



The report of  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education,  
Children's Services and Skills

# Learning and skills

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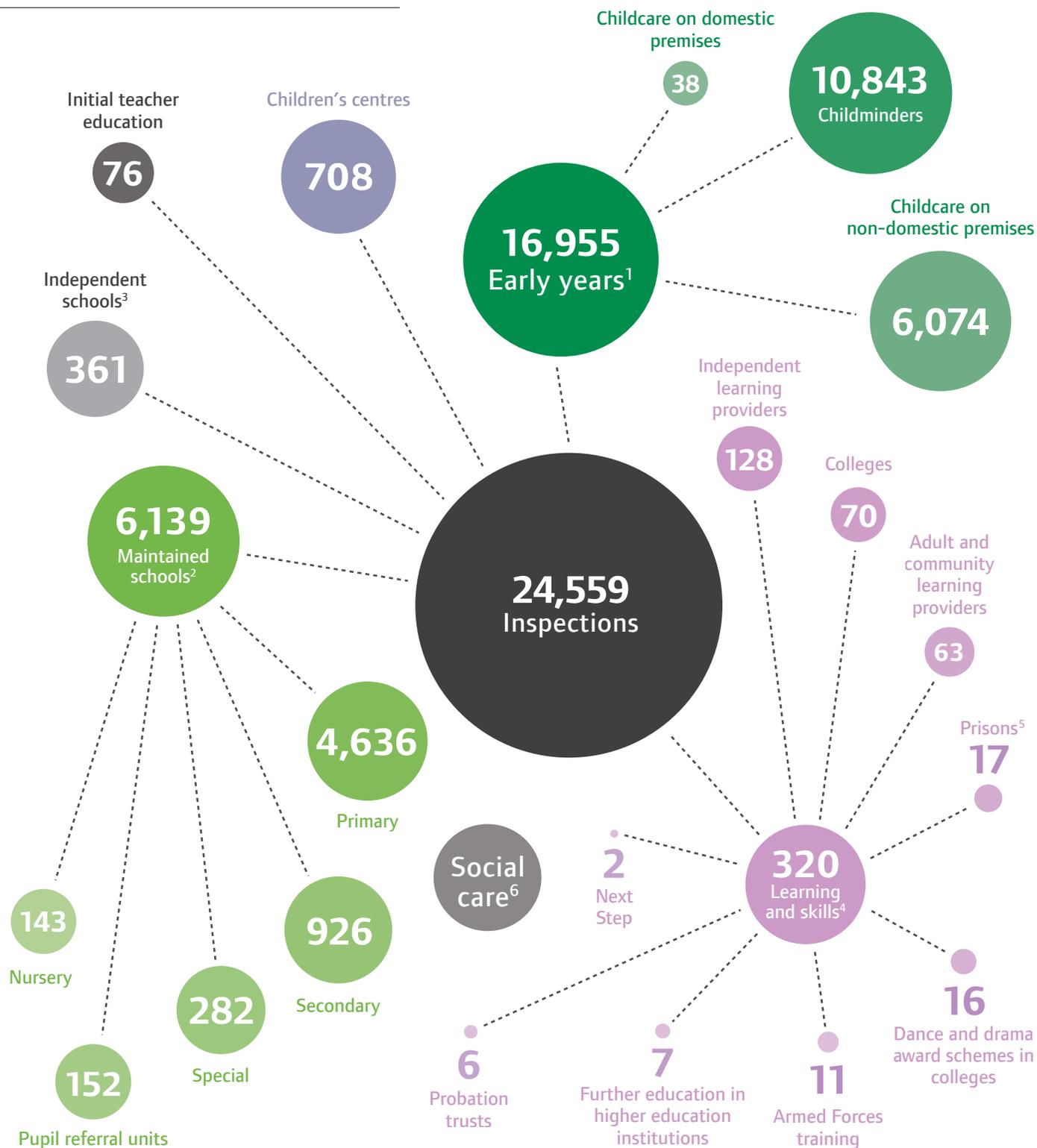
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## Inspections carried out in 2011/12



**FIGURE 1**

1. These data do not include inspections where there were no children on roll or inspections of providers only on the Childcare Register.
2. Includes Section 5 inspections and Section 8 deemed Section 5 inspections under the Education Act 2005, as amended in 2011.
3. Ofsted only inspects non-association independent schools which account for around half of the independent schools in England.
4. Data include five pilot inspections and 11 prison inspections undertaken in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.
5. Inspections of immigration removal centres are undertaken as part of Ofsted's inspection of prisons.
6. Ofsted also carries out inspections of a range of different types of children's social care, including children's homes, and of local authorities. These inspections are not included here because the findings from these inspections will be covered in a separate remit report in June 2013.



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>What does the sector look like?</b> .....	8
<b>Inspection outcomes in 2011/12</b> .....	12
<b>The state of learning and skills provision in England</b> .....	16
<b>Are things getting better or worse?</b> .....	18
<b>Challenges</b> .....	20

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**Data View:** Inspection findings can also be viewed at [www.dataview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.dataview.ofsted.gov.uk). Data View enables users to compare the performance of providers over time from Ofsted inspections across England by region, local authority and constituency area.

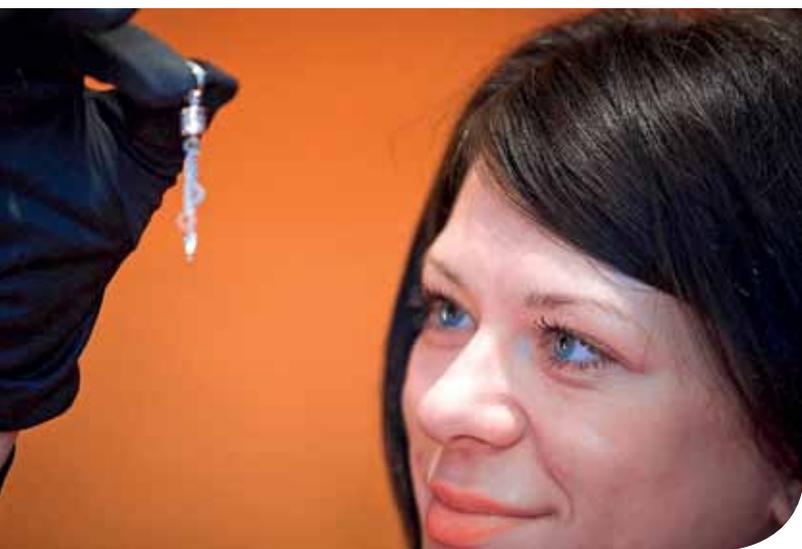
# Introduction

## Is the system fit for purpose?



**33,000 fewer young people aged 16–18 in full-time education in 2011 than in 2010**

1. **The further education and skills sector has a critical role to play in securing jobs for individuals and prosperity for the nation. The proportion of young people aged between 16 and 24 who are unemployed has risen by 5.9 percentage points since 2007 to 20.5% in August 2012.**<sup>1</sup> In an environment where employers have access to an international labour market, young people need to develop really impressive skills and attitudes to stand out.
2. **All young people will be required to participate in learning to the age of 18 from 2015.** This is a major challenge to the sector. Learning and skills providers and schools have succeeded in increasing the proportion of young people aged 16–18 engaging in learning. However, good quality provision for all those who are currently not in employment, education or training (NEET) is essential. At the moment, NEET numbers are rising, despite a drop in the total number of young people aged 16–18, and around 33,000 fewer young people aged 16–18 were in full-time education in 2011 than in 2010.<sup>2</sup>



1. Office of National Statistics, A06: Educational status and labour market status for people aged from 16 to 24 (last updated October 2012), [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tc%3A77-222515](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tc%3A77-222515). 2. Department for Education, Table 2: Participation of 16 to 18 year olds in education by institution type, England, end 2009, end 2010 and end 2011 (provisional), [www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001072/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001072/index.shtml).



3. **Providers have not focused enough on measuring the true impact of their provision.** Rising proportions of young people are completing their courses and achieving their qualifications, but, at the same time, unemployment is rising. Many adult and community learning providers have developed particularly good expertise in developing provision in deprived areas. However, senior management teams across the sector need to develop the capacity to be genuinely forward-looking, focus on matching their provision to local needs, and measure the longer-term benefits of their provision for their learners.
4. **Leaders therefore need to focus more on the usefulness of qualifications to learners and not on the quantity of qualifications achieved.** Even in the good and outstanding colleges, senior managers and governors have prioritised the achievement of individual qualifications as an indicator of success. There has been insufficient attention paid to how well these qualifications help learners achieve their career and employment goals. This is not surprising: the incentives largely ignore the progress made by learners and the value that post-16 provision adds.
5. **Consolidation should be put before growth.** Growth in the size of individual providers serves little purpose if the provision does not make a significant difference to the life chances of learners. Quality must be the determining factor of any growth strategy and it is for government to ensure that this principle is consistently applied in all policy initiatives.
6. **Incentives and funding systems need to change.** Providers need the freedom to adapt to local needs and circumstances, but they also need the right incentives. At the moment, funding largely follows participation and completion of courses. In the future, it needs to incentivise an increased focus on learners' development in relation to their starting points, their progression to further training and subsequent employment or their progress within work.

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## Provider quality

7. **There are many good, outstanding and sometimes genuinely world class providers in the learning and skills sector.** Almost two thirds of providers were judged to be good or outstanding at their last inspection, and completion and achievement rates have continued to increase since 2005. However, we increasingly focus our inspections on the basis of risk and inspect the strongest providers less frequently. This year, 35% of all of our inspections were brought forward because our risk assessment indicated concerns. For colleges, this figure was even higher.

8. **Overall, the quality of provision in the learning and skills sector is not improving.** Almost 1.5 million learners are being supported by providers who are not yet good and some colleges have now been satisfactory for over 10 years. For general further education colleges, the overall picture of inspection results has worsened over the past year. In our inspections, we have seen that, often, the quality of teaching is still not good enough; not enough young people secure good skills in English and mathematics; and providers generally do not adequately measure how well young people and adults are being equipped with skills that are closely matched to local and national labour markets.

9. **Weak accountability, leadership and governance are common failings in poor provision.** One of the most significant underpinning reasons why providers failed to improve was lack of effective accountability. Eight of the 13 colleges judged to be inadequate this year had inadequate governance. Self-assessment was inadequate in 14% of all learning and skills inspections carried out this year. In contrast, senior managers and leaders in providers that improved to outstanding set very clear direction. This involved setting ambitious but realistic targets to raise expectations for staff and all learners and ensuring that the provision offered was relevant to local contexts. Self-assessment was used very effectively in outstanding provision to closely monitor the progress towards targets and to evaluate and improve each aspect of learners' programmes, especially the quality of teaching and learning.

10. **Apprenticeships are not meeting their full potential.** The apprenticeship is now a valued brand and, while there is much truly outstanding provision, it is still not a progression route for enough young people, with little increase in numbers of apprentices under the age of 19 since 2007.<sup>3</sup> Too many apprentices aged 16–18 are not in established jobs that are likely to continue once the apprenticeship has been completed<sup>4</sup> and adults already in work are likely to have accounted for a fairly large proportion of the recent increase in post-19 apprenticeships. This year saw a significant change in subcontracting, largely due to central policies that set minimum contract values. There are now too many instances where the distance between learner and main contractor has contributed to poor monitoring of provision.



**14%**  
providers judged  
inadequate for self-  
assessment this year



3. The Data Service, Apprenticeship Programme Starts by Level and Age (2002/03 to 2011/12 full year estimates), [www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr\\_supplementary\\_tables/Apprenticeship\\_sfr\\_supplementary\\_tables](http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_supplementary_tables/Apprenticeship_sfr_supplementary_tables). 4. *Apprenticeships for young people* (110177), Ofsted, 2012; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110177](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110177).

11. **Teaching is still not good enough.** Of all providers inspected this year, only 56% were judged good or outstanding for teaching and learning, a slight decline from last year. For the second year running, no colleges were judged outstanding for teaching and learning. Only eight independent learning providers and one adult and community learning provider received an outstanding judgement for teaching and learning. Key features of the weaker sessions remain the teacher/trainers' lack of updated expertise in the specialist vocational and subject areas, and teaching that fails to meet the needs of all learners. Lessons do not focus sufficiently on developing learners' skills for employment.
12. **English and mathematics skills are of paramount importance, but the system needs to do much more to ensure that young people secure these by the age of 19.** Three years ago, around half of all 16-year-olds had secured the equivalent of five GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics. Of the other half, only one in five had reached this benchmark (or its equivalence) by the age of 19 last year.<sup>5</sup> This measure of the value added by the learning and skills sector as a whole has been improving over the past five years, but from a low base. If we are to meet the challenges presented by the economic downturn, and meet the clearly articulated needs of employers, this measure of success must improve dramatically. Our inspection and survey evidence raises concerns about the sufficiency of expertise in English and mathematics teaching particularly.<sup>6</sup> Our inspections found that there was too much teaching to the tests and insufficient focus on developing learners' conceptual understanding.

56%

providers judged good or outstanding this year for teaching and learning



5. The Department for Education, Table 13: Progression in English and maths between 16 and 19 (GCSE A\*-C and equivalent qualifications), 19 in 2011 cohort, DfE, [www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001059/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001059/index.shtml). 6. *Removing barriers to literacy*, Ofsted, 2011; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090237](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090237).

# What does the sector look like?

## Over four million learners

13. In 2011/12, provisional data show that just under 4.2 million learners were engaged in some form of government-funded education or training in the learning and skills sector.<sup>7</sup> General further education colleges and sixth form colleges are the major providers, with nearly 2.3 million learners. In 2011/12, the largest 10 colleges accounted for 323,870 learners. The number of learners attending individual independent learning providers varied considerably. The smallest had fewer than five learners and the 10 largest between 14,790 and 181,680 learners each. The total cost to the public purse of learning and skills provision in 2011/12 was £7.89 billion, of which £3.96 billion was spent on learning for 16–18-year-olds (excluding apprenticeship provision).<sup>8</sup>

### The largest provider of education for 16–18-year-olds

14. More 16–18-year-olds study in the further education sector than in schools. The number

of learners aged 16–18 attending courses in general further education colleges, sixth form colleges and higher education institutions in 2010/11 (the last year for which final data have been published) was 942,900 learners, almost twice the number who attended post-compulsory education in state-funded or independent schools. A further 111,200 were enrolled on apprenticeships and learning in the workplace.<sup>9</sup>

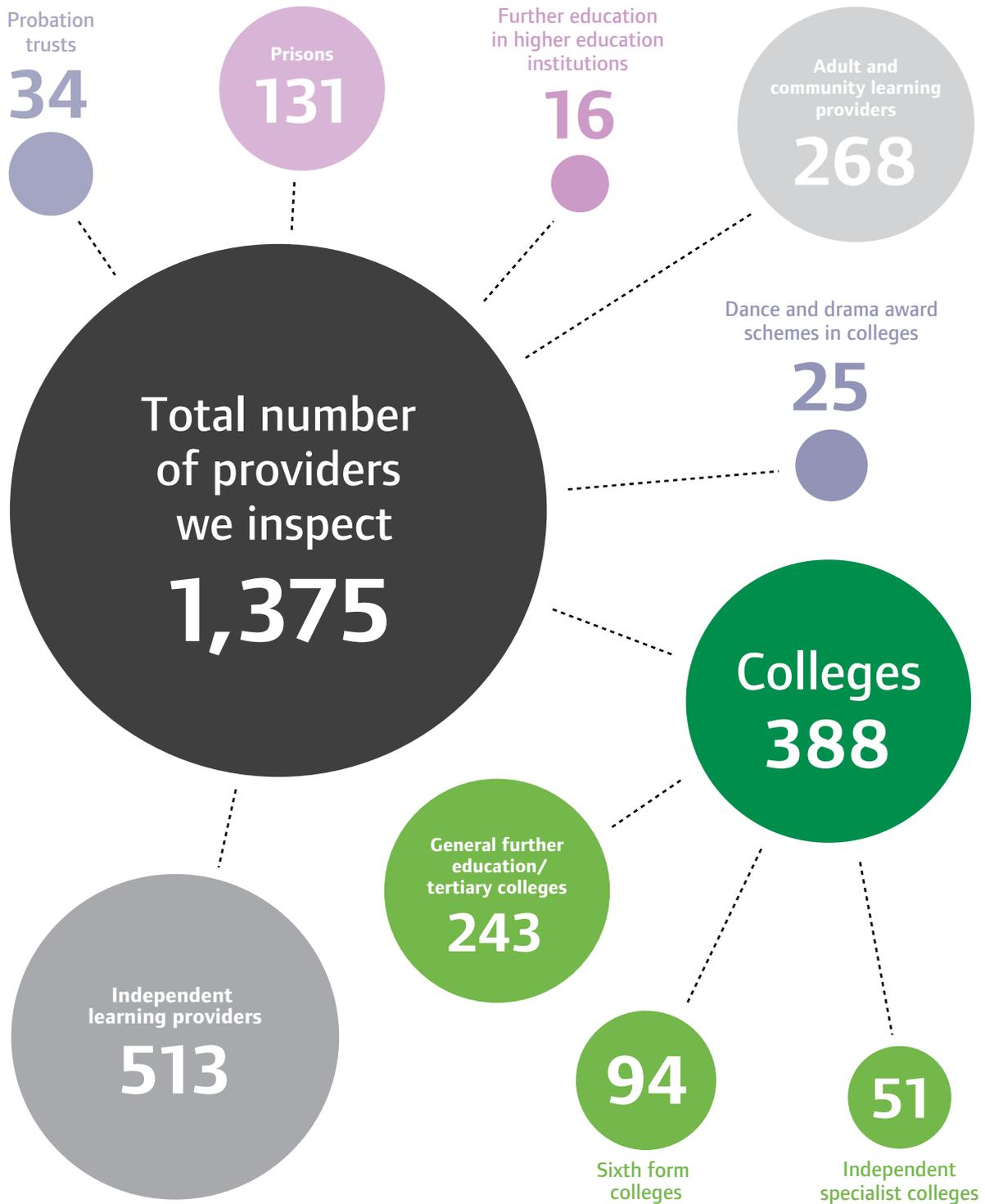
### Post-19 provision: falling numbers but weightier qualifications

15. In 2010/11 the number of adults on learning and skills programmes fell by nearly 11% to just under 3.2 million. However, most of this decline was due to fewer learners on courses at level 1. There are encouraging signs that the numbers of adults participating in and achieving the weightier full level 2 and full level 3 qualifications are continuing to rise. Around 78% of all adults now hold a qualification at level 2 or above, compared with just under 73% in 2008.<sup>10</sup>



7. Learner number data have been provided by The Data Service. Data on learner numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. 8. Young Person's Learning Agency (now Education Funding Agency), funding allocations for 2011/12, and Skills Funding Agency funding allocations for 2011/12. 9. The Department for Education, Table 2: [www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001072/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001072/index.shtml) 10. The Data Service, Level of Highest Qualification Held by People aged 19-64 in England (Quarter 4) – percentages; [www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr\\_supplementary\\_tables/labour\\_force\\_survey\\_sfr\\_supplementary\\_tables/](http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_supplementary_tables/labour_force_survey_sfr_supplementary_tables/).

Number of providers (2011/12)



**FIGURE 2**

Data based on funded providers that are eligible for an Ofsted inspection in line with the list provided by The Data Service. Providers that have held more than one contract with the Skills Funding Agency or Education Funding Agency within the year have been included only once. Prison clusters are counted as one provider.

Source: Ofsted



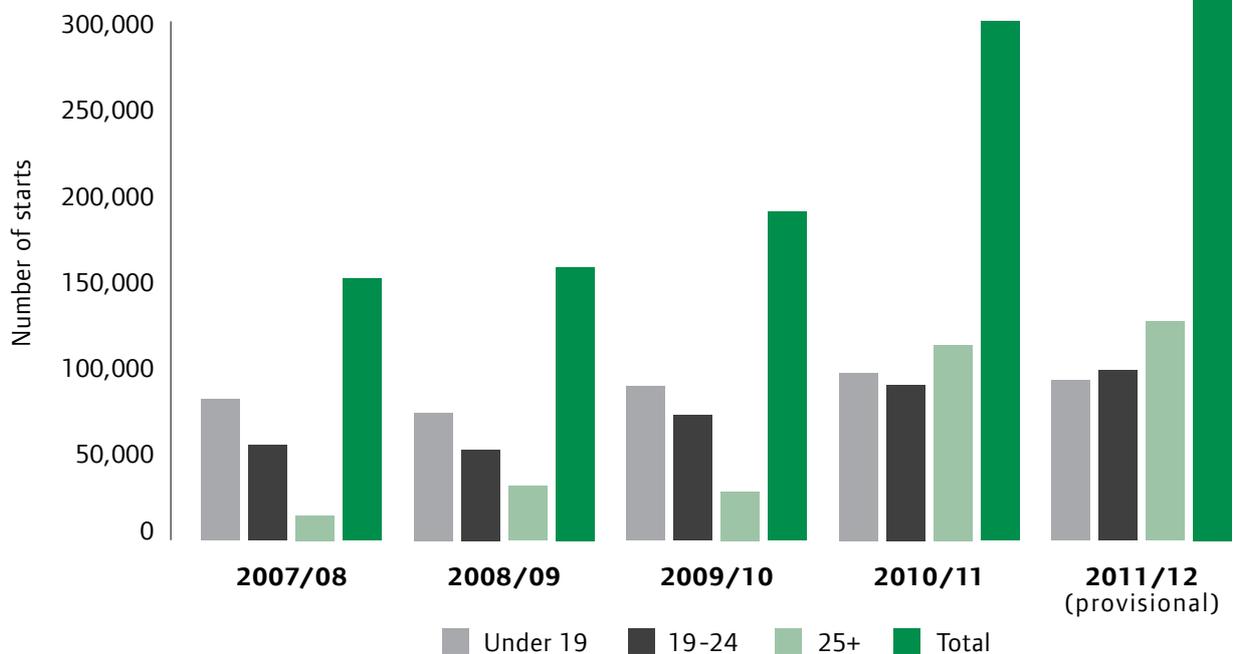


**Rapid growth in the number of apprenticeships, but not for young people**

16. One of the most striking developments in this sector of recent years has been the substantial increase in the number of apprenticeships. In 2010/11, the number of apprentices was 457,200 – an increase of over 63% compared with the previous year. However, this rapid growth has

been driven by the expansion of adult apprentices, particularly those over the age of 25. This is largely due to the achievement of an ambitious government target to fund 50,000 more adult apprenticeship places for 2010/11. However, since 2007, there has been a relatively small increase in the number of apprentices under the age of 19. Provisional data for 2011/12 indicate that this age group now accounts for less than one third of all new apprentices at intermediate level.<sup>11</sup>

**Intermediate level apprenticeship starts between 2007/08 and 2011/12 by age**



**FIGURE 3**

Quarterly starts and achievements by Level and Age. [www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr\\_supplementary\\_tables/Apprenticeship\\_sfr\\_supplementary\\_tables/](http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_supplementary_tables/Apprenticeship_sfr_supplementary_tables/).

Source: The Data Service

<sup>11</sup> The Data Service, Apprenticeship Programme Starts by Level and Age (2002/03 to 2011/12 full year estimates), [www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr\\_supplementary\\_tables/Apprenticeship\\_sfr\\_supplementary\\_tables/](http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_supplementary_tables/Apprenticeship_sfr_supplementary_tables/).

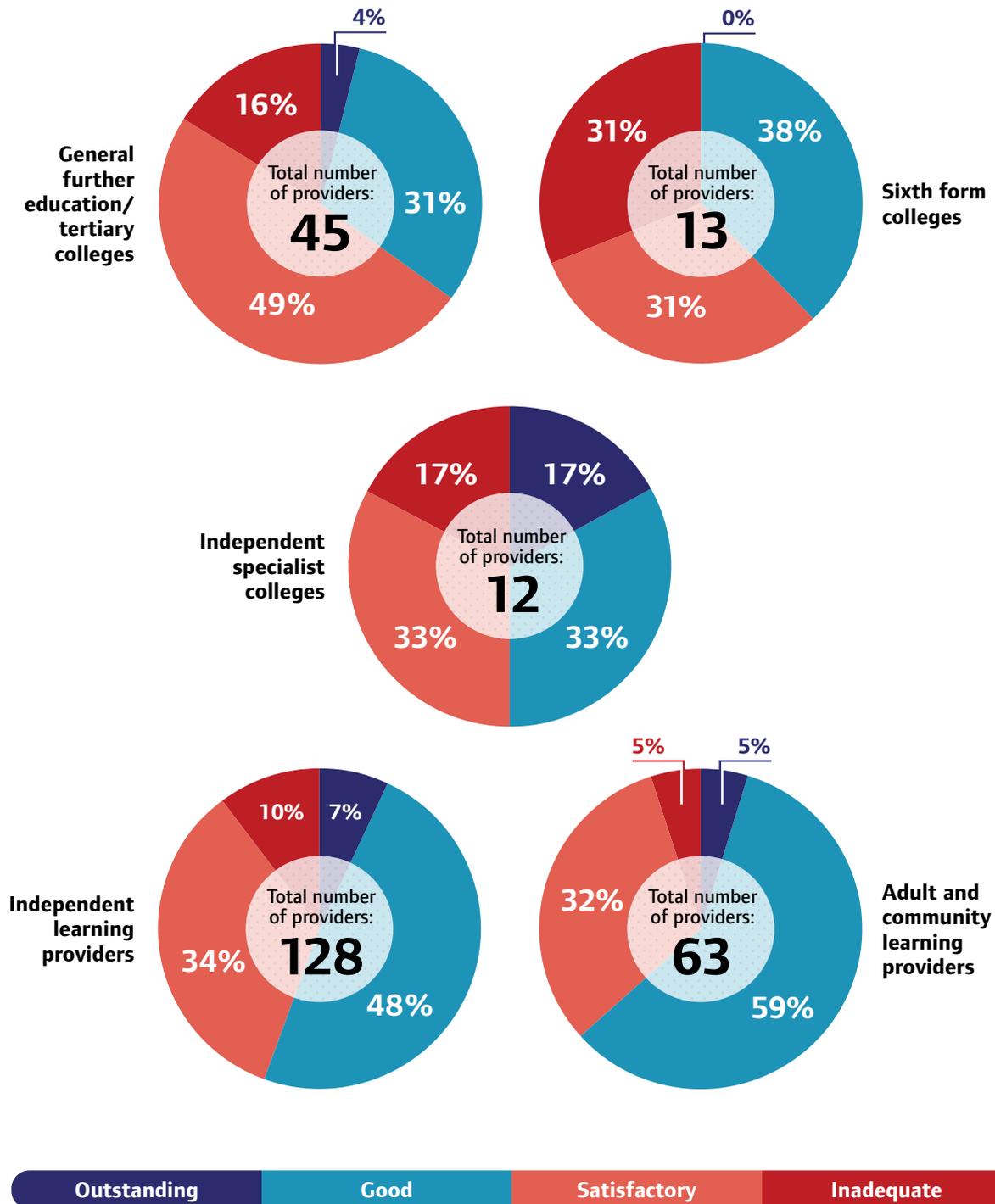
# Inspection outcomes in 2011/12

## Some 44% of the learners at provision we inspected in 2011/12 were at providers judged less than good

17. Just over a third of providers visited this year were selected for inspection on the basis of a risk assessment, which identifies those providers where evidence suggests areas of possible concern. The remainder were selected according to the time that had elapsed since their previous inspection or because they were new providers.
18. During 2011/12, the 261 providers that were inspected (see Figure 4) accounted for about 866,460 learners in the sector. Of these, approximately 380,700 were at providers that were judged to be either satisfactory or inadequate. This is a significant concern.
19. The number of colleges judged to be inadequate increased from four in 2010/11 to 13 in 2011/12; although the proportion of colleges selected through risk assessment remained broadly similar at 57%. The overall



Overall effectiveness judgement for learning and skills providers inspected in 2011/12



**FIGURE 4**

Percentages are rounded and may not add to exactly 100. General further education/tertiary college includes specialist further education colleges. Independent learning providers include employer providers.

Source: Ofsted

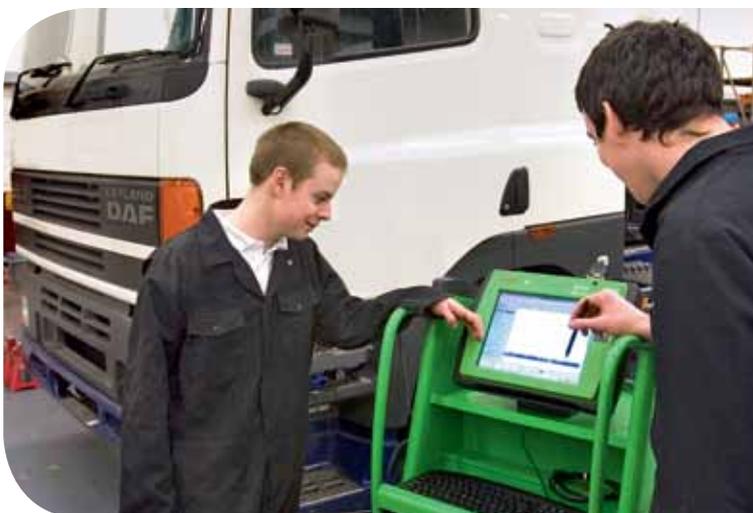
effectiveness of nine of the 10 sixth form colleges that had their inspection brought forward this year fell by at least one grade; disappointingly three of them declined from good to inadequate. Three colleges improved to outstanding, and two of these were large.

20. Almost half of the 128 independent learning providers inspected were judged to be satisfactory or inadequate in 2011/12, accounting for approximately 64,480 learners on apprenticeships, foundation learning and, increasingly, employability programmes. The quality of provision of the 38 independent learning providers inspected for the first time varied considerably from outstanding to inadequate – indicating the challenges faced by new providers.
21. Of the 26 employer providers inspected this year, over half were new providers, four of whom were inadequate. Three employers were judged to be outstanding this year; between them these had a total of almost 2,000 apprentices enrolled in 2010/11 working across the country, who were benefiting from excellent resources and developing very good standards of vocational skills.
22. The adult and community learning sector had a similar proportion of providers judged to be good or outstanding for overall effectiveness this year, at 64%. Providers in this sector are generally successful at attracting disadvantaged learners to provision, and bear particular responsibility for ensuring that vulnerable learners have access to high quality provision.
23. Provisional data for 2011/12 show that there were 90,000 offenders aged 18 or over in the prison system participating in learning. Ofsted no longer makes a specific graded judgement on the overall effectiveness of learning and skills and work in prisons.<sup>12</sup> This year, we observed an increased range of vocational training and greater opportunities for prisoners to work towards qualifications, albeit mostly at level 1. However, not enough prisons had sufficient links with local and national employers to support prisoners' progression to employment on release.



57

independent learning providers judged satisfactory or inadequate this year



12. Ofsted inspects learning and skills at work as part of inspections led by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.





# The state of learning and skills provision in England

Too many learners are attending provision that is not good enough

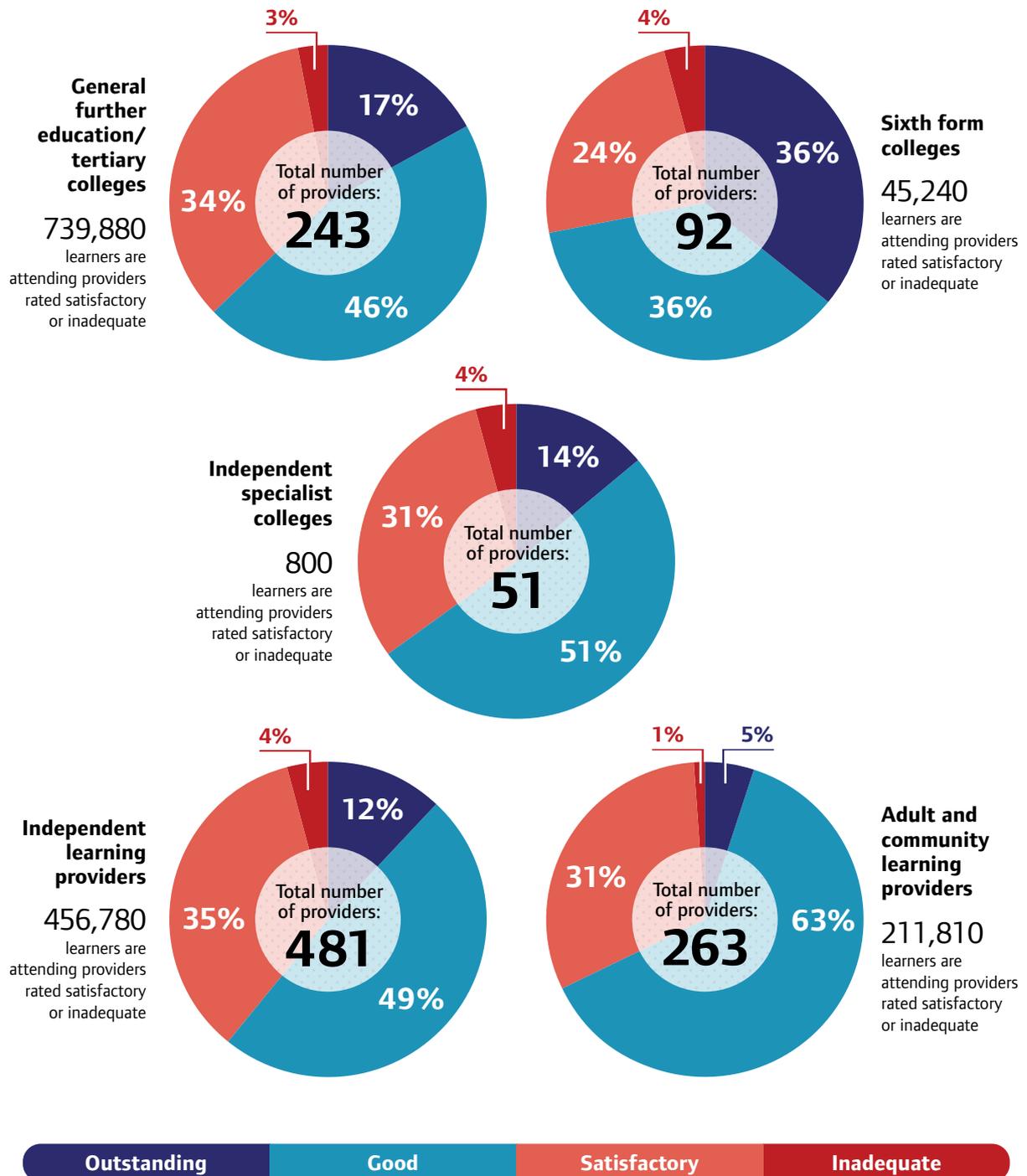
1.5m

learners attending providers judged to be less than good

- 24. In 2011/12, one in every three learners in the sector – around 1.5 million people – attended providers judged to be satisfactory or inadequate at their last inspection (see Figure 5).
- 25. Some 785,920 learners attended colleges that were not good or outstanding; 82,330 of these attended colleges that had been judged to be inadequate overall. Around 927,080 learners attended independent learning providers, including employer providers, mostly on apprenticeships or on foundation learning programmes. Only around 440,720 of them received training from good or outstanding providers. Adult and community learning providers performed better. Approximately 78% of those attending this type of provider – 746,470 learners – were at providers judged to be good or outstanding.



## How well are providers performing?



**FIGURE 5**

Based on latest inspection judgements of funded provision as at 31 August 2012. Data on learner numbers are rounded to the nearest 10. Data exclude providers that were open but have not yet been inspected. General further education/tertiary colleges include specialist further education colleges. Independent learning providers include employer providers.

Source: Ofsted and The Data Service

# Are things getting better or worse?



The proportion of colleges judged inadequate or satisfactory is the highest it has been over the past three years



Improvement has been too slow over the past three years

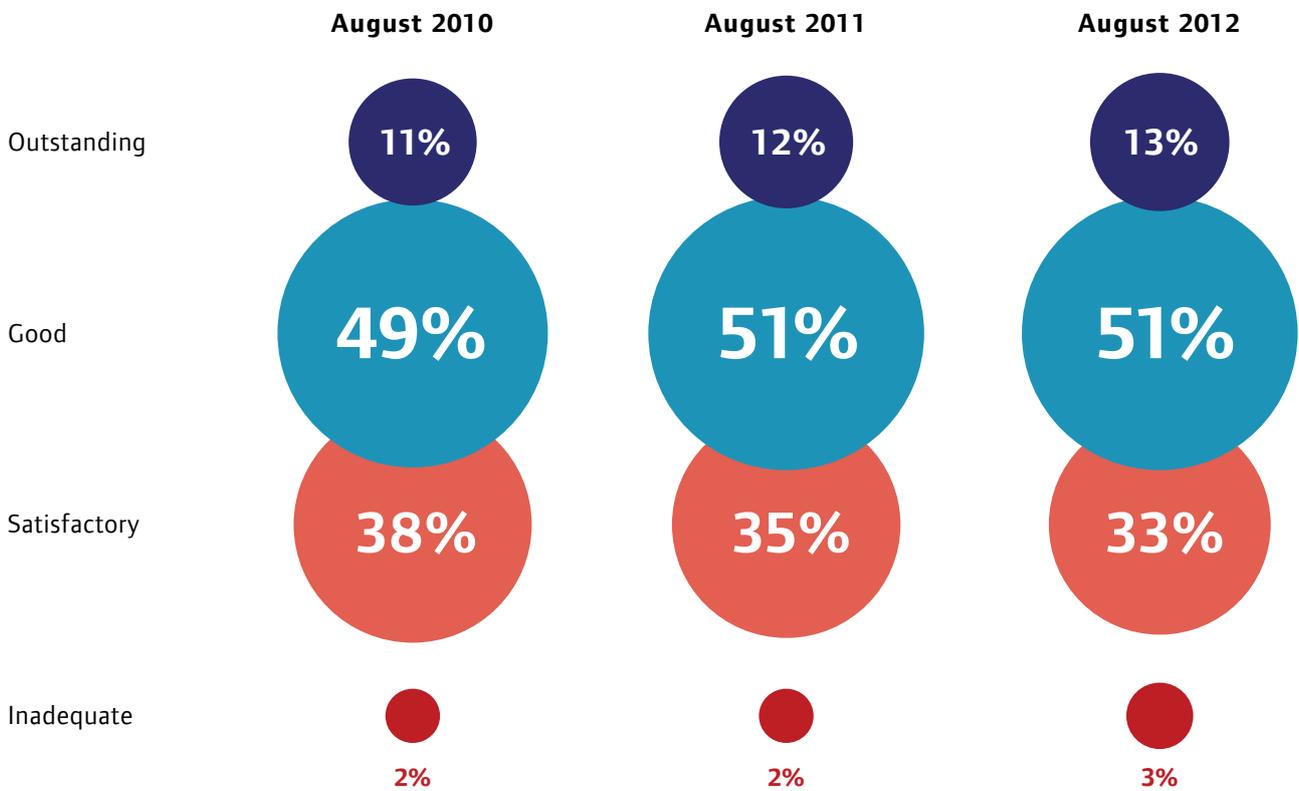
26. The overall effectiveness of learning and skills providers has improved slightly over the past three years; the proportion of outstanding providers is greater now than in 2010, but so too is the proportion of inadequate providers. Nationally, the proportion of colleges judged inadequate or satisfactory is the highest it has been over the past three years – 35% of colleges compared with 31% at 31 August 2011 and 30% at 31 August 2010.<sup>13</sup> The proportion of independent learning providers and adult and community learning providers judged to be good or outstanding at their latest inspection has improved, balancing out the decline in college performance.



<sup>13</sup>. Data vary slightly from that reported in the previous year due to changes in the methodology for selecting eligible providers.



Overall effectiveness of provision, compared over time



**FIGURE 6**

Data are for the following provider types: general further education/tertiary college (including specialist further education colleges); sixth form colleges; independent specialist colleges; adult and community learning providers; independent learning providers (including employer providers).

Source: Ofsted



# Challenges

## A difficult context for young people



The backdrop of rising unemployment and slow economic growth presents the sector with enormous challenges



27. It is important to consider the work of the further education sector against the current economic and social contexts. Figure 7 compares youth unemployment rates across Europe. It shows that the youth unemployment rate in the UK is higher than the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average, and is considerably higher than in Germany, The Netherlands and Norway. Joblessness amongst older people has also risen sharply in the last four years.<sup>14</sup> According to OECD data, the UK is roughly in line with the OECD average for the proportion of people unemployed for more than 12 months.<sup>15</sup>
28. The backdrop of rising unemployment and slow economic growth presents the sector with enormous challenges when supporting young people and adults at what is for many of them a pivotal time in their careers. It is therefore critical that providers offer the courses and qualifications that help ensure that their learners have a greater chance of progressing to further training or employment.

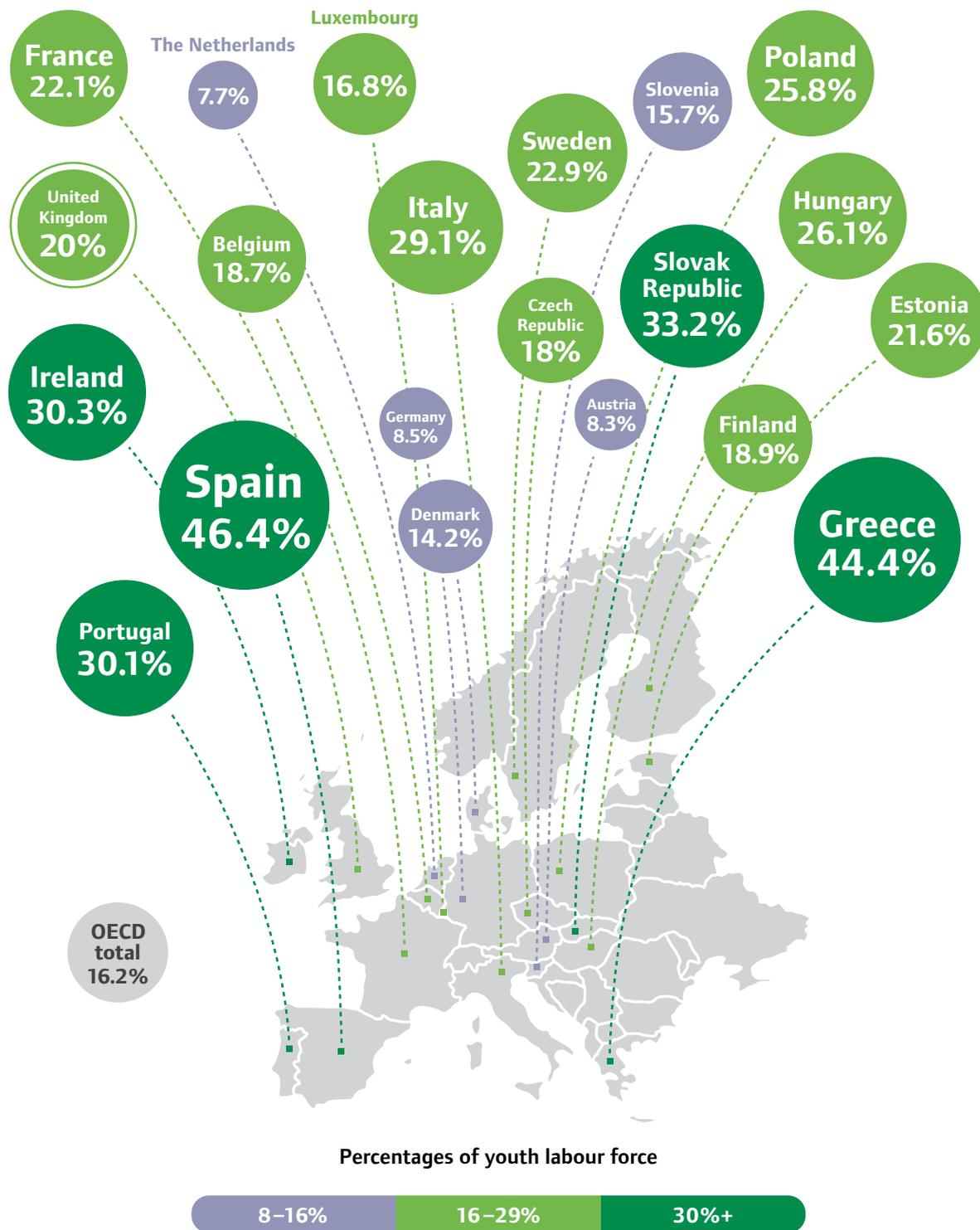
### The wrong financial incentives

29. There has been a steady increase in recent years in the number of learners who complete their qualifications successfully. In 2005/06, the overall success rate for long qualifications was 70%. This rose in each succeeding year to 80% in 2010/11. Similarly, the successful completion of apprenticeships has risen impressively from 49% in 2005/06 to 76% in 2010/11.<sup>16</sup> However, although we are clear about the improvement in success rates, there is not yet a reliable or complete way to evaluate how well achieving these qualifications has contributed to young people obtaining employment or progressing into further education.



14. ONS Unemployment by age and duration. 15. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, [www.oecd-ilibrary.org/statistics;jsessionid=239bh07tqa3ji.delta](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/statistics;jsessionid=239bh07tqa3ji.delta). 16. The Data Service; [www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr\\_current/](http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_current/)

### Youth unemployment rates (2011)



**FIGURE 7**

Labour market statistics: Labour force statistics by sex and age: indicators, OECD Employment and Labour Market Statistics (database). Employment and labour markets: Key tables from OECD-ISSN 2075-2342, © OECD-2012



Too many learners take additional funded qualifications likely to be of little real value to them



30. The extent to which learners can use their qualifications to enhance their careers needs to be at the heart of decisions regarding the courses they are offered, and the help they are given to choose. At the moment, there is too little focus on whether learners go on to sustained employment after finishing their course. In addition, too many learners take additional funded qualifications likely to be of little real value to them, such as low level courses in personal effectiveness.

31. In the survey *Skills for employment*, we found that there was insufficient emphasis by leaders and managers on how well they contribute to improving the chances of young people and adults to gain sustained employment and achieve their career goals.<sup>17</sup> Employability programmes at entry level and level 1 are generally not sufficiently challenging for learners. Far too few courses include purposeful work experience to help learners make informed decisions about their career choices.

32. This was the first year that providers had the greater freedom to determine their own strategic priorities and ensure that they offered courses and qualifications in line with the needs of the local economy. Every provider has an important role in ensuring that its government courses are well matched to local needs and make a difference to individuals.

33. In September 2012, the government introduced job outcome payments which make a proportion of the achievement funding still payable even if a learner does not complete their qualification, as long as they gain employment.<sup>18</sup> This is a good move forward but it remains to be seen what impact these payments will have on shifting the focus of providers towards moving people into sustained employment.

34. In August 2011, the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) introduced a minimum contract level of £500,000. Consequently, we believe smaller providers (including those that were good or outstanding and unable to obtain an exemption) have been forced into sub-contractor or consortia arrangements to meet the minimum threshold. Since August 2011, the number of providers in receipt of government funding and subject to inspection has fallen by 16% from 1,374 to 1,188.<sup>19</sup>

### Lancaster and Morecambe College

Lancaster and Morecambe College, visited for our *Skills for employment* survey, demonstrated good practice in using labour market information and its local networks well to introduce new employability provision

and vocational courses at the expense of more traditional courses that were popular with learners and were successful, but that did not necessarily lead to sustained employment.

<sup>17</sup>. *Skills for employment* (110178), Ofsted, 2012; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110178](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110178). <sup>18</sup>. Skills Funding Agency, Funding Rules 2012/13 - Final Version, [skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingrules/](http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingrules/). <sup>19</sup>. Based on data provided by The Data Service. Refers to providers eligible for an Ofsted inspection.



35. There is a real danger that increased subcontracting will dilute quality in the learning and skills sector.
36. The survey carried out this year on *Ensuring the quality of apprenticeships*<sup>20</sup> identified that, in several cases, the lead contractors had a history of only satisfactory performance in providing apprenticeships themselves. The size of their existing contracts, rather than the quality of their provision, appeared to be the main factor in allowing them to expand. The most effective subcontracting arrangements seen in the surveys were between like-minded independent learning providers working as part of a consortium or training group. They successfully developed a true delivery partnership, with savings on shared services and a strong common vision of high quality apprenticeship training.

### Accountability, leadership and governance

37. One of the most significant reasons for colleges' failure to improve was lack of effective leadership. Eight of the 13 colleges judged to be inadequate this year had inadequate governance. In these colleges, governing bodies had failed to monitor the college's performance in sufficient detail or provide the right kind of challenge. Where there were significant changes or instability in senior leadership, this was likely to contribute to the colleges' poor position, because senior managers themselves did not have a clear oversight of their college's performance against its strategic and business objectives.
38. In weaker colleges, senior managers had failed to improve the quality of lessons or ensure that all learners had the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed to complete their main programme of study. In these colleges self-assessment failed to identify the weaknesses in provision and quality improvement planning was ineffective. Managers also failed to either identify or build on the good practice that some members of staff had developed.
39. It was also clear that scrupulous monitoring of the quality of every aspect of their provision – from their overall performance to that of individual courses and individual

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There is a real danger that increased subcontracting will dilute quality in the learning and skills sector  
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learners – was pivotal in providers moving from inadequate or satisfactory to good or better. The two general further education colleges and eight adult skills providers that improved to outstanding this year had very strong systems of accountability. Leaders, governors and senior managers were directly accountable for specific aspects of the provision: from monitoring the use of initial assessments to the scrutiny of information on learners' progress and achievement. This was particularly successful when the emphasis was on making sure that recruitment was firmly centred on enabling learners to join courses that truly met their needs and those of local employers.

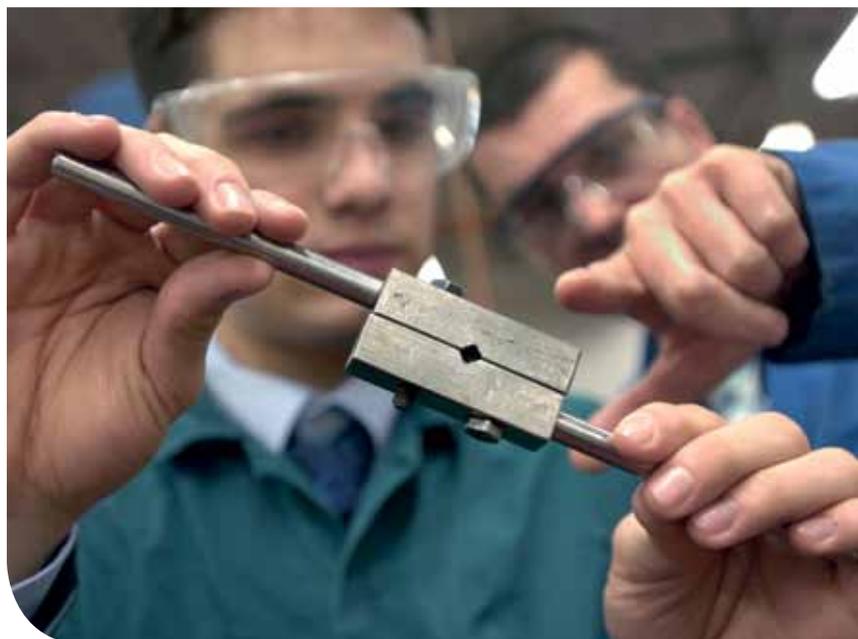
### Apprenticeships for young people

40. Apprenticeships have a key role in the government's strategy to develop the skills of the workforce and to promote the growth of the nation's economy. However, as we saw earlier in the report, the expansion in numbers has largely been as the result of increasing numbers of older apprentices – particularly those aged over 25. Inspections and our recent survey showed

20. *Ensuring quality in apprenticeships* (120153), Ofsted; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/ensuring-quality-apprenticeships](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/ensuring-quality-apprenticeships)

that employers offered too few opportunities for apprenticeships for 16–18-year-olds. Where apprenticeships were available, they were not sufficiently promoted as a career pathway to young people while they were still in school. Work experience, especially from schools, was often not a meaningful first-hand experience of the world of work or used well to help young people make informed career choices.

41. In the weaker provision, too many apprentices did not have appropriate and sustained employment during and after their apprenticeship. We have continued to find poor practice where apprentices were only given low-level work or found themselves unemployed as soon as they had finished their training. Just over one third of the 500 apprentices responding to our recent online survey did not consider themselves to be holding a permanent job during their apprenticeships. There also remained a wide variation in the length of apprenticeships and the proportion of traditional off-the-job training away from the workplace. This all resulted in the apprentices not having sufficient opportunities to develop specialist vocational skills or an adequate understanding of the industry to improve their career options.
42. In poorer provision, these issues were typically not addressed adequately by leaders and managers – especially where the provision was subcontracted and learners far removed from the main provider. Indeed, our survey *Ensuring the quality of apprenticeships* showed that there was often a weak relationship between the management fees that lead contractors charged and the quality of the service and support they provided.



43. There is an urgent need to ensure that publicly funded apprenticeships are adding value to the national skills set, providing opportunities for young people and not just being used to reinforce the skills of adults already in established jobs.
44. Four of the six independent learning providers as well as the three employers judged to be outstanding this year each had more than 100 apprentices enrolled in 2010/11, including one employer provider that had over 1,600. The hallmarks of this excellent provision were structured and planned opportunities to develop relevant vocational skills and sufficient time devoted to the development of personal and employability

### Farnborough College of Technology

Farnborough College of Technology improved from satisfactory to outstanding this year. The Principal, staff and governors showed great ambition for the college and its learners. Outstanding leadership and management, exemplified by rigorous quality assurance and self-assessment procedures, drove up results and has improved the quality of teaching and learning significantly since the last inspection. The impact of this included:

- a very strong emphasis on developing learners' employability skills evidenced by employers' reflections on the high standards of work and professional conduct they find in the learners they employ
- particularly effective individual tutorial provision with excellent management of learners' progress and target-setting
- highly successful actions to tackle areas for improvement from the last inspection.

## Apprenticeships in Germany

Youth unemployment in Germany is one of the lowest in the EU. Apprenticeships have a high profile and they are the main source of post-compulsory education and training for the 70% of school leavers who do not enrol in higher education; in the UK, just 6% of young people aged 16 to 18 were participating in an apprenticeship in 2011. In Germany, approximately two thirds of a cohort completes an apprenticeship by the age of 25. In England, 40% of starts were 25 or over in 2010/11, compared with 8% of starts aged 24 or over in Germany. Apprenticeships encompass over 300 trades, and both employers and the government are involved in the design of programmes and the payment of the apprentice. Nearly all apprenticeships are at level 3 and most programmes take three

years to complete. In England, two thirds of apprenticeships are at level 2 and most programmes last one to two years.<sup>21</sup> Information and guidance on choosing an apprenticeship is well established in German schools and careers advice centres. The range of subjects is fairly evenly represented across service sector and industrial or craft occupations, whereas in England, a higher proportion of apprenticeships cover the service sector than industrial occupations and a recent Ofsted survey found careers guidance on apprenticeships to be weak.<sup>22</sup> Employer engagement is particularly strong in Germany. In 2005, nearly 100% of large firms (with more than 500 employees) offered apprenticeships, compared with 30% in England.<sup>23</sup>



skills, including English and mathematics. Monitoring of apprentices' progress was meticulous and these providers were particularly effective at identifying and building on the practices of very skilled staff to ensure that all apprentices across the provision benefited.

45. Germany provides an example of a mature system of apprenticeships – one that provides enough places for young people, across most sectors, with high quality links to employers and sustained employment at the end of the courses.

### Teaching and learning remains a significant area for improvement

46. From September 2012, inspection has focused increasingly on what matters most for young people: the quality of the teaching they receive. Good and outstanding teaching does much more than simply ensure that learners have the skills and knowledge they need to pass exams and gain qualifications. Young people today face a wide array of challenges and distractions during the transition from childhood to adulthood and from school to employment.

We know there is a real issue with how prepared young people are for work – punctuality, attendance, standards of behaviour in the classroom, respect for others, handing in work on time, having an appropriate balance between work and social life.



**Around two thirds of all young people in Germany undertake apprenticeships**



21. Apprenticeship Ambassador's Network, The State of Apprenticeship 2010 – August 2010, and update – February 2012, [www.apprenticeships.org.uk/AmbassadorsNetwork/Reports.aspx](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/AmbassadorsNetwork/Reports.aspx). 22. *Ensuring quality in apprenticeships* (120153), Ofsted; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/ensuring-quality-apprenticeships](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/ensuring-quality-apprenticeships). 23. Apprenticeship Ambassador's Network, The State of Apprenticeship 2010 – August 2010, and update – February 2012, [www.apprenticeships.org.uk/AmbassadorsNetwork/Reports.aspx](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/AmbassadorsNetwork/Reports.aspx).





47. The best providers instil these real life skills in their learners as part of the teaching and set these standards in the classroom. Teachers at these providers teach in a way that means young people leave their courses not only vocationally competent but work-ready. Good and outstanding teaching makes the best use of opportunities to increase learners' confidence in, and correct use of, both English and mathematics, recognising that these core skills are essential to employers. This teaching results in young people who not only know the value of being on time, meeting deadlines and managing their career, but who can also deliver the quality of work that employers expect. For young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, these skills are an escape route from deprivation and, in some cases, crime and anti social behaviour.

48. Teaching and learning were not good enough in the providers inspected in 2010/11 and this remains the case in 2011/12. Of all providers inspected this year:

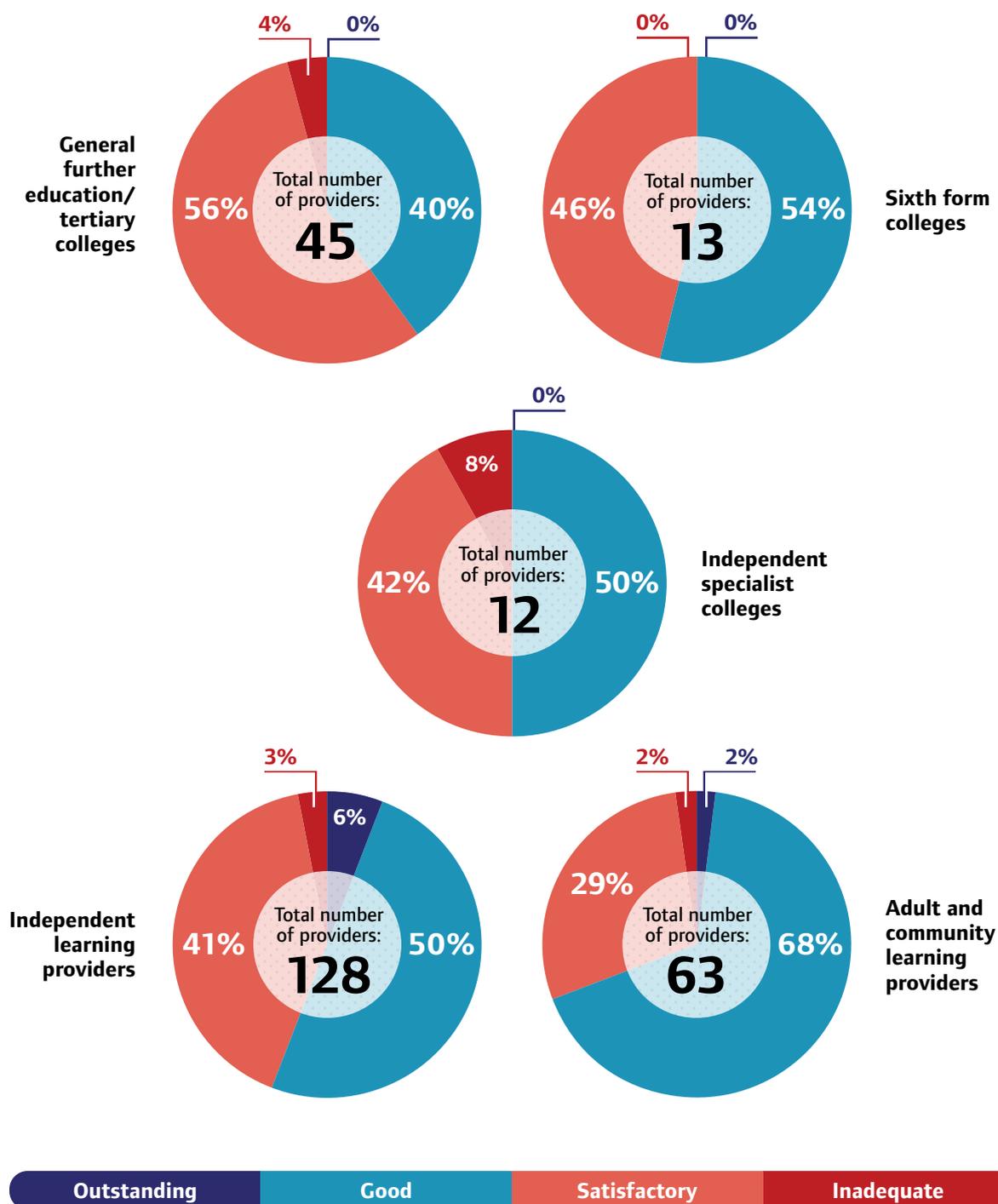
- only 56% were judged good or outstanding for teaching and learning
- as with last year, no college was judged to be outstanding
- only eight independent learning providers and one adult and community learning provider were judged to be outstanding
- eight providers had inadequate teaching and learning this year
- an unacceptable number of all learning sessions observed were judged satisfactory or inadequate.

49. Improvements to the quality of initial teacher education remain slower in further education than in the maintained schools sector, with six out of the 22 further education providers inspected in 2011/12 judged satisfactory in comparison with seven out of the 54 qualified teacher status providers. Often, the training and feedback that participants on these courses receive do not focus sufficiently on how well they apply their specialist knowledge and skills to their teaching to develop learners' skills and understanding. In the best provision, teachers take modules related to their area of specialism, alongside a generic teaching qualification, to directly address this 'dual professionalism'.<sup>24</sup> The best teachers were also particularly skilled at tackling poor punctuality and attendance. Overturning inappropriate attitudes and behaviour are a feature of all good and outstanding providers.

50. Where a provider's teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory or inadequate, arrangements for improving the quality of lessons tended to be insufficiently critical. Managers failed to ensure that teachers were given accurate feedback on the quality of their teaching and did not identify actions likely to

24. The initial training of further education and skills teachers: findings from 2011/12 inspections of courses leading to awarding body qualifications, unpublished Ofsted summary report.

### Teaching and learning judgement for learning and skills providers inspected in 2011/12



**FIGURE 8**

Percentages are rounded and may not add to exactly 100. General further education/tertiary colleges include specialist further education colleges. Independent learning providers includes employer providers.

Source: Ofsted

**80%**

young people who leave school without level 2 including English and mathematics and haven't gained that qualification by the age of 19



bring about improvements. Over-generous grading by managers was generally the result of failing to take sufficient account of the extent of learning taking place and learners' progress. All too often, this led to complacency by managers and teachers when they self-assessed their teaching and learning to be good or better overall. This year, inspectors left approximately half of providers with a recommendation to improve the quality of their teaching and learning, especially through more effective monitoring of sessions and training for staff. This included providers judged to be good for the quality of provision overall.

51. In outstanding lessons, teachers provided excellent role models by demonstrating expertise and commitment to achieving high standards. They were skilled at developing learners' vocational and subject expertise by engaging them in stimulating and challenging learning activities. Their confident use of information learning technology successfully helped learners become more independent in their learning through the use of technology at work and at home, where relevant. Features of good lessons included:

- good planning to meet all learners' needs, especially in mixed level classes
- innovative and stimulating learning activities and resources
- appropriately gauged individual support.

### Standards of English and mathematics

52. The sector faces a key challenge in raising the standards of English and mathematics in the working population. Far too many young people leave school with low levels of English and mathematics and the negative effects can be long-lasting.

53. In 2005, only around 10% of those who had not reached level 2 in English at 16 had gone on to achieve this standard by 19, but this rose to over 23% in 2011. Similarly, for mathematics, the proportion going on to achieve level 2 has risen from around 8% in 2005 to just over 17% in 2011. However, overall, of those young people who leave school without achieving a level 2, including both English and mathematics, only one in five will have done so by the age of 19.<sup>25</sup>

54. There is much more to do if the sector is to engage those young people who struggled with these skills at school to participate and achieve once older. Government policy must drive these changes.

55. A recent CBI survey of employers found that around one in five employers are providing remedial training in one or more

25. Department for Education, DfE: Level 2 and 3 Attainment by Young People in England Measured Using Matched Administrative Data: Attainment by Age 19 in 2011, [www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001059/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001059/index.shtml).



### DV8 Training Ltd

DV8, an independent learning provider judged to be good at its latest inspection, successfully used functional skills champions and specific sessions to promote functional skills to raise learners interest and motivation to tackling their previous weaknesses in English and mathematics. Vocational training and English and mathematics specialists worked extremely well to combine the teaching of technical literacy and numeracy skills with their practical application in vocational settings.

of English, mathematics and information technology (IT) for the young people joining them from school or college who lack an acceptable level of these basic skills.

56. A national government survey last year estimated that 5.1 million adults (15%) were below level 1 in literacy and 8.1 million adults (24%) were below entry level 3 in numeracy.<sup>26</sup> Even when qualifications in literacy or numeracy are achieved, our recent surveys have shown that people struggled to retain the skills they may have developed for the tests.
57. In the weaker provision, learners were not working towards a qualification in English and mathematics that was sufficiently challenging or likely to develop their skills further. Success rates in functional skills at level 2 were particularly low – 47% in functional English and 55% in functional mathematics. This is especially worrying, as functional skills will be the qualification taken by learners aged 16–18, and all apprentices who enter the sector without a qualification in English and mathematics at level 2.
58. This year, inspectors found that the management of functional English and mathematics was generally weak in colleges, with little effective staff development.

Classroom-based lessons did not link sufficiently with the vocational area and they often failed to motivate learners to work on their skills. Showing learners the relevance of these skills to the subject they are studying is the key to success.

59. Inspections this year continued to show that the greatest weakness in this area was the lack of specialist expertise in teaching English and mathematics, so that learners learnt how to tackle the technical skills (such as calculating percentages and using punctuation correctly), and developed the ability to apply the skills in vocational, work-related and everyday contexts.
60. The sector therefore needs to give greater emphasis to high quality teaching of mathematics and English. Our survey *The initial training of further education and skills teachers*<sup>27</sup> identified that, although teachers met the minimum level required to obtain the qualification, they were not supported in developing their skills to reach their full potential as teachers. *Tackling the challenge of low numeracy skills*<sup>28</sup> also highlighted the need for better subject-specific continuous professional development for teaching staff. With the introduction of the Department for Education's Programme of Study for all 16–18-year-olds in 2013, this shortage must be urgently addressed.

<sup>26</sup>. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011 Skills for Life survey, <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills/research-and-statistics>.  
<sup>27</sup>. *The initial training of further education and skills teachers* (120297), Ofsted 2012; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/initial-training-of-further-education-and-skills-teachers>.  
<sup>28</sup>. *Tackling the challenge of low numeracy skills in young people and adults* (100225), Ofsted, 2012; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/tackling-challenge-of-low-numeracy-skills-young-people-and-adults>.

# Key statistics

**Data View:** Inspection findings can also be viewed at [www.dataview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.dataview.ofsted.gov.uk). Data View enables users to compare the performance of providers over time from Ofsted inspections across England by region, local authority and constituency area.

## Overall effectiveness of colleges at their most recent inspection as at 31 August 2012, by provider type<sup>1</sup>

	Total number inspected	Percentage of providers			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
General further education/tertiary college <sup>2</sup>	243	17	46	34	3
Sixth form college	92	36	36	24	4
Independent specialist college	51	14	51	31	4
All colleges	386	21	44	31	4

1. Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

2. General further education/tertiary colleges include specialist further education colleges.

Source: Ofsted

## Overall effectiveness of funded independent learning providers at their most recent inspection as at 31 August 2012<sup>1</sup>

	Total number inspected	Percentage of providers			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Independent learning providers	481	12	49	35	4

1. Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Source: Ofsted

## Overall effectiveness of funded adult and community learning providers at their most recent inspection as at 31 August 2012<sup>1</sup>

	Total number inspected	Percentage of providers			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Adult and community learning providers	263	5	63	31	1

1. Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Source: Ofsted

Overall effectiveness of learning and skills providers inspected between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012<sup>1</sup>

	Total number inspected	Percentage of providers			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
All colleges	70	6	33	43	19
Of which:					
General further education/tertiary college <sup>2</sup>	45	4	31	49	16
Sixth form college	13	0	38	31	31
Independent specialist college	12	17	33	33	17
Independent learning providers	128	7	48	34	10
Adult and community learning providers	63	5	59	32	5
All provision	261	6	47	36	11
Dance and drama award schemes in colleges <sup>3</sup>	16	31	56	13	0
Further education in higher education institutions <sup>4</sup>	7	43	43	14	0
Next Step providers	2	0	100	0	0
Prison and young offender institutions <sup>5</sup>	6	0	50	33	17
Probation trusts	6	0	33	67	0

1. Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. 2. General further education/tertiary colleges include specialist further education colleges. 3. Inspection outcomes for dance and drama awards schemes in colleges relate to the specific course only and not providers as a whole. 4. Inspection outcomes for further education in higher education institutions relate to the further education provision and not providers as a whole. 5. Prison data only include inspections up to 31 December 2011 as, from 1 January 2012, Ofsted does not award overall effectiveness judgements for inspections of prison and young offender institutions.

Source: Ofsted

**Inspection outcomes of learning and skills providers inspected between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012<sup>1 2</sup>**

	Total number inspected	Percentage of providers			
		Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>
Capacity to improve	256	5	47	38	10
<b>A. Outcomes for learners</b>	261	8	45	38	8
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning	256	9	45	38	8
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development	256	13	63	21	4
<b>B. Quality of provision</b>	256	6	53	38	3
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development	261	3	53	41	3
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users	256	16	54	28	1
B3. How well do partnerships with schools, employers, user groups and others lead to benefits for learners	256	23	56	20	1
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve	256	10	58	29	3
<b>C. Leadership and management</b>	261	7	48	35	10
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation	256	16	48	27	9
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners	256	12	56	30	2
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap	256	4	46	47	3
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement	256	10	49	38	3
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners	256	4	39	43	14

1. Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.  
 2. Data include five pilot inspections.

Source: Ofsted