

PRESS RELEASE

EKC Group rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted

EKC Group has been graded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted following its latest inspection, with the education watchdog giving the Group [top marks in every single category](#).

The results make EKC Group the first General Further Education college to achieve the highest rating in all categories since a new enhanced inspection framework was introduced last July. The categories that EKC Group achieved 'Outstanding' in are as follows: The Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and Management, Education Programmes for Young People, Adult Learning Programmes, Apprenticeships, Provision for Learners with High Needs and a 'Strong' judgement for Skills; the highest an organisation can achieve.



The Group received significant praise for its work to meet skill needs across East Kent, with the report stating that: "Leaders have excellent knowledge of the local economy and review their course offer to respond quickly to employers' new and developing needs such as green technology and digital skills."

Ofsted sent 18 inspectors to assess the Group's provision between 7 and 10 March, meeting staff, students and stakeholders the Group works with, as well as doing numerous 'deep dives' into areas of the organisation's provision.

Overall, the report found that: “Learners and apprentices thrive in calm, positive and inclusive environments,” whilst stating that “The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs” in the localities it serves.

Inspectors particularly praised the inclusive learning within the organisation, and the fact that the Group offers opportunities for the whole of the communities it serves.

The report states: “Leaders and governors are passionate about tackling social inequality through education and training. They rightly pride themselves in offering a range of inclusive, accessible and challenging learning opportunities to the communities in East Kent. Governors, leaders and staff are highly ambitious for all learners and apprentices irrespective of their starting points, particularly for those with high needs or from disadvantaged groups. They place a high priority on learning and progression to ensure that learners and apprentices complete their studies and move on to their desired next steps.”



Despite the Group’s rapid expansion since the last inspection, standards have increased from its previous ‘Good’ rating awarded in 2017. The ‘Outstanding’ status comes after a successful visit by Ofsted last year, which saw the Group’s latest acquisitions – Ashford College and Spring Lane – awarded the highest rating possible during a monitoring visit.



EKC Group Chief Executive Officer Graham Razey OBE said: “This Ofsted rating is a momentous occasion for us as an organisation, and we are delighted that inspectors recognised the incredible work put in by staff and students.”

“To be deemed outstanding in all aspects highlights the excellent standard at which we operate, with everyone playing their part to provide top quality training and improve the socio-economic prosperity of the communities we serve.”

The organisation has some 12,000 students, with colleges in Ashford, Broadstairs, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and Sheppey, as well as a regional business unit, EKC Training, which provides Apprenticeships, community learning, employability provision and prison education. Within this the Group is the largest provider of High Needs learning within England, delivering education to more than 900 students that have Education and Health Care Plans.

Graham continued: “I am particularly proud of the fact that we have been able to achieve this rating, whilst also ensuring that we remain a fully inclusive organisation that seeks to meet the needs of absolutely everyone within the communities we proudly serve. I am truly passionate about delivering for every learner regardless of their background or learning requirements, and it fills me with real joy when I am able to witness the transformational impact our Group has on so many young people and adults who develop their skills within our provision.”

“My thanks go to all of the staff and stakeholders who work so hard to ensure we continue to create the best learning opportunities possible for learners across East Kent.”

For further information please contact:

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Notes to Editor

- More pictures available upon request, including of individual colleges and sites



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