

# Inspection of The Isle of Wight College

Inspection dates: 26 to 29 September 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

The Isle of Wight College is a general further education college with one main site in Newport and the Centre of Excellence for Composites, Advanced Manufacturing and Marine (CECMM) based in East Cowes. On the main site, the college offers a very broad curriculum, including vocational programmes across engineering, health and social care, T-levels and pathways for students with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The CECMM site offers engineering programmes for students and apprentices. The college works with two subcontractors, United Kingdom Sailing Academy (UKSA) and Platform One.

The college has students studying on courses from entry level up to level 6. The largest subject areas include engineering, building and construction, health and social care and digital. A significant number of students study English and mathematics GCSE and functional skills.

At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 1,322 students on study programmes, 281 students on adult learning programmes and 418 apprentices. There were 191 students in receipt of high needs funding.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Most students and apprentices are very positive about their learning. Most attend well, are motivated to achieve, and develop the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours to be well prepared for their next steps. Students with high needs make excellent progress from their starting points. They enjoy their learning, are exceptionally well supported, and develop their independence very well. Adult students and apprentices develop the essential skills employers are looking for, which enhances their future job prospects.

Students value the positive environments in which they learn at both sites. Apprentices at CECAMM appreciate the excellent facilities. These facilities enhance their learning experience greatly. Students and apprentices have responded quickly and willingly to the behavioural expectations of leaders, managers and staff and, as a result, are highly respectful of staff, peers and visitors to the college.

Students value the highly inclusive and respectful culture leaders and staff have created. Students, adults and apprentices recall useful learning about fundamental British values and exemplify these consistently both on college sites and with employers. For example, on the pathways programme, teachers adapt learning and use effective approaches to enable students to manage their emotions well, and, as a result, these students feel safe and willingly participate in learning with their peers. In level 2 childcare, teachers and support staff have a strong understanding of students' needs and provide swift and tailored support to develop students' knowledge. Students from the LGBTQ+ community are comfortable to be themselves and enjoy being at the college.

Most students develop their resilience and confidence very well. They benefit from a carefully designed 'Future Focus' programme. This programme enables them to learn about possible barriers to learning, emotional difficulties, communication and stress management. Students value this programme and develop a positive attitude towards their studies as a result. For example, level 3 engineering fitter apprentices access organisations for mental health support, take walks during breaktimes and value the free fruit available to them. T-level management and administration students appreciate learning about the impact of a sedentary lifestyle and poor diet on health and well-being.

Students feel safe when in the college and at the CECAMM centre. They know how to report concerns should they have them. They appreciate the welcoming, safe and supportive environment that leaders, managers and staff create. Residential students at UKSA feel exceptionally well looked after and safe. Staff and students do not tolerate bullying, harassment and abuse and, as a result, instances of these are very rare.

## **Contribution to meeting skills needs**

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders, managers and governors have a wide range of successful partnerships with employers and stakeholders both locally and more widely in the area. For example, leaders facilitate business meetings to support development of the local skills improvement plan and have been instrumental in the development of the skills board. Leaders consult very well with adult and community learning leaders at the council to understand priority needs in healthcare and hospitality.

Leaders have carefully selected their subcontractors to ensure they provide valuable education opportunities which they do not offer themselves. For example, leaders have conducted thorough due diligence on UKSA to ensure students benefit from high-quality learning where they develop the necessary knowledge and skills to progress successfully to careers in the maritime industry, which most do.

Leaders have worked effectively with the Chamber of Commerce, Young Enterprise, GKN aerospace and undertake diligent research into the local and regional employment market. As a result, they have developed the T-level in management and administration to include the occupational specialism of team leader recognised as in high demand. Managers and teachers have developed positive relationships with the Isle of Wight NHS Trust. Health and social care students attend frequent presentations from the trust's multi-disciplinary team, whose members inspire students very well about future careers, how to listen to patients, and professional conduct.

Leaders and staff work closely with local schools to ensure students with high needs can progress to college and access a much wider range of programmes than schools can offer. As a result, students can pursue learning in areas of interest such as horticulture.

Leaders and managers have not secured employer and stakeholder engagement in the design and implementation of all curriculum areas. Where this is in place, leaders and teachers work very effectively with stakeholders to create a rich skills-based curriculum which provides the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours employers are looking for.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have designed a curriculum that meets the aspirations of students and employers on the Isle of Wight. They have rightly focused on learner destinations and considered carefully the knowledge, skills and behaviours students will need. Most students develop these skills, deepen their knowledge, and adopt behaviours they need to advance their independence and move on to further learning, apprenticeships or employment.

Leaders, managers and teachers plan learning logically and carefully. They ensure students and apprentices develop a secure understanding of the foundations of their subjects before deepening their knowledge as study and training progresses. As a result, most students become increasingly competent with the skills they learn and

develop expertise during their programmes. T-level management and administration students learn the fundamentals of project management theory before they consider the roles required to lead a project successfully by being on time and within budget.

Most teachers use effective strategies to explain key concepts that enable students and apprentices to develop mastery and fluency with their skills. Teachers break tasks down so they are more manageable and use stimulating resources, including technology, to advance students' understanding. As a result, most students enjoy their learning and are passionate about their subjects. For example, in level 2 childcare, students enthusiastically use an array of resources to create successful language-based activities for children in key stage 1.

Teachers check students' and apprentices' understanding frequently and effectively. They identify and correct misunderstandings swiftly, which ensures students understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Students value this feedback, which they use willingly to improve the quality of their work. For example, in hospitality, students serving soup learn quickly why pouring soup around the croutons centred in the middle of the bowl ensures the integrity of presentation.

Most students achieve their qualifications and produce work of high quality. For example, level 3 graphics students produce work to an exceptionally high standard early in their programmes. They very competently use software swiftly to create illustrations and wax printing with a high level of skill and confidence.

In education programmes for young people, leaders, managers and staff have high aspirations for all students, including those with SEND, and are ambitious for their futures. Leaders ensure all students participate in useful work experience and/or work-related experience. Teachers set very clear expectations for students' progress and conduct at the start of their programmes. T-level management and administration students value their work placements highly and are all ambitious to go to university or an apprenticeship within sectors closely related to their studies. In level 2 art and design, a significant majority of students move confidently on to level 3 programmes.

Students at UKSA complete an array of additional qualifications, such as statutory training for crew and watchman, dinghy instructor and a personal safety and rescue course. Level 3 public services students participate in valuable residentials which help them to develop confidence and teamwork qualities.

Leaders have not ensured consistent high quality of teaching and learning for GCSE and functional skills English and mathematics. Teachers do not routinely consider students' starting points and plan the curriculum to meet their needs. As a result, too many students do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

Leaders and managers ensure the requirements of an apprenticeship are met successfully. Leaders work very effectively with employers to ensure apprentices are on the right programme so they can achieve their intended career goals.

Apprentices participate in robust interviews, complete thorough English and mathematics assessments and identify their current skills. As a result, leaders, managers, and employers understand apprentices' starting points clearly and use this information diligently to develop individualised training plans which work effectively to meet individual needs.

Leaders and managers ensure comprehensive review meetings take place where college assessors, employers and apprentices meet frequently to identify apprentices' progress and areas for development. As a result, apprentices, including those with SEND, feel well supported during on-and off-the job training and are clear on what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve.

Leaders and managers plan the apprenticeship curriculum carefully to ensure apprentices benefit from additional qualifications to support the development of their knowledge, skills and behaviours and to support their future employability. For example, leaders have created a valuable robotics unit in conjunction with employers for T-level students. Level 3 engineering fitter apprentices complete an additional welding qualification that employers value highly.

Leaders and managers have identified that too many apprentices do not complete their qualifications within the planned time frame. They have put sensible plans in place, including the appointment of knowledgeable curriculum managers and additional support for apprentices when with their employers.

Leaders have designed an adult curriculum expertly to align very well with the local education and training needs on the Isle of Wight. Leaders have worked diligently with Community Action on the island to provide essential English for speakers of other languages programmes for the significantly increased number of Ukrainians. Adults studying Access courses make rapid progress, with the significant majority moving on to higher education. Leaders develop most programmes in conjunction with employers. For example, welding programmes meet the needs of local marine firms effectively.

Leaders have been responsive to meeting the needs of those not in employment and have identified their skills gaps. Leaders have created useful boot camps in areas such as health and social care and hospitality. As a result, the local community benefit from valuable training to enhance their employment opportunities.

Leaders recognise the mathematics functional skills achievement rates for adults are not yet good. They have recently adapted the curriculum to ensure they use assessment more robustly to identify and meet any gaps in understanding before progressing to subsequent topics.

Leaders and managers have developed a rich and purposeful curriculum for students with high needs. They work extremely well in partnership with school leaders and the local authority to aid students' successful transition to college. Leaders and staff have rightly focused on preparing students for adulthood and tailor learning skilfully to meet individual education health care plans. They work successfully with external

professionals who provide highly effective occupational and speech and language therapies for students who require it. Leaders ensure the curriculum provides students with valuable qualifications, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and English and mathematics at an appropriate level.

Teachers plan and sequence the curriculum very well for students with high needs and use individual targets skilfully to monitor and record their development. Staff are highly knowledgeable and very experienced. They apply these skills expertly to present topics and recap learning frequently to support learning. In work skills lessons, teachers encourage students to think about what they would like to do when they leave college and research areas of interest such as information technology, transport, music, food and fashion. Teachers use resources linked to these areas to make learning highly interesting and stimulating.

Teachers and staff know students with high needs very well and are sensitive to individual emotions and the meaning behind behaviours. They support students to overcome difficulties by adapting learning skilfully. For example, students who are nil by mouth enjoy the sensory experience of cooking and smelling food.

Managers, teachers and staff provide effective impartial careers advice and guidance, which helps students and apprentices to make informed decisions about their next steps. For example, level 2 art students participate in an inspirational creative careers week supported by the Isle of Wight cultural partnership. Students benefit from learning about progression to university, working for a local business and becoming a self-employed artist.

Leaders and staff provide an array of personal development opportunities for most students to develop their wider interests. For example, hospitality students use external venues to provide catering for wakes and birthday parties. T-level management and administration students value the Young Enterprise competition, where they set up a sustainable clothing business. Leaders recognise that not all adult learners and apprentices currently participate in these activities and, as a result, do not develop their wider skills and interests.

Leaders benefit from diligent oversight from skilled and experienced governors. Governors use their expertise well to provide effective support and challenge to senior leaders. Leaders provide governors with useful reports which help them to understand strengths and weaknesses well. As a result, governors rightly focus on areas which will have the greatest impact.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Leaders and managers should ensure they plan the curriculum effectively so that all apprentices can complete their qualifications within the planned period of time.
- Leaders and managers should ensure students studying English and mathematics benefit from high-quality education which helps them to make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that all adult learners and apprentices benefit from a personal development programme of learning that helps them to develop their wider skills and interests.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130724
<b>Address</b>	Medina Way Newport Isle of Wight PO30 5TA
<b>Contact number</b>	01983 526 631
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.iwcollege.ac.uk">www.iwcollege.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Ros Parker
<b>Provider type</b>	General further education college
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	23 to 26 May 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Platform One, UKSA



## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief operating officer and deputy CEO, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising students' work, seeking the views of students, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Daniel Beale, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ann Potterton	His Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Darren James	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Addis	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Conibear	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Attfield	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Kirkham	His Majesty's Inspector
Judith Munro	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Hillman	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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