

LATEST OFSTED FINDINGS ANNOUNCED AT CHELMSFORD COLLEGE

In February Ofsted published their Further Education and Skills Inspection Report for Chelmsford College, revealing their findings from an inspection during the week beginning Monday 11 December 2017.

It took nine inspectors four days to closely examine the effectiveness of leadership and management; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal development, behaviour and welfare; outcomes for learners; 16 to 19 study programmes; adult learning programmes; apprenticeships and provision for learners with high needs.

The resounding result across the board was that the College was graded by Ofsted as "Good".

61% of FE (Further Education) colleges in the UK are classified as "Good". Overall there are 189 General FE Colleges in the UK.

Caroline Williams, Deputy Principal of Chelmsford College and Nominee as part of the Ofsted inspection team says "We are good because we do the right things for our students and apprentices."

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Government appointed, it's entrusted with inspecting and regulating services which care for children and young people and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

Andy Sparks, Principal of Chelmsford College says "We have made enormous strides since our last inspection. We've seen many changes at Chelmsford College and driven new measures to constantly improve our standards of teaching, leadership and management.

"The Ofsted inspection represented an opportunity for our collective hard work to be formally recognised and to propel us towards our goal of outstanding. We are delighted to be acknowledged for high quality leadership, management and innovative teaching."

As part of the inspection, self-assessment reports, development plans and the previous inspection report were taken into account. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather views of learners and employers. Inspectors also observed numerous lessons and tutorials in College and a range of workplaces.

"Ofsted has validated our College's success," Caroline Williams continued, "It has highlighted our student and apprentices' success and acknowledged the care we are proud to have in place to nurture and unlock our students' potential."

Although the College has around 3,500 students, it has a smaller feel to it and students benefit from individual attention.

The highly inclusive culture and sense of community at the College can't be easily reproduced.

"People feel strongly connected to the College - when we speak with business owners and employers there is invariably a personal connection to the College, with themselves previously attending and parents or siblings choosing Chelmsford." Sarah Hamilton, Director of Business Services said.

Marco Iciek, Director responsible for Learner Development and Inclusion says "The inspectors said straight away they recognised the inclusivity of our College and that students and apprentices were respectful of each other, themselves and members of the wider community. We are proud our students behave so well and demonstrate a good work ethic."

Ofsted stated the leadership team have high expectations and aspirations of staff and students with a good focus on the craft of teaching. They praised leaders, managers and staff for implementing a very effective learning strategy since the previous inspection.

Penny Petch, Director for Teaching, Learning and Quality at the College says "We've invested time and effort in developing a learning strategy which brings out the best in staff and students. We created a new strategy with five key expectations of teachers. By our teachers meeting these five key elements we enable our learners to excel."

Teachers were commended for fostering a positive culture of learning, including using deeper levels of thinking, questioning techniques, encouraging students to reflect on their own learning and target setting.

Ofsted recognise Chelmsford College students are not only successful but develop skills valued by employers. Last year, the pass rate for 16 - 18 year olds was 95% and for students aged 19 and over it was 97%. The report also noted that "The large majority of learners, adults and apprentices complete their qualifications and make good progress from their individual starting points."

Almost 45% of students leave school without their English and Maths GCSE qualifications. For those who have joined College without these qualifications, approximately one third achieve their English and mathematics GCSEs at Chelmsford College at A* - C (which is equivalent to the reformed 4 - 9). This reflects the national rate for resits.

Lisa Houghton, Head of English and Mathematics at Chelmsford College says "We have a full team of highly qualified and experienced English and mathematics teachers who will enable students to gain even higher grades in the future."

Simon Drane, Director of Curriculum and responsible for apprenticeships at Chelmsford College says "One of the ways in which Chelmsford College is different, is that

students benefit from impartial careers advice. Many prospective students discover alternate pathways to achieving their chosen careers - such as apprenticeships - and identify transferable skills valued by employers to enable a wider range of opportunities in the future."

Work experience was seen to be high quality thanks to effective partnerships with employers, which resulted in students gaining good skills which are highly valued by industry. One of the outcomes identified by the report was how a significant proportion of students achieve additional qualifications which help them improve their effectiveness in the workplace.

FE Week recently ranked Chelmsford College top of the national league table for 16-18 learner progression (i.e. students progressing into a job or Further/Higher Education). The Ofsted report echoed this, noting that on successfully completing their qualifications, nearly all Chelmsford College students progressed into meaningful employment or further study.

Students' attendance is good and according to Ofsted "Learners enjoy their learning, work hard in lessons and most make good progress developing their skills and knowledge."

Recent research has suggested that 1 in 6 young people will experience anxiety at some point in their lives. Ofsted recognised

Chelmsford College supports students with significant anxiety issues and individual needs and supports them well so they can grow in independence and confidence.

The leadership of the College was praised and Ofsted recognised that the Governors of the College are "committed to the success of the College, they value its involvement in the community and have worked effectively with senior leaders and partners to redefine the strategic direction... they provide strong challenge and hold senior leaders to account well."

If you'd like to become part of the College's success moving forward, applications are welcome for Governors, from Senior Managers who excel in their professional fields.

If you're interested in finding out more about Chelmsford College you are warmly invited to visit at the next Open Evening on Monday 30 April from 6.00pm until 8.30pm. More details can be found on the website www.chelmsford.ac.uk

In summary, Principal Andy Sparks says "Overall we couldn't be happier with this report, it recognises the areas we have strived to improve upon and acknowledges the high standards we've come to expect. We intend to develop our excellent teaching practices further and continue our support programmes to ensure we care for every individual student and apprentice, to the best of our ability."



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Principal Andy Sparks talks with students at a Learner Voice meeting



Public Services Students Celebrate the GOOD

