

Capel Manor College

Specialist college

Inspection dates		29 January-1 February 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Well-qualified and vocationally-experienced teachers have high expectations of their students and support them diligently in their work.
- Students develop good and sometimes outstanding practical skills that equip them well for future employment.
- Students make good progress in developing their confidence and their ability to learn independently.
- It provides high quality support and guidance to students.
- It has strong and effective partnerships with a wide range of local employers and the local community.
- It is an inclusive college that provides accessible opportunities to land-based education and training to a very large urban population.
- Leaders and managers provide good support to staff to help them to improve their provision. Consequently, the proportion of students completing their courses successfully has improved well on many courses over the last year.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The proportion of students completing their courses successfully has been too low for some time on a significant minority of courses.
- Not enough teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding.
- Standards of teaching and learning in classroom based lessons in horticulture and landscaping are not high enough.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more students complete their courses successfully, especially those in horticulture and landscaping.
- Strengthen its approaches to evaluating the quality of teaching and learning so that areas for improvement are more clearly identified, and ensure that the outcomes of these systems contribute more fully to performance management.
- Develop more effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) to support learning by ensuring that all students have access to suitably programmed computers and that all teachers make good use of the college's virtual learning environment.
- Improve the use of data regarding students' performance at all levels to ensure that challenging targets for improvement are set and achieved.
- Fully implement the computer-based attendance monitoring system across all provision to improve the efficient monitoring of students' attendance at lessons, and use this important performance indicator more fully to evaluate the quality of provision.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- The college has made good progress in improving the proportion of students who successfully complete their courses. However, it has yet to raise these successful completion rates for all of its provision. On a significant minority of courses the proportion remains below that seen nationally in other colleges.
- There has been sustained, and often good, improvement in the success rates for younger students. Success rates for most of these courses are now close to the high national averages, although advanced-level provision remains below the national average. For students over the age of 19, success rates on short courses have improved, but on some longer courses, despite improvements, they remain below national averages.
- The college has a large and growing apprenticeship programme. Employers provide very good support for their apprentices who develop good practical skills. The proportion of apprentices who gain their qualifications has improved over the last three years and is now slightly above the national average.
- Students are generally confident and talk about their work with enthusiasm. The overwhelming majority clearly enjoy their time at college and feel that they have made a good career choice. Students often do well when they enter regional and national competitions in their chosen vocation. They generally work hard in lessons, pay attention and most of them successfully complete the tasks their teachers set for them. Most students make good or satisfactory progress in lessons. Many students benefit from the good opportunities provided for them to extend their experience, for example by volunteering in a range of ways in the local community.
- Students develop good practical skills. They are well trained in health and safety to ensure that they work safely. Their written and numerical skills vary widely. They receive good support to help them to develop these skills.
- Students develop good skills that will help them to be effective in their jobs. They work well in pairs and in small groups. They are polite and courteous. They get along well with each other and their teachers. There is a harmonious atmosphere in the college. Most students go on to further and higher study or to employment when they leave the college.

- The college has been slow to introduce a computer-based system to help managers and tutors have easy access to timely data regarding students' attendance. It has very recently implemented a system for its part-time provision. However, the lack of a comprehensive system means that speedy support for students who are absent is less efficient and this very useful and effective performance indicator is not consistently used as part of the quality assurance system.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is reflected in the good improvements to students' achievement and progress over the last year.
- Staff are well qualified and have good industrial experience. They have high expectations of their students. They expect them to work hard, but they also help them to enjoy learning. Most achieve this balance well, although a few are less skilled at the craft of teaching. Most teachers use their extensive skills and experience effectively to plan and provide learning activities which emphasise the importance of working to industry standards. Students see them as good role models and are motivated to attain the same level of knowledge and expertise.
- Many of the most effective lessons are those involving an element of practical work. In these lessons teachers make very good use of the extensive range of specialist resources and the college's estate to support learning. It helps that the animal care unit, greenhouses and the award-winning gardens are open to the public and are used to showcase students' work well. It also means that students are aware that they are always on show. They display high standards of behaviour, and work safely and diligently on the estate and on community projects. Students clearly enjoy these practical lessons and they make good progress in developing their practical skills and associated knowledge. They enjoy working together as a team to complete their tasks.
- Teaching and learning in theory lessons are good, but are more variable than in practical lessons. More of these lessons require improvement. Theory lessons in animal care are better than those in the other subjects inspected. The technical skills of teachers, for example using questions well to check and extend learning, making sure that all students are fully involved in the lesson, and presenting students with challenging activities and targets that are closely matched to each student's ability, vary markedly. Sometimes teachers simply talk too much and students do not have sufficient opportunity for active participation or to learn independently of the teacher.
- Most students receive good written and verbal feedback on their work from teachers. They receive constructive advice on how to improve the standard of their work, although sometimes this is not always sufficiently precise to enable students to make the required improvements.
- Inspectors saw good examples of the development of students' skills and knowledge in English and mathematics. However, students' written and numerical skills are not always strong and their spelling mistakes and poor grammar are too often left uncorrected by their teachers.
- The use of computers and other technologies to support learning requires improvement. There are some good examples of the use of ILT, for example arboriculture apprentices' use of smart phones and a bespoke electronic mailbox to submit and mark their course work; however, not all teachers are adept at using the technology that is provided. Inspectors observed little effective use of computers in classrooms, nor did they see many teachers take full advantage of the learning potential of interactive whiteboards in lessons.
- Good support for students outside lessons is effective in helping them to achieve. Students speak very highly of the help they get from staff, much of which is unobtrusive and informal. They value their tutorial support, which has improved since the last inspection. Students with specific learning needs benefit from comprehensive transition arrangements. There is good deployment of learning support assistants in lessons so that all students derive the maximum benefit from the support. Well-developed careers advice ensures the number of students progressing to further study and employment is increasing.

- Teachers reflect well on how to improve their professional practice. They are supported by good staff development. The college has revised its approach to observing lessons and this is starting to pay dividends. However, some of the records of these lesson observations show that not all observers consistently focus on what students are learning nor on the progress they are making.

Horticulture and hard landscaping

Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+ Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. The pockets of good practice that do exist in this area are leading to improving performance on many courses, but the satisfactory standard of teaching and learning overall is reflected in the fact that success rates on several large courses remain below the national average.
- Students develop good practical skills by completing gardening and building work in real-life situations. They benefit from the very strong links to employers and community organisations. A good example of this is the work students do to renovate gardens for the Crown Estates. Teachers are adept at making very good use of the extensive gardens and other parts of the college estate to help students to see the links between theory and practice. Students develop safe working practices. Their written work is generally good and older students produce some work of a very high standard.
- In the best lessons, teachers know their students well and make sure they work hard and are challenged through skilful use of questions to test their knowledge and help them to find solutions for themselves. They make good use of practical demonstrations by students to show good practice to their peers. This approach was seen by inspectors to be especially effective when students were discussing the accurate identification of a wide range of plants, an essential skill for a successful horticulturist.
- In the weaker lessons, which are often theory lessons, teachers talk too much and many use uninspiring learning packs. In these lessons, students tend to spend their time taking notes down from the whiteboard. They ask a few questions to seek clarification, but otherwise there is little checking of learning by the teacher. Very few lessons observed during the inspection included any use of computers or other technologies to support learning. Most students are not set challenging targets to help them to achieve their highest potential.
- Assessments are carefully planned and assignment briefs are clear. Teachers' feedback on students' written and practical work shows what students need to do to improve their work and also praises good work. The marking and correction of students' mathematics, their written English and their use of specialist terms, however, is often sparse and does not help students to improve these aspects of their work.
- In too many vocational lessons the results from students' initial screening tests for literacy and numeracy are not used to create individual targets for them, nor to plan lessons specifically to suit each student's need. Students are helped to develop their confidence in mathematics and English in their functional skills lessons. In one of these, for example, students were developing their negotiation and speaking skills by undertaking a role play exercise which reflected a company board meeting. Students participated well and clearly enjoyed learning in this dynamic way.
- Students are effectively supported by tutors. Tutors know their students well and know how well they are making progress on their courses. However, the monitoring of students' progress against their targets is not systematically recorded, reviewed with the student or shared with all of their teachers.

- Equality and diversity are often not well promoted by teachers in their lessons. Some teachers use good examples of diversity in their lessons, for example how tree fruits and seeds make significant economic contributions to the different global communities where they are grown. However, most teachers miss opportunities to link their subject to equality and diversity themes.

Arboriculture and countryside management

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. These standards are clearly reflected in the improvement seen in the proportion of students who complete their courses successfully, which has risen consistently and significantly over the past three years. Many of these rates of success are now well above national averages.
- Students make good progress in lessons and progress very well into employment when they leave college. They develop a wide range of practical skills and benefit from good work placements. They receive knowledgeable careers advice that helps them to find a good job. Not many students progress to higher education after college.
- Staff and students show very good awareness of health and safety, which is incorporated into the start of all practical lessons. Students play an active part in the risk assessment process, creating their own risk assessment which is then subsequently monitored by the teacher.
- Students understand the issues involved in lone working and the college provides them with mobile phones and field first-aid packs.
- Teachers use their up-to-date, industrially-relevant subject knowledge and experience well to enliven learning and motivate students. They frequently check students' understanding using questions well to probe and encourage students to reflect on what they have learned and how to improve. They confidently use ad hoc opportunities to enrich students' learning experience. For example, a chainsaw practical lesson for apprentices was relocated so that they could fell a tree that was close to the nursery and was in a dangerous state. In another example, a hedge-laying practical class was simultaneously used to refresh students' tree identification knowledge.
- In classroom-based lessons, often dealing with theory, students work hard at their tasks, but the teaching does not inspire the same motivation and enthusiasm as in practical lessons. In some lessons, additional learning support assistants are used effectively, but they do not always provide full benefit to students. Teachers do not routinely incorporate opportunities to increase students' knowledge and understanding of working in an equal and diverse society.
- Assessment is fair and used well to gauge and monitor progress and attainment. Feedback is comprehensive and gives clear guidance on what the student needs to do in order to be successful and improve their work. Not all teachers consistently correct mistakes in grammar, spelling or punctuation in students' work.
- In the best lessons, good use is made of information and learning technology (ILT) to illustrate teaching points, but generally insufficient use is made of the computers and ILT resources that are available. For example, in one lesson, plant pathogens were verbally described to students when the teacher could have made use of the wide range of images available on the internet to see pictures of these pathogens and their explicit effects on plants.
- Tutors provide good support to their students, but they do not systematically monitor or record their progress. They rely too much on an informal system of meetings and information exchange regarding students' progress. Students are not set sufficiently clear targets which would inform them what they need to do in order to be even more successful.

Animal care and animal management

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This improved position is reflected in the increasing proportion of students who successfully complete their courses, many of which have shown good improvements in their rates of success to around, or slightly above, national averages. The proportion of students successfully completing their courses remains below the national average on a minority of courses at a few of the college sites.
- Students develop good practical skills and benefit from a wide range of opportunities to work with different animals. Many students progress to higher education, both in the college and to university programmes, such as veterinary or biomedical sciences, and courses that often have particularly demanding entrance requirements. A further high proportion of students proceed to employment in the animal care industry. Employers report that they value highly the skills these students bring with them.
- As well as their main qualification, students successfully complete a range of additional qualifications that improve their chances of employment and extend their range of industry-related skills and knowledge further. Among the most successful and valued of these are courses on the safe use of veterinary medicines, stockmanship and GCE AS-level biology.
- Teaching and learning in theory lessons are good. Teachers use questions well and make sure that students are encouraged to air their views and discuss and question both the teacher and each other. A good set of workbooks supports each subject and teachers pay close attention to the development of students' reading and writing skills. Computers are used well to support learning. Students learn independently, research topics and can confidently explain and record what they have learnt. Teachers use questions and discussions well to check learning, to challenge the more able students and to ensure that those with less confidence are included in the lesson.
- Practical work and students' rota duties caring for the animals are supported by a series of well-designed practical assessment books. These are often used well, but occasionally they are not followed in a logical order or made available when learners are ready to be assessed. Teachers do not always complete written records of students' progress when they observe them at work. Some health and safety aspects are interpreted inconsistently and the use of appropriate protective clothing is not routinely enforced.
- Students receive good feedback from teachers on their written assignments. These are marked fairly and teachers provide clear comments on how well students have performed and what it is they need to do to improve their work. Sometimes teachers' written comments on students' practical workbooks do not have enough detail to help students to improve specific aspects of their practice.
- Students receive good support from their tutors who monitor their progress well. Students who have been identified as needing extra help with their studies receive appropriate support and generally do well.
- The college recruits many students from minority ethnic heritages to its provision in animal care, well above the levels often seen in this subject area. These students make good progress. The college has successfully addressed the cultural barriers some students face when wanting to work with animals. There are strong links with two local schools for students with hearing impairments and a good number of students from these schools attend college and make good progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- After a period of significant change in the senior management of the college, senior managers and governors are working well with staff to make the curriculum more flexible and to ensure a stronger focus on students' success and progress. They have reviewed the management structure and have implemented a review of the curriculum that has ensured a more flexible course offering for students. The changes which have taken place over the last year in many aspects of the college's work have improved retention and success rates in many areas. Managers are clearly making good progress in this work.
- Staff support these changes and work hard to help achieve the college's strategic objectives. They are strongly committed to meeting the needs of their learners and to improving provision. Staff and students are very proud of the college, its reputation and the benefits it gives to those who use it.
- Governors bring valuable professional skills to the work of the corporation. They are strongly committed to the success of the college and use their skills to provide good support and challenge to managers. They monitor the performance of the college closely, especially through their thorough work on the self-assessment reports. They often use data regarding students' performance well, but acknowledge that they need to identify a few high level key performance indicators to help them maintain a more immediate and frequent awareness of this performance and how it compares to national averages. The college's financial health is good.
- Employers, local communities and schools hold the college in high regard and see it as a very good partner. Over 60 employers offered their views to Ofsted during the inspection, a high number for a short notice inspection, and they were almost unanimous in endorsing and valuing the college's work. The college offers a wide range of courses within its specialist areas at a number of sites across the Greater London area. It works very well with many large employers, such as London Zoo and the Royal Parks, as well as many smaller employers. In this way it makes best use of the specialist facilities available to offer local opportunities for people to study land-based courses. Students' and employers' views are used well by the college to improve the quality of provision.
- New approaches to self-assessment have been implemented that have improved staff participation and increased the rigour and challenge of the process. The self-assessment report is evaluative and is used effectively to identify areas for improvement. Managers and their teams have a clear understanding of any areas where there is underperformance. These areas are issued with a 'notice to improve' by senior managers and are required to produce detailed plans to show how this improvement will be achieved. Progress towards improvement targets is monitored well and is supported by a wide-ranging staff development programme. These actions are leading to some good improvements, for example in raising success rates on underperforming courses.
- There is still work to be done to ensure that these new processes are fully effective. Lesson observations generally provide a sound view of the standard of teaching and learning, but this is not always the case. The process is being further improved to provide a more reliable overview. While course reviews generally provide a reliable appraisal of course performance, a few of them are not sufficiently evaluative and the action plans that result from them are not thorough enough. Not all of them make effective use of performance data to compare their performance with national averages. The college has a strong and well-established performance management scheme which would benefit from closer links to the evaluation of teaching and learning.
- This is an inclusive college that works hard to ensure that there is a culture of respect. Students value the way they are treated, both by their peers and by staff, and recognise their responsibilities for themselves and others. There is a strong emphasis on the promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity, which are supported by staff development activities and

in tutorials and other organised events. However, teachers occasionally miss valuable opportunities to reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity in lessons.

- The college makes effective use of data to identify under-represented groups and discrepancies in achievement between different groups of students. It has taken good steps, for example through the use of staff and student role models, to increase the recruitment of under-represented groups.
- Managers and staff safeguard students effectively. The college meets its statutory requirements. Students feel safe and adopt safe working practices. Staff and governors have received appropriate training. There are good working relations with external agencies which ensure effective responses to any child protection matters that arise.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Capel Manor College

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships
	Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	3	2	3	3	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Horticulture and hard landscaping	3
Arboriculture and countryside management	2
Animal care and animal management	2

Provider details

Capel Manor College	
Type of provider	Specialist further education college
Age range of learners	14–16, 16–18, 19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 683
	Part-time: 1834
Principal/CEO	Dr Stephen Dowbiggin OBE
Date of previous inspection	March 2008
Website address	www.capel.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	149	22	164	63	113	88	-	-
Part-time	24	423	27	667	42	222		--
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	69	71	10	32	-	-		
Number of learners aged 14-16	140							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	The college does not subcontract any work to other providers, nor does it act as a subcontractor for any other provider.							

Additional socio-economic information

Capel Manor College is a specialist land-based college with a main campus in Enfield, much of which is open to the public, and four other centres across London. As well as these sites, the college is the tenant of a 53-hectare farm a mile from the main campus. The college is the largest provider of land-based education and training across Greater London. The college has few residential students. It offers financial support to help students to travel to their nearest centre. There are around 5,000 land-based businesses in London with around 34,000 employees.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Wilf Hudson HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five 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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