. The proportion of learners achieving A\* to B grades is low on most AS courses.
- Learners' achievements on GCSE courses have been close to national averages for the last three years, but the proportion of learners achieving A\* to C grades in mathematics is low. Across all courses, success rates for the small number of adult learners are low and are below national averages. Learners make progress broadly in line with that expected from their prior attainment. Progression on to science, technology, engineering and mathematics courses in higher education is satisfactory.
- Learners feel safe in the college. Teachers set high standards of safety during laboratory work which learners replicate. Learners' punctuality and behaviour are good.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners work effectively in small groups and often undertake peer review. In the best lessons, learners are provided with useful topic workbooks and printed study materials to assist them with note taking and collecting experimental data. Teachers often use past examination questions to enable learners to apply their knowledge and to improve their problem-solving skills.
- A minority of teachers do not plan class activities sufficiently and learners do not learn as much as they should. They do not always check that learners have fully understood a topic before moving on. Too often, key terminology is not explained with sufficient clarity or with enough supporting examples.
- Learners gain good practical skills and work safely in the laboratories. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Teachers and learners regularly use the VLE to upload or access course resources and additional learning material.
- Marked work is generally at an appropriate standard and contains useful and specific comments from teachers on how learners can improve their work. However, some psychology assignments lack the detail and depth that would be



expected at A level. Work completed by learners studying mathematics is frequently untidy and unsystematic.

- The range of provision is good. A wide range of A-level, AS, vocational and GCSE courses is available during the day. In the evening, learners can study GCSE courses in mathematics and human physiology and health. The faculty has constructive links with local schools and hosts joint activities such as taster days and conferences.
- Support for learners is good. Their performance on tests and module examinations is closely monitored. This year, underperforming learners were quickly identified and directed to recently introduced workshops and extra lessons after college.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have put into place a range of improvement strategies to rectify the decline in achievement on AS courses. The actions are linked to realistic targets and are monitored regularly. However, the actions taken to improve teaching and learning have had only a limited impact. Recent AS module test results indicate improvements.
- Safeguarding and the promotion of equality and diversity are good. Teachers are aware of the need to promote equality and diversity in lessons when it is appropriate and often use learners' own experiences to enrich their lessons. Managers have correctly identified that too many adult learners do not succeed in their courses and appropriate actions are in place to remedy this.
- Learners' views are regularly sought, discussed and acted on in course review meetings. More recently, the college's VLE and small focus group sessions have been used effectively to collect subject-specific feedback.
- Self-assessment is satisfactory. Detailed course reviews effectively contribute to the faculty self-assessment report. It is accurate in identifying most of the key strengths and areas for improvement. However, there has not been enough progress in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

### **What does Yeovil College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve outcomes for learners on AS and GCSE courses by monitoring their progress closely, particularly their attendance and progress at the additional workshops.
- Improve the quality of self-assessment by focusing on analysing teachers' performance more thoroughly and targeting their professional development to match the needs identified.
- Raise the standard of teaching by developing strategies to share good teaching practice across all levels and all subjects.

## Engineering work-based learning

## Grade 2

### Context

30. The college offers intermediate and advanced apprenticeships in mechanical and electro-technical engineering and manufacturing technologies. Within manufacturing technologies, two pathways are offered: print and printed packaging and industrial applications. At the time of the inspection there were 132 intermediate apprentices and 84 advanced apprentices. Of the 216 learners, 134 were mechanical engineering apprentices, 24 were electro-technical apprentices and 58 were manufacturing apprentices.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. In 2010/11 the overall success rates for intermediate and advanced apprentices aged 16 to 18 improved and were well above the national averages. However, overall success rates for apprentices aged between 19 and 24 were significantly below the sector average. The vast majority of apprentices achieve their full framework by their target end date. In 2010/11 overall success rates on Train to Gain and its successor programmes were below the national average.
- Apprentices develop good practical skills in the workplace, supported by good practical and theory sessions at the college. Many apprentices successfully work in the workplace with minimal supervision. They are confident and achieve high standards of industrial skills that meet, and sometimes exceed, the employer's expectations.
- Many learners make good progress onto higher-level qualifications. For example, the majority of the learners on the Young Apprenticeship programme have progressed through intermediate onto advanced apprenticeships. Three quarters of intermediate apprentices recently progressed onto advanced apprenticeship programmes.
- All learners feel safe in the workplace and at college. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety and take full responsibility for their own safety and that of others. They understand and adhere to health and safety guidelines at all times.
- Assessment is good. The feedback on marked work is clear and precise, although grammatical errors in portfolios are not always corrected. However, learners are not always aware of their overall progress within the full framework. Teaching and learning are good in practical sessions, which learners say they enjoy; a few theory lessons lack pace and challenge, and learners find these slow and boring.
- The range of provision meets the needs of employers well. In many cases employers have been able to select the units for the programme to meet their needs and create an individual training programme for their apprentices. For

example, specialist scientific engineering units have been provided to meet the needs of engineering apprentices working in the local hospital.

- The college has very good partnerships with employers, schools and other training providers that support and enhance learning. For example, the college has set up a training centre in Shaftesbury in partnership with a large local electrical installation company in order to meet their needs.
- Employers value the level of support provided by the college. However, the coordination of on- and off-the-job training for apprentices is not well organised and can lead to missed opportunities for employers to contribute to learning.
- Learners benefit from effective pastoral welfare support in the workplace that meets their needs and provides regular reviews of progress. Learners' reviews in electrical installation set clear targets, but in engineering targets are unclear. Too many reviews take place without employers contributing to them.
- The management of work-based learning is good and significant improvements in success rates took place in 2010/11. Managers use data well. Regular staff meetings identify at-risk learners in order to ensure that they complete their programmes by the planned end dates. Workshop facilities are very well equipped and reflect industry standards.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Induction includes appropriate coverage of equality and diversity, but opportunities are missed to enhance and record learners' understanding during training sessions or in progress reviews.
- The engineering self-assessment report is broadly accurate but does not contain enough emphasis on work-based learning. Some of the issues raised in inspection have not been identified in the faculty quality improvement plan. No formal mechanism exists for apprentices' views to be sought and recorded.

### **What does Yeovil College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve outcomes for work-based learners by ensuring that all theory lessons are interesting and challenging and that all grammatical errors in learners' portfolios are identified and corrected.
- Improve assessment and reviews for learners by better coordination of on- and off-the-job training and more involvement of employers in assessment and reviews.

## Visual arts and media

## Grade 2

### Context

31. Currently, 202 full-time and 10 part-time learners study on a range of art and design and media courses from foundation to advanced level. The college offers BTEC intermediate courses in media and art and design and a short course in visual arts. At advanced level, the college offers AS- and A-level art and design, BTEC national diplomas in art and design and media and a foundation diploma in art and design. The majority of learners are aged 16 to 18 and around 60% of learners study on vocational courses.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Learners' success on media courses has been consistently outstanding over the past three years. Success rates on vocational art and design courses are good, but on the art and design foundation diploma only satisfactory. A-level success rates are good, but too few learners complete AS courses. Not enough learners gain their qualifications with high grades.
- The standards of learners' work are good. Learners' work in graphics is varied and sophisticated and media videos are produced at a professional level. Sketchbooks are rich and lively where learners experiment with a wide variety of media. However, learners' work in A-level photography is pedestrian and lacks vigour, and work produced in A-level textiles is satisfactory rather than good.
- All courses have commercial and industrial contexts integrated into assignments that help learners develop employability skills and commercial understanding. For example, in graphics, learners produce an annual poster for a national charity campaign. Educational visits expose learners to a wide variety of cultural influences that are then also integrated into assignments. Knowledgeable staff use industrial experience well in setting assignments.
- The majority of lessons are skilfully planned and well paced, allowing learners to concentrate and to learn from each other. Teachers use printed work materials, pair work, video clips and group discussion effectively. In an excellent graphics lesson learners worked swiftly to create an 'ideas wall' of imaginatively montaged images.
- In a minority of lessons the learners are not sufficiently challenged. They are passive and the teachers talk for too long. Questions are not always used to probe or check understanding.
- Learners value both group and individual tutorials and feel well supported. However, targets set in individual learning plans are not always measurable. The VLE is used well and media learners value the facility to submit assignments and receive prompt feedback online. Assessment is thorough and most oral feedback enables learners to improve their work. However, written

feedback for both AS- and A- level learners is neither sufficiently scrupulous nor followed up rigorously enough to ensure that improvements materialise.

- A wide range of courses allows good progression from intermediate to advanced level within the department. Well thought-out induction activities enable learners to settle in quickly and begin to make progress. Excellent additional courses, such as life drawing, are well attended and help learners develop their technique.
- The department is well managed and communication between the manager and staff and across the team is good. Staff value managers being both available and approachable. Appraisals celebrate staff strengths and managers set clear and achievable improvement targets. Best practice meetings have recently been instigated where staff share ideas and resources.
- Learners feel completely safe despite this being an open access campus. Two staff have completed an intermediate level safeguarding qualification that enables issues to be referred to them swiftly. The manager meets with learners' representatives on a regular basis and acts on their views where possible.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is well planned and effectively integrated into learners' projects. For example, advanced level art and design learners complete a 'cultural fusions' project and media learners discuss how stereotypes are presented in sitcoms. However, in a minority of lessons teachers miss opportunities to discuss equality issues.
- Self-assessment is broadly accurate, although some course outcomes are too generously graded. Course reviews are completed but not all staff are aware of the faculty self-assessment report. The department lesson observation grades are accurate and correlate with grades awarded in inspection.
- Good specialist resources and equipment are used in spacious purpose-built studios. Technical support has been successfully reorganised so that it is now effective across the provision.

### **What does Yeovil College need to do to improve further?**

- In order to raise attainment on AS-level courses, monitor and track learners rigorously so that more stay and complete their courses.
- Increase the number of learners that achieve high grades by providing more challenge in lessons with tasks that stretch all learners to achieve to their full potential.
- Ensure that written feedback on AS- and A- level work is very detailed and clear about what learners have to do to improve their work, and is rigorously followed up by teachers subsequently.

## Business, administration and law

## Grade 2

### Context

32. The college offers AS- and A-level courses in business studies, accounting and law. It also offers BTEC intermediate and advanced diplomas in business along with NVQs in accounting. Professional courses are available from intermediate level to advanced level in accounting, marketing and management. Currently, there are 309 learners on business-related courses. Of these, 190 are aged 16 to 18 and 119 are adults.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates on most courses, such as AS business and accounting, were above national averages in 2010/11 and AS law success rates improved significantly. However, success rates on the BTEC national diploma and in A level business studies declined to national averages. Learners' achievements on the first diploma in business studies were below the national average in 2010/11.
- The quality of work produced by learners is good. They make good progress in their studies, are well motivated, work hard and take responsibility for their learning by coming to lessons well prepared. Learners are well aware of the variety of careers options available to them and work hard to achieve their goals. However, not all learners benefit from organised work experience.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers plan their lessons well and use a good variety of activities to interest and encourage learners. They regularly check learners' understanding and progress in lessons and give good verbal and written feedback that enables learners to improve the quality of their work.
- Teachers use technology well and have produced high-quality resources available on the college intranet. Learners appreciate being able to access their marked work with comments online from home when planning their studies. However, the more able advanced level learners are not always challenged enough or encouraged to work independently, and not enough interesting curriculum materials have been made available for learners at intermediate level.
- Learners develop team working skills and confidence in their studies. Well-planned enrichment activities, such as trips to Disneyland in Paris and the Houses of Parliament, are popular and give learners practical experience of business, politics and legislation.
- The pace and structure of most lessons are good. Teachers make effective use of time and learners are able to improve their examination technique using short, timed written exercises. Learners participate well in lessons and teachers are skilled at managing their behaviour and creating a calm atmosphere for learning.

- Teachers regularly assess and mark learners' work. Written feedback is fair and contains helpful comments indicating how well learners are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- Learners feel very safe at college and are aware of safeguarding issues such as bullying and harassment. During induction, they are successfully introduced to the college safeguarding procedures and learners use group tutorials effectively to raise any concerns that they have.
- Learners benefit from good individual support from their teachers who give freely of their time after college. Those in receipt of additional learning support achieve slightly better than their peers. Learners identified with specific additional learning needs are supported well by support staff in lessons.
- Leadership and management are good. Teachers have good opportunities to develop their professional skills from training that has been tailored to meet their needs and interests. They are well supported by the advanced practitioners and subject learning coaches both informally and formally.
- Equality and diversity are well promoted. Schemes of work highlight opportunities for exploring equality and diversity themes. Teachers plan and integrate the themes into their lessons. However, unanticipated opportunities for discussion and reflection on equality and diversity in modern society are not always taken.
- Learning resources are good and specialist equipment such as computers and electronic whiteboards are available in most classrooms. Self-assessment is thorough and evaluative and identifies key strengths and area for improvement.

### **What does Yeovil College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve outcomes for intermediate learners and provide more challenge for advanced learners by making sure that learning materials are interesting, relevant and differentiated.
- Introduce vocational learners to a range of work experience opportunities in order to deepen their understanding of the world of work and create a wider range of choices for progression.
- Encourage teachers to take a more confident approach in dealing with equality and diversity issues that arise informally in order to prepare learners for life in modern Britain.

## Information about the inspection

33. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and 8 additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's vice principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
34. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.



**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Yeovil College**

**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>					
Full-time learners	1616		1482	134	
Part-time learners	2630	267	55	896	1412
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2				
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	1				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	1				
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3				
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>				
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	1				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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