

Askham Bryan College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130595

Name of lead inspector: Bev Barlow HMI

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Type of provider: Specialist college

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Information about the college

1. Askham Bryan College is a specialist land-based college providing further and higher education courses and work-based learning across North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, the Tees Valley and Cumbria. In August 2011 it took over the land-based provision from the University of Cumbria based at the Newton Rigg campus in Penrith. The college's main site is three miles west of York and additional centres are located in Harrogate, Bradford, Bedale, Thirsk and Guisborough. Askham Bryan College works in partnership with further education colleges in Middlesbrough, Scarborough and Wakefield to provide specialist land-based courses.
2. The main campus and that at Newton Rigg are set in extensive grounds and include specialist facilities such as the college's farms, animal management units, equestrian centres and stables, woodland areas, a dairy unit, a food manufacturing centre, sports centres and student accommodation.
3. The college has increased its student numbers significantly since the last inspection in 2007. In 2010/11 it enrolled around 1,000 students on full-time courses; a further 805 students, mostly adults, studied on part-time courses. Student numbers rose considerably following the acquisition of Newton Rigg College in August 2011. The college provides work-based programmes and higher education courses and delivers land-based qualifications to pupils from 23 schools. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. The college recruits students from both rural and urban areas, which range from relatively prosperous to those with high levels of deprivation. Most students are enrolled on land-based qualifications or foundation-level courses. The college's mission is 'to be the college of choice for land-based and land-related learning'.
4. The inspection took account of all of the provision offered by the college. The provision in agriculture and horticulture, animal management, and equine was inspected in depth.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following organisation:
 - C Skills (Highways and plant maintenance apprentices)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
<p>Provision for young learners: Age 14 to 16 years Further education (age 16 to 18 years) Foundation learning Entry to Employment</p>	<p>331 part-time learners 197 part-time learners 756 full-time learners 141 full-time learners 10 part-time learners 44 learners</p>
<p>Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)</p>	<p>204 full-time learners 608 part-time learners</p>
<p>Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships</p>	<p>1,039 learners 370 apprentices</p>

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

Subject Areas	Grade
Agriculture and horticulture	2
Animal management	3
Equine	2

Overall effectiveness

6. Askham Bryan is a good and improving college. The college provides courses for three times as many students than it did at the last inspection and across a much wider geographical area. The proportions of students completing their courses successfully are high and most students make good progress from their initial starting point. However, the proportion of adult students who complete their courses is low, particularly on floristry and animal management courses. Learners on employer-based provision achieve good results. Progression to higher-level courses and employment in the land-based sector is good.
7. Students enjoy college and work-based learning. They understand how to stay safe and know that any concerns are dealt with quickly. Students make a considerable and valuable contribution to the college and local communities. Teaching and learning have improved but the quality of theory lessons is not yet at the high standard of practical sessions. At advanced level too many students are not given challenging enough tasks to enable them to reach their full potential. Students benefit from very good pastoral support and their progress is monitored closely. Through very careful financial management, the college's finances are now secure and significant investment in the different

sites has improved facilities; students now have access to the latest industry-standard resources. Senior leaders set ambitious targets and are effective in driving forward improvements. Strategies to raise standards are mostly effective.

Main findings

- The proportions of students completing their courses successfully have risen significantly since the last inspection. Students aged 16 to 18 achieve well and most make good progress. The achievement of school pupils studying at the college is outstanding. However, too many adults do not complete their courses and their levels of success vary too much across different centres.
- Most work-based learners gain their qualifications in the planned time. The achievement on specialist short courses is excellent. Students develop highly relevant work-related and broader employment skills. A wide variety of their voluntary and charity work supports the local communities.
- Students enjoy college and have a good understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy. The standard of students' work is good. Work experience, duties on the college site, and voluntary and project work provide students with a good understanding of the requirements of working in industry.
- A good range of courses and a variety of options are well suited to students' interests and commercial needs. Many students progress to higher-level courses including higher education and to industry-related employment. Courses provide good opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and research skills although the proportions of students completing functional skills courses successfully are low.
- Practical lessons are good and most theory lessons are satisfactory. Poor teaching is uncommon but the number of outstanding lessons is insufficient. Lessons are carefully planned with a good range of practical activities that reflect the challenges in industry. In a significant minority of theory lessons students are not given sufficiently challenging work and they lose interest in their tasks.
- Assessment arrangements are thorough. Teachers use praise well and give clear constructive feedback and good guidance on how students can improve their work. Frequent assessor visits to the workplace, the support from employers, and flexible arrangements all contribute to good and well-planned assessment opportunities for apprentices.
- Investment in new technologies has improved the use of information and learning technology (ILT) but this is not yet used consistently across all subjects to support learning. Students use the college's virtual learning environment (VLE) to access lesson notes and assignments on most courses but only a few courses provide interactive learning resources.
- The college has expanded its provision across Yorkshire and Cumbria to provide land-based opportunities to meet identified local needs, often in areas of

significant deprivation. Courses are well designed with relevant optional units to meet the specialist requirements of employers in the land-based sector.

- Partnership work is extensive and provides exceptional benefits to students. The college is a key player in developing a broad range of educational opportunities through its work with local authorities, charities, universities, other colleges and schools, including for the most disadvantaged groups.
- Careful guidance, induction arrangements and reviews to check that students have enrolled on appropriate courses are increasingly successful at ensuring that students understand the demands of their course. Initial assessments are prompt and students with a wide range of additional and often complex learning needs are supported very successfully.
- Good academic and pastoral support ensure that students' performance is monitored closely. Students know their target grades and how well they are doing. However, individual targets and actions set at one-to-one reviews are not always specific enough to support students in achieving their interim goals.
- Highly effective strategic leadership and governance with ambitious and challenging targets have led to significant improvements since the last inspection. The integration of the Newton Rigg campus is being skilfully managed. Staff are supportive of the open and transparent management and are focused on raising standards, which are monitored regularly.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well through tutorials and cross-college events although further reinforcement in lessons and at reviews is insufficient. Arrangements for safeguarding are thorough and comprehensive across all sites and particular attention is given to meet the needs of residential students.
- The use of students', employers' and other users' views to improve provision is outstanding. The college responds appropriately to improve the quality of the provision and learning experience, ensuring that these meet the needs of all users. These effective practices are yet to be embedded fully at the newly acquired Newton Rigg campus.
- The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and identifies the areas for improvement. Quality assurance procedures are robust and the college makes effective use of data to identify risk and drive forward improvements. The application of quality assurance procedures is not always sufficiently prompt to tackle areas of underperformance in a few subjects and across different sites.
- Financial management is exceptionally good. The college has invested significantly in improving the quality of specialist teaching and learning resources across its sites. Value for money is outstanding.

What does Askham Bryan College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the retention of adult students on advanced-level courses, particularly in floristry and animal management by ensuring that they fully understand the commitments required and by monitoring their progress very closely to enable prompt support to be put in place to help them stay on their course.

- Improve the quality of the provision at the newly acquired Newton Rigg campus by embedding the quality assurance processes and developing the curriculum further to ensure that it meets local area needs and is cost-effective.
- Improve the teaching and learning in theory sessions through the identification and sharing of good practice, better use of ILT and the VLE, and the planning of lessons to ensure that learning is consolidated, and that all learners are fully engaged and challenged to achieve their full potential.
- Build on the existing initial assessment practices to ensure that the needs of students with low levels of literacy and numeracy are clearly understood and to inform detailed measurable development targets. Prepare students fully for external tests to improve the success rates on functional skills.
- Implement the online monitoring system across all sites to ensure that all learners are given specific short-term targets that can be monitored closely so that all students are motivated and challenged to achieve their goals.
- Provide additional and appropriate training to support governors and middle managers in carrying out their duties in order to embed quality assurance procedures further and to ensure that prompt action is taken to improve students' outcomes, reduce any inconsistencies across the different sites and meet the college's vision to be outstanding.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the good facilities and knowledgeable staff
- the very friendly, helpful, safe and respectful environment
- the good individual support from tutors and support staff
- the visits to other organisations to broaden their experiences
- the wide range of specialist vocational courses and the opportunities to complete interesting and relevant work experience
- the well-planned arrangements for travelling to college
- the re-establishment of a dairy herd at Newton Rigg
- making new friends and the college's social activities.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the organisation of some courses to minimise staff and timetable changes
- the planning of assignments and more detailed feedback on how to improve
- the visibility of wardens in social areas
- their access to computers in the evenings
- the residential facilities at the Newton Rigg campus.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the block release arrangements
- the regular visits by college staff to the workplace
- the flexible and shared approach to planning apprentices' learning
- the professional, helpful and supportive staff who have recent and relevant industrial expertise.

What employers would like to see improved:

- No improvements were identified.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

8. Following the last inspection, success rates increased rapidly for two years and they have been maintained at a high rate in the last few years. Students aged 16 to 18 and work-based learners achieve well but the success rate for adults on advanced-level courses has fallen to below that in similar colleges. Students make good progress but their interim targets are not always specific enough to help them achieve their goals. Students develop very good workplace skills but the success rate on functional skills was low in 2010/11. Two of the areas for improvement from the last inspection, governance and financial management, are now strengths of the college. While quality assurance arrangements have been strengthened they are not yet consistently applied across all sites. Lesson observations are now robust but the quality of theory lessons is weaker than that in practical sessions. The inspection grades for all aspects of the college's provision have improved by at least one grade.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

9. The college's overall success rate is high. Students aged 16 to 18 achieve well and above that in colleges with a similar intake. Pass rates on students' main qualifications are very high. The majority of students on advanced-level courses who do not progress from the subsidiary diploma to the extended diploma leave college to go into employment or to join an apprenticeship programme. The overall success rate for adult students improved in 2010/11 to above that in similar colleges. However, too many adults on advanced-level courses leave college early. Success rates vary across centres and they are weaker at Guisborough and Wakefield.
10. Over the last three years increasing proportions of students have studied foundation-level programmes; success rates are very high and students make excellent progress. Foundation-level students increase in confidence and develop both their social and study skills to develop greater independence to progress to the next stage of their lives. Many of these students progress to intermediate-level courses and several have continued to advanced-level programmes or apprenticeships. The achievement of pupils from local schools who study at the college is outstanding.
11. All full-time students complete successfully a broad range of highly relevant short courses that contribute significantly to their workplace skills. Vocational areas adapt the courses to meet the specific needs of local employers and industry, for example short courses in fork-lift truck driving, health and safety, animal handling and stockmanship. Students develop their literacy and numeracy skills effectively. However, the achievement of functional skills qualifications in 2010/11 was poor.

12. Apprentices' success rates are good and improving and most learners complete in the planned time. While success rates are good for advanced apprentices, too many do not complete within the planned time, particularly in agriculture. Most learners on Train to Gain qualifications achieve their qualification in the planned time.
13. The progress of most students is good and they meet their target grades. However, the proportion of students achieving high grades is low on a few intermediate-level courses. Data show no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of students aged 16 to 18. However, female adult students do not achieve as well as males. The college now has in place appropriate strategies to narrow the achievement gap.
14. Progression is good. Almost 60% of students progress to a higher-level qualification, many in the college and around one fifth leave college and go into employment in an area directly related to their course. The attendance rate is high.
15. Students develop good industry-standard skills and have realistic experiences of working in the industry. Students are confident in handling animals on the unit, and carrying out yard and farm duties. Students develop their ambitions and aspirations further through competing and achieving well in national horticulture and equine competitions and prestigious agricultural shows.
16. Students say that they feel safe and are supported well to make informed choices and to adopt healthy lifestyles. Good links with external agencies provide helpful advice and guidance on sexual, emotional and other medical health issues. The college promotes health and well-being effectively and full-time students complete alcohol and drugs awareness courses. Students also benefit from the effective promotion of healthy eating and participation in physical activities but are not sufficiently involved in their planning at Newton Rigg.
17. Students make a valuable contribution to their local communities through extensive fund-raising and voluntary work. For example, students raise money for a local animal shelter and help take the animals to a hospice to boost the morale of the children living there, and at Newton Rigg gamekeeping students arrange a local shoot. Many courses, including those for apprentices, include conservation and community projects.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

18. Teaching and learning are good. Since the last inspection, systems for monitoring, evaluating and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning have improved. Highly skilled and well-qualified vocational tutors make very good use of the college's facilities and estate to develop students' occupational skills and to link theoretical concepts to real working environments. Well-planned practical sessions provide challenging activities for students to work at an appropriate

pace, develop their confidence to take on responsibilities, and to work effectively as a team. Teachers provide good support throughout students' time at college, demonstrate good vocational skills and use questions effectively to extend students' understanding. Carefully planned and meaningful work placements support college-based learning.

19. The effective theory lessons engage students well; teachers have a good rapport with students and plan a good range of productive activities. Students enjoy their learning and are confident in asking probing questions to gain a better understanding. In weaker lessons, particularly at advanced level, students are not required to develop their responses or acquire independent learning skills. Teachers do not always allow sufficient time to consolidate learning. In some lessons the pace is too slow; a minority of students become disengaged and teachers do not always take prompt enough action to keep them on task, particularly during group work. Learning support assistants provide good support but their work is not always included in lesson plans.
20. Assessment is well planned and supported effectively by timetabled study weeks and assignment support workshops. Most tutors give clear constructive feedback on how students can improve. Students develop specialist knowledge and expertise through carefully chosen project work in specific areas of interest. Frequent assessor visits and clear assessment plans that involve employers provide good assessment opportunities for apprentices.
21. The college has devoted substantial staff training to improve the use of ILT and the VLE. Information and learning technology is used effectively to enhance learning in agriculture and animal management but is limited to presentations in many other courses. On most courses students use the VLE to access lesson notes and unit assignments. In a minority of courses teachers have developed interactive resources but the use of ILT and the VLE to support learning remains underdeveloped in several subjects.
22. The college offers a good range of main qualifications within its land-based specialism. Good progression opportunities exist from entry to advanced and higher levels. The full-time curriculum has been developed well in response to the views of students, local schools and employers. New courses have been developed in motor sport and the curriculum has been redesigned at the newly acquired Newton Rigg campus. In work-based learning, the college has introduced apprenticeships in gamekeeping and butchery and has developed industry-specific courses, such as the herdsman certificate. In animal management, students can choose from four alternative option routes and in agriculture they have two optional routes that are directly linked to their career aspirations. Workplace skills, industry competencies and an understanding of the industry are embedded throughout courses. A new timetable structure enables students to participate in work experience and off-site visits.
23. In response to the college's commitment to be inclusive it has expanded provision across Yorkshire and Cumbria, including in areas of significant

- deprivation, to provide local opportunities to study land-based courses. It has developed foundation-level courses across horticulture and animal management. The college is responding well by providing courses to attract young people who are not in education or employment or who are at risk of being excluded from school, and it works closely with the Prince's Trust.
24. Sharing the Guisborough site with the local sixth form college provides good opportunities to share facilities and enrichment activities, and to provide a more flexible curriculum. A small number of students who are studying primarily A-level qualifications also study a sub-diploma in animal management. This model of provision is replicated in Scarborough.
 25. In work-based learning, employers help to decide which optional units are most appropriate for their businesses and employees. Training and assessment are planned to respond to, for example, seasonal work to ensure that assessments are planned realistically.
 26. Students develop their communication, teamwork and leadership skills alongside industry-specific skills through a good variety of enhancement and enrichment opportunities. These are wide and varied and valued by students; participation is good and opportunities include projects such as cheese making, conservation work at local gardens and graveyards, residential trips to outdoor education centres and grounds maintenance. Students receive a college diploma to recognise their broader achievements.
 27. The college's extensive partnerships with industry, local authorities, charities, universities, colleges and schools are outstanding and provide substantial benefits to students. Students participate in cutting-edge research projects in, for example, Wagyu cattle and with national bodies such as the National Beef Training Centre. Employers value students' specialist work-related skills and the new ideas they bring to the industry. The college is a key partner in the development of the local 14 to 19 curriculum and promotes college-based and apprenticeship courses for school leavers.
 28. Students feel cared for and are supported well. They have a wide range of support services to help them with identified medical, social, learning and behavioural difficulties. Initial assessment is rigorous and in-class learning support is effective. Great care is taken to ensure that all students are on the correct course. Students with a range of complex needs receive effective support, which develops their confidence and increases their independence; they achieve as well as their peers. The college has good systems to monitor attendance closely and to keep parents and carers informed of students' progress.
 29. Personal support tutors provide good support for students on personal, welfare and financial issues. Careers advice and guidance are good. Students receive good academic guidance. Students know their predicted and aspirational target grades, the progress they have made and what they need to do to improve.

The college has introduced an electronic tutorial monitoring system recently but it is not yet used systematically across all sites. Group tutorials cover an appropriate range of personal development topics. Tutors encourage students to take responsibility for setting targets that focus on their progress and interests. In some cases these are very specific, for example the steps required to design and build a garden successfully at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show. However, in a significant minority of reviews tutors do not give students specific interim targets to help them achieve their goals.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

30. The Principal, governors and senior managers have a clear and inclusive strategic plan that is fully understood and supported by staff, including those from the newly acquired Newton Rigg campus. The college's mission and values are owned by the whole college community.
31. Staff understand their roles and have clear lines of accountability. The senior leadership team sets ambitious targets and empowers staff to achieve them by providing the support and resources necessary to succeed. Although progress in meeting targets is inconsistent, recent initiatives have shown good improvement in most areas. Open and transparent leadership is being used well to integrate the provision at Newton Rigg and staff at this site now feel empowered to plan for future success and improvement. Curriculum management is good with many areas benefiting from recent changes that have improved students' outcomes and their college experience.
32. Governance is much improved since the last inspection and is now effective, partly as a result of recent exemplary clerking arrangements. Governors' strong commitment and high levels of expertise in the land-based sector are used well. They play a central role in establishing and reviewing the college's strategic direction, in giving constructive criticism and setting targets. Governors work closely with senior staff to review and monitor the college's financial performance. However, governors' knowledge and understanding of curriculum performance indicators have still to be developed fully.
33. The college manages its rigorous and effective safeguarding practices well. Systematic recruitment processes form part of the thorough safeguarding audits and risk assessments completed on all staff, site contractors, and those who have prolonged contact with students or who frequently stay overnight on campus. A structured training schedule ensures that all staff are trained appropriately. Designated staff have taken effective action in response to safeguarding incidents and have good links with local safeguarding boards.
34. Students feel safe and value the college's positive response to any issues that they raise. A 24-hour contact number provides students and the families of residential students with direct help and support should the need arise. The college implemented considerable improvements at the Newton Rigg site quickly. The safeguarding processes and systems at Newton Rigg are now

systematic and thorough and there are effective links with the University of Cumbria who share the site.

35. The college promotes safeguarding effectively through induction, group tutorials, displays and wallet-sized 'essential information' cards. Internet protocol and safety are promoted but the level of learners' understanding of techniques to maintain privacy on social network sites is inconsistent. Health and safety practices are thorough and comprehensive. Learners exhibit a particularly good understanding of the benefits of employing safe working practices. They risk assess the practical activities in college and on work placement.
36. Equality and diversity are promoted well although staff miss many opportunities to embed topics in lessons and work-based reviews. Students at the Newton Rigg campus have a limited understanding of equality and diversity issues. Staff have received appropriate equality and diversity awareness training and the college is proactive when students raise concerns. Performance data are analysed and effective action is taken to reduce any gaps in the achievement of different groups of students. The equality and diversity group shares good practice and ensures that the college meets its legal duties. The ambitious targets to ensure that the staff profile reflects the student body and local community are met.
37. The college is outstanding in gathering and responding to students' and other users' views. It collects students' views through surveys, focus groups, course representatives, the students' union and the students' council. Students have good representation on the governing body, cross-college committees, interview panels for prospective staff and curriculum groups. The views of employers and other users are used effectively to ensure a highly responsive curriculum matched to the needs of land-based industries. The college engages with industry well through industrial advisory panels, surveys and work-based training.
38. Quality assurance procedures are robust but are not yet implemented fully at the Newton Rigg campus. Senior managers focus very effectively on improving provision and students' achievement. They have a very clear understanding of the areas for improvement. The college uses data and key performance indicators, including lesson observations and students' views, routinely to identify risk, implement effective actions and drive forward improvement. Management intervention has been effective in bringing improvement, for example in animal management. However, application of these quality assurance procedures is not always prompt enough to tackle a few areas of underperformance such as the declining success rates of adult students.
39. The self-assessment process is inclusive, rigorous and externally validated. While the report is broadly accurate, it contains too much descriptive evidence, a few of the strengths are over-stated and areas for improvement are not always developed sufficiently. The quality of course reviews is inconsistent.

40. Financial management is much improved and is now highly effective. Budgets are clearly understood and monitored very closely. Significant recent investments in specialist learning resources, through the college's ability to generate independent income, have enhanced the learning environments. The college has exceeded targets on student numbers consistently and in the context of its high success rates it is judged to offer outstanding value for money.

Subject areas

Agriculture and horticulture

Grade 2

Context

41. At the time of the inspection 285 students were studying on agriculture and 274 on horticulture courses. College-based courses range from foundation level to higher education across several campuses. Most agricultural students are aged 16 to 18 and the majority of horticulture students are adults. In work-based learning there are 247 agriculture and 138 horticulture apprentices. The majority of learners are male.

Key findings

- Success rates are outstanding in agriculture and satisfactory in horticulture. Pass rates are also very high on most courses but they were poor on functional skills in 2010/11. Retention is good except on the intermediate-level national diploma in horticulture and too many advanced-level floristry students at the Harrogate site leave college early.
- Students on full-time and work-based programmes achieve a high number of additional relevant vocational qualifications. For example, agriculture students complete tractor driving and telescopic handling qualifications, arboriculture students gain chain-saw qualifications and horticulture students complete pesticide and machinery operation awards.
- Most advanced-level students in agriculture and horticulture achieve high grades. Progression rates are good and a high proportion of students gain employment in their chosen industry or progress to higher-level courses. Attendance is good across all subjects and levels.
- Success rates on apprenticeship programmes in agriculture are high and improving. For advanced apprentices the numbers who complete within the planned time is low. The college has implemented effective strategies and current data show significant improvements.
- Students develop good personal and social skills; they enjoy their learning and become more confident in working in their chosen industry. Students feel safe in college and on work placements. Health and safety are promoted throughout activities and students conduct risk assessments routinely in practical sessions.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and meet students' needs and areas of interest. Teachers make good use of the college's estate to link practical and theory work and to develop students' specialist knowledge. Horticulture students maintain the college's grounds and agriculture students carry out farm duties. Students value these responsibilities and gain a good understanding of working in a commercial environment.

- In the better lessons students participate fully in classroom and practical activities and demonstrate good technical knowledge. Information and learning technology and the college's VLE are used well in agriculture to support learning but they are less well developed in horticulture. In a minority of lessons a few students are not fully engaged and teachers miss opportunities to check learning. Students' note-taking is poor in a few lessons.
- Assessment is good. Teachers plan assessment schedules carefully and students complete a good range of industry-specific tasks. Teachers' feedback is clear and it helps students to improve the standard of their work. In lessons teachers give useful oral feedback and encourage students to work at a productive pace.
- The variety of courses and range of option routes are good. The college involves employers fully in developing work-based programmes. Students develop higher-level practical skills and compete in prestigious horticultural and agricultural shows and competitions; awards include a gold medal at Euro Skills and a silver medal at the World Skills Championship.
- Students value the helpful formal and informal support from their tutors. Additional support is extensive. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive prompt and effective support and achieve as well as their peers. Students know their target grades and these are monitored regularly although identified actions are not always specific enough to help students achieve their interim goals.
- Leadership and management are good. Highly effective leadership in agriculture ensures that teachers and support staff work together to ensure high standards. The new horticulture manager has introduced many recent changes to drive forward improvements. Horticultural facilities are now of a good standard and students have use of up-to-date equipment.
- Self-assessment is thorough and data are used well to monitor performance. However, action plans are not always sufficiently clear about how improvements will be achieved. Clear strategies are in place to improve the low retention rates on intermediate-level horticulture.

What does Askham Bryan College need to do to improve further?

- Improve retention on intermediate-level horticulture by monitoring attendance and completion of assignments closely and ensuring that targets are specific and motivate students to complete their course.
- Extend the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning so that the best practice observed is used by all staff to ensure that students are fully engaged in lessons, make accurate notes and that learning is checked regularly and consolidated.

Animal management

Grade 3

Context

42. Currently 721 students follow courses in animal management from entry to advanced levels. Of these, 90% are on full-time courses, 83% are aged 16 to 18 and 75% are female. A few learners are on work-based courses. The courses are provided across several campuses including in partnerships with two colleges and several schools.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Success rates on foundation-level courses are high. Success rates on intermediate- and some advanced-level courses are low due to poor retention although appropriate action has led to improvements in retention this year. Many students make exceptional progress given their starting point. Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are good.
- Students value the specialist pathways offered and develop good practical skills and knowledge that prepare them well for employment. Skilled technician instructors teach practical lessons and expect high standards. Students are confident in handling a wide range of animals including farm stock and exotics.
- Students make a good contribution to the college and the community. For example, students promote careers in animal management to school pupils, organise a broad range of charity events and carry out voluntary work with a wildlife trust. Enrichment opportunities are good and range from a study tour to Africa to working at a local zoo.
- Students feel safe. Students demonstrate safe working practices and carry out risk assessments for practical lessons. They make good contributions to reviewing and improving safety arrangements and feel that their concerns are listened to and acted upon. For example, the college has issued personal safety alarms to students at one centre.
- Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons use a range of activities effectively so that students enjoy learning, their needs are well met and they make good progress. However, in too many advanced-level theory lessons students have insufficient challenge to develop their technical knowledge and independent learning skills. The use of ILT to support learning is underdeveloped.
- Teachers have good industrial experience and use high-quality resources skilfully to develop students' commercial standard skills and knowledge. For example, animal management students rear partridges for the gamekeeping department. Practical resources and vocational examples reinforce theory very effectively. Teachers allocate animals carefully to match students' ability and stage of learning.

- Many intermediate-level students progress to advanced-level courses. Progression to higher education and relevant employment is good. A good range of visits, guest speakers and additional qualifications complement students' chosen specialist route. Students develop relevant vocational skills such as dog grooming and stockmanship, and broader transferable workplace skills.
- Assessment practice is good. Assessors give comprehensive feedback with clear indications of how students can achieve better grades. Students value the support they get from their teachers in the dedicated assignment lessons. The standard of learners' work is good.
- Partnerships and links with employers provide a wide variety of relevant and supportive work placements. School partnerships are well established and successful. The partnership with a zoo enriches students' learning experience and the practical work they do there prepares them well for employment.
- Personal support and guidance are good. Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are good. The support for students with significant learning needs enables them to make good progress. For example, the animal unit has been adapted to assist students with visual impairments. Students know their target grades; their progress is now being monitored closely and they understand what they need to do to improve.
- Leadership and management are good. Staff work well together as a team to improve students' learning experiences and the plans for improvement are ambitious. Successful actions, to rectify the issues identified through self-assessment and the use of student feedback, have led to improvements in course delivery and retention is now good. However, data are not always used effectively to evaluate the effectiveness of the quality improvement plan and to monitor the consistency between centres.

What does Askham Bryan College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates by developing the range of assignments and the effective use of ILT further to support learning.
- Improve retention by ensuring that those who are at risk of leaving are identified quickly and that prompt support is in place to help them stay on their course.
- Use the outcomes from lesson observations to share good practice and ensure that all students, particularly those on advanced-level courses, are sufficiently challenged in theory lessons.

Equine

Grade 2

Context

43. Currently 91 students are studying intermediate- or advanced-level diplomas in horse care with a further 41 students on higher-education equine programmes. In addition there are six students on a foundation-level programme, eight school pupils on the intermediate-level certificate in horse care, and eight apprentices. The vast majority of students are female aged 16 to 18.

Key findings

- Success rates are satisfactory although they have declined on full-time courses over the last three years as an increasing number of students have left college without achieving their main qualification. Thorough arrangements are now in place to identify and support students at risk of leaving their course and in-year retention is now much higher.
- All students who complete the course pass their qualification and the proportion of students achieving merit and distinction grades is high. Advanced-level students complete the subsidiary diploma in the first two terms, and on achievement they progress to the extended diploma course or to other positive destinations.
- Most students achieve additional relevant qualifications. Intermediate-level students complete the foundation diploma in work-based horse care and employability skills awards successfully. Advanced-level students achieve certification in riding and road safety, employability and understanding stewarding.
- Students enjoy their programmes and the strong focus on the practical aspects. Staff are approachable and students value their support and guidance. Students work well together and are placed in groups according to their riding ability.
- Learning is enhanced through visits, visiting speakers and the sharing of horses with a commercial yard in London. Students benefit from the extensive range of partnerships with industry. For example, students can attend specialist clinics with top equine trainers. Students have good involvement in the preparation and organisation of the British Equine Event held at the college, the annual equine science conference and other fund-raising activities.
- Assessment is good. A good range of assignments with an increased practical focus assist students in developing skills for progression to higher education or employment. Teachers assess practical skills thoroughly. The quality of the marking of written assignments is inconsistent; some teachers' comments are effective at helping students to improve while others fail to identify poor spelling and do not explain how they can achieve better grades.

- The teaching of practical skills, particularly stable management, is good. Students are taught in small groups with good use of demonstration, student practice, peer observation and feedback. In riding lessons teachers make good use of questions to challenge students to evaluate both the horse they are riding and their own skills. They miss some opportunities to challenge advanced-level students further.
- Theory teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use a variety of activities to engage students but these do not always provide sufficient variation to meet the needs of all students. The use of ILT to support learning is underdeveloped. In a minority of lessons the teachers do not manage the group work effectively and their questions do not provide sufficient challenge to advanced-level students.
- Support for students is good. Tutors give considerable informal individual support and guidance. Students discuss their progress regularly at one-to-one reviews. However, targets are not sufficiently specific to help students make the best progress. Pastoral support tutors deliver group tutorials and provide extra personal support. Support for students with an identified learning difficulty and/or disability is very good and they make good progress and achieve well.
- Students develop good practical skills that enhance their employment prospects. They are attentive and work diligently in practical sessions. Rigorous attention is given to health and safety and safeguarding. Students feel safe and demonstrate a clear awareness of safe working practices.
- Students complete realistic yard duties. Intermediate-level students' pace of work and performance are outstanding. For advanced-level students, teachers provide insufficient emphasis on working at a suitable pace and on supervisory skills. A weekly award, which rewards the student who has made most progress, is valued at all levels.
- Leadership and management are good. The recent restructure, expansion of resources and changes in staffing are skilfully managed. Staff have very good industrial expertise and are enthusiastic about the positive impact the changes have made to students' experiences. The specialist resources, including the well-managed equine yard, which has a good range of horses and equipment, are used very effectively to support learning.

What does Askham Bryan College need to do to improve further?

- Share good practice to improve the quality of learning in theory lessons, ensure that activities are sufficiently challenging for advanced-level students and that ILT is used more effectively to support learning.
- Increase retention on full-time courses by ensuring that initial assessments provide a comprehensive understanding of students' individual abilities and that their progress is monitored closely so that issues are identified quickly and that appropriate help is put in place to help them stay on their course.
- Ensure that all students are set challenging and specific targets that are reviewed regularly so that they progress at a good pace and achieve their full potential.

Information about the inspection

44. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the college's deputy principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
45. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed lessons, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Askham Bryan College

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	1,474	0	1,177	297	0
Full-time learners	1,322	327	317	169	509
Part-time learners					
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2	1	2	3	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	1				

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