

Inspection of Capel Manor College

Inspection dates: 23 to 26 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Information about this provider

Capel Manor College is a specialist land-based college situated on five sites across London. The largest site is in Enfield, with other campuses in Regent's Park, Crystal Palace, Mottingham and Gunnersbury Park. Students study qualifications from entry level to level 4 in foundation learning, animal management, horticulture, garden design and floristry. Approximately half of the students study at level 2 with the remaining students split equally between level 1 and level 3. A small proportion of students study at level 4 in floristry and animal management.

At the time of the inspection, there were 911 students aged 16 to 18 and 1,165 adult students. Nine hundred and ninety-seven adult students study on part-time courses and 168 study full time. There were 207 apprentices on apprenticeship standards in level 2 horticulture and golf greenkeeper and in level 3 landscape technician, keeper and aquarist, and advanced golf greenkeeper. Most apprentices were over 19, with a small proportion of apprentices aged 16 to 18. Apprentices in landscape technician, and keeper and aquarist mainly study online.

There were 215 students with high needs and 673 students with special educational needs or learning difficulties or disabilities. There were 42 students aged 14 to 16 studying part time at the college.

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

Students and apprentices say it is a privilege to study at the college. Adult students enjoy the atmosphere and the calm and inclusive environment at the college which inspires them on their courses. They value highly the opportunity to be a student again and appreciate the new and valuable skills they gain swiftly on courses such as floristry, garden design and horticulture. Adult students enjoy the variety of activities they do during their courses. They feel comfortable to ask questions and explore ideas with their teachers.

Young students and adults enjoy the practical work that they carry out using the extensive and high-quality resources at college and with local employers. Students learn what it is like to work in practical environments and feel well prepared for their next steps. Many students gain employment from their work placements. Young students do not routinely receive helpful feedback on their assignments and so do not know how to improve their work and often do not make good progress.

Apprentices gain new knowledge and skills which help them to gain confidence in their workplaces. In horticulture, they learn how to use machinery and power tools to maintain gardens and parks. However, assessors do not ensure that apprentices study for their English and mathematics qualifications. A few apprentices do not use the study time outside of work effectively to complete their apprenticeship work.

Vocational teachers do not routinely consider the targets for students that are in their education, health and care plans to ensure that they make good progress against those targets. However, students with high needs achieve in their vocational courses and frequently progress from foundation programmes to study at a higher level in their chosen subject.

Students behave well in lessons and are attentive in their learning environments. Most students feel that teachers support them well on their courses. They appreciate the advice that they receive when they need help with their work or with personal issues. Students and apprentices appreciate that teachers and assessors are experts in their fields and provide them with a good insight into the careers that they wish to progress into.

A significant minority of students are frustrated with frequent staff changes that disrupt their learning. Students say that often communications about their courses are unclear and disorganised, which causes them confusion. Teachers do not ensure that young students and apprentices attend their lessons frequently enough. Students do not attend their English and mathematics lessons well enough and so too many students do not achieve their GCSEs in English and mathematics.

Students and apprentices feel safe in college and in their workplaces.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders work effectively with a broad range of specialist local employers and stakeholders to understand the local and national land-based skills needs. They use this information well to inform their curriculum offer and to keep up to date with changes and trends in the sector. Leaders offer a good range of courses to meet these needs. For example, leaders work very closely with the Worshipful Company of Saddlers to ensure the saddle, harness and bridle making course teaches students the right techniques they need in the industry. Leaders design their animal management courses to meet the increasing demand for skills in areas such as dog grooming.

Leaders and managers establish useful partnerships with stakeholders to plan and develop new courses and curriculums for the future. Leaders have recently designed a new and bespoke course in shoemaking in partnership with an awarding body and a university. They use their effective relationships with landscape garden companies to create new courses in ecology survey skills and biodiversity.

Leaders and staff work closely with Local London to identify their specific role in the future development of the green skills agenda and curriculum. They play an active part in the development of the Local London strategic partnership and the green skills hub.

In some curriculum areas, leaders and managers involve employers and other stakeholders in the design and teaching of the curriculum. This ensures that the curriculum aligns to employers' needs and provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to progress successfully. For example, in garden design, leaders ensure teachers teach students how to observe plants correctly to identify disease and poor growth.

Leaders work effectively with a small number of universities to provide training in areas such as animal management and zoology. These partnerships provide good opportunities for students to access higher education training close to where they live.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders and those responsible for governance have not ensured that the quality of provision remains high. The quality of education varies too much between different subject areas and different sites. Although most adult students on short courses and apprentices aged 16 to 18 achieve their qualifications, too many young students and adults on longer programmes do not achieve them.

Too many students and apprentices do not attend their lessons frequently enough, including students with high needs. Students' attendance to English and mathematics lessons has improved but continues to be poor and is well below attendance to vocational lessons. The attendance of adult students is good.

On education programmes for young people, teachers do not routinely set work for students that is sufficiently demanding. Too often, students find work repetitive. Teachers do not challenge students sufficiently well to achieve high grades. However, most adult students produce work of a good standard which is at, or above, the level required by the qualification.

Teachers' feedback to students is inconsistent across different courses and campuses. Too many teachers do not provide specific or helpful feedback to students and apprentices. They do not provide feedback on work swiftly enough. As a result, students and apprentices do not have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. Assessors provide apprentices with detailed feedback during online lessons.

On apprenticeship programmes, managers and assessors do not plan carefully for apprentices to have frequent reviews so that they can evaluate their work and plan future learning. Too few employers attend the reviews that take place. As a result, assessors and employers do not have a shared understanding of the progress apprentices are making or how to plan future tasks in a meaningful way. Too many apprentices who declare a learning difficulty or disability do not receive timely support. As a result, they do not complete tasks to a sufficiently high standard.

Most teachers on vocational programmes do not have a thorough enough understanding of specific learning difficulties and disabilities so that they can support students confidently. However, in level 2 dog grooming and in level 2 animal management at Crystal Palace, teaching and support staff work collaboratively together to provide effective support for students.

Teachers and assessors do not focus well enough on the development of students' English and mathematics skills. Too many adult students continue to lack confidence in using English and mathematics in their written and practical work. Teachers do not routinely correct students' errors with punctuation or grammar. As a result, students continue to make the same mistakes and do not improve the standard of their written work.

In English GCSE, teachers check students' understanding of concepts frequently. As a result, students improve the structure of their written work. However, too many students do not achieve their qualifications in GCSE English and mathematics. On apprenticeship programmes, apprentices who need to achieve their English and mathematics qualifications do not have sufficient or timely teaching to improve their skills swiftly.

Managers and tutors have developed curriculums that meet the needs of local and regional industries in the land-based sector. They work closely with employers to

ensure that students gain the high-level practical skills, for example through work placements, that they need to progress onto further or higher education and into employment. In level 2 agriculture at Mottingham, teachers have adapted the curriculum effectively to meet the requirements of city farms and small holdings. Assessors design level 2 horticulture apprenticeship programmes specifically to meet skills shortages in the environmental and green industries.

Teachers plan the curriculum in a logical and meaningful way, so that students gain basic concepts at the start of their programme and then apply them to more complex tasks. In animal management at Enfield, students learn to care for small animals, such as rabbits and guinea pigs, to establish their practical skills. They then progress to more demanding species, such as meerkats and porcupines which require higher levels of knowledge and skill. Assessors in horticulture ensure that apprentices understand plant identification before they progress onto complex vegetation control and propagation.

Most teachers plan lessons carefully so that students and apprentices recognise how theory and practical knowledge are linked. Most use effective teaching strategies to help students to build their knowledge and acquire substantial new skills. In level 3 landscape technician, apprentices learn to use digi-map resources confidently to show locations and plan for conservation and environmental assessments. Most teachers ask probing and challenging questions to check students' and apprentices' understanding and to ensure that they can recall prior knowledge. Teachers use the industry standard resources at the college skilfully so that students and apprentices are prepared well for future employment.

Managers do not share targets contained in education, health and care plans routinely with teachers or support staff in vocational areas. As a result, they do not consistently provide the support that students require. Too many teachers in vocational areas do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to support students with high needs. Leaders and managers have developed curriculum pathways so that students can progress from entry level to higher-level programmes. Teachers provide students with detailed advice and guidance prior to their enrolment on foundation programmes.

Teachers and assessors are well qualified and experienced. A high proportion of teachers are employed in relevant industries. They use their knowledge and experience skilfully to provide students and apprentices with real-life examples from the industry. They ensure that students and apprentices understand and use relevant industry terminology confidently. For example, students on horticulture programmes use common and botanical plant names accurately when discussing planting plans. Leaders recognise that there has been disruption to learning for a small proportion of students, due to challenges in recruiting well-qualified staff.

Teachers use their extensive links with employers to provide valuable work experience for students. Students benefit from frequent visits to employers and attending talks and masterclasses to deepen their knowledge. In the diploma in saddle, harness and bridle making, adult students gain expert knowledge from

masterclasses by master saddlers and visit prestigious stables in London. Students on level 1 programmes, however, do not have sufficient opportunities to experience external work placements or work-related learning.

Teachers and assessors create calm and purposeful learning environments. Most students and apprentices behave well in classrooms and around the campus. They are respectful to their teachers and to their peers. A very small minority of students do not behave appropriately towards other students in social spaces. When teachers and managers are made aware of poor behaviour, they respond swiftly to resolve matters.

Teachers provide young students with an effective tutorial programme so that they have a good understanding of life in modern Britain. In animal management, students appreciate different cultures and views about animal welfare. For example, level 3 dog grooming students discuss differences in the approach to and legislation on grooming show dogs. Most young students can identify the potential signs of radicalisation and extremism. They know how to report any concerns that they might have. Students in animal management understand the risks associated with animal activism. Too few apprentices have an in-depth understanding of fundamental British values or how they might need to apply these in their workplaces.

Students and apprentices have a thorough understanding of the career opportunities available to them at the end of their courses. Students on level 3 courses appreciate the wide range of higher education courses that are available to them. As a result, most students and apprentices progress onto further education, higher education or into employment.

Newly appointed leaders and governors have identified accurately the main areas for improvement at the college. They have put robust action plans in place to secure the improvements required. Leaders and managers have placed a high priority on the quality of teaching and have established a comprehensive staff development programme to raise standards and ensure that there is greater consistency in the quality of students' and apprentices' experiences. The actions taken by senior leaders are starting to have a positive impact on the quality of education, attendance and the experience that students and apprentices have.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have put in place appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures which they use effectively to keep students and apprentices safe. Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), who each take responsibility for different campuses, are suitably trained to carry out their roles. DSLs ensure that staff receive relevant training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty at the start of their employment and through frequent updates.

Managers responsible for recruitment take appropriate actions to ensure that the staff they employ are safe to work with young students and vulnerable adults.

Students and apprentices feel safe and are safe on the college sites and in workplaces. Students and apprentices have a thorough understanding of the importance of personal protective equipment and the use of detailed risk assessments.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers must ensure that teachers and assessors set challenging curriculums for students and apprentices so that they develop new skills and knowledge swiftly, make good progress and gain their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that students and apprentices attend their lessons, including English and mathematics lessons, frequently so that they benefit from high-quality teaching.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that teachers and assessors provide students and apprentices with helpful feedback on their work so that they understand what they do well and what they need to do to improve.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that teachers and assessors are well trained so that they can use appropriate teaching strategies and provide effective support for students and apprentices with high needs, including monitoring progress against targets from students' education, health and care plans.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that students and apprentices develop their English and mathematics knowledge and that those students and apprentices who require qualifications in English and mathematics are prepared well for their examinations.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130438
Address	Bullsmoor Lane Enfield EN1 4RQ
Contact number	0303 003 1234
Website	www.capel.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Peter Brammall
Provider type	Specialist further education college
Date of previous inspection	29 and 30 November 2016
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the interim vice principal, 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 learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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