

Hartlepool College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130567

Name of lead inspector: Fred Brown HMI

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Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Hartlepool College of Further Education is a medium-sized college, operating on town centre sites in the unitary authority of Hartlepool in the Tees Valley. It provides mainly vocational education and training to meet the needs of young people and adults, with a diverse range of courses from pre-entry level to higher education. The college offers programmes in 14 subject areas. The majority of learners are in the subject areas of health and care, engineering, construction and preparation for life and work. Apprenticeships are mainly in engineering, construction, retail and commerce. The majority of learners in Train to Gain provision are in retail and manufacturing. Around 32% of students aged 16 to 18 study courses at advanced level and some 41% at intermediate level. The college's curriculum has changed since the last inspection with a significant increase in employer-responsive provision. Around a third of its income is derived from programmes designed to meet the needs of employers with the remainder focused on meeting the range of other learners' needs. Further education (FE) provision is overwhelmingly vocational in nature. A new college is being built on the existing town centre site and is scheduled to be completed by June 2011.
2. The proportion of school leavers in Hartlepool achieving five GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics is well below the national average and many learners join the college having achieved lower than average levels of qualifications.
3. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - JTL (construction)
 - CITB (construction)
4. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - Durham County Council (health, public services and care)
 - Hartlepool Borough Council (health, public services and care)
 - The Studio, Hartlepool (arts, media and publishing)
 - Catcote School (preparation for life and work)
 - Training Support for Industry (construction)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	354 part-time learners
Further education (16 to 18)	1,091 full-time learners 263 part-time learners
Foundation learning, including Entry to Employment	488 full-time learners 65 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	210 full-time learners 1,874 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	1,880 learners 576 apprentices
Informal adult learning	289 learners

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	
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	2
Construction, planning and the built environment	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Literacy, numeracy and Entry to Employment	3

Overall effectiveness

- This is a good college with a good capacity to improve outcomes for learners and the quality of provision. Learners feel very safe and this reflects the good promotion of safeguarding. Leadership and management are good; senior leaders and governors have a clear agenda for improvement and focus on raising the quality of provision to increase learners' chances of success. Self-assessment has contributed well to improvements in many areas. Equality of opportunity is well integrated into all aspects of college life, although not all teachers and assessors promote equality in lessons and during reviews of work-based learners sufficiently. Outcomes for learners improved during the last four years and the pace of improvement is particularly good for foundation learners and learners aged 16 to 18. The college recognises the need to improve further the outcomes for adult learners and the numbers of learners achieving high grades in their examinations and in some subjects. Learners make good

progress, produce a high standard of work and acquire a wide range of practical skills. The quality of teaching is good as is the quality of provision in most of the subject areas inspected. The teaching of practical activities is particularly good but some theory teaching is less effective and the use of information and learning technology (ILT) is underdeveloped in some areas.

6. Learners benefit from a wide range of courses in all subject areas and collaboration with partners is outstanding. Arrangements to gather and act on the views of employers are particularly good. Learners' views are used well to improve the college although all learners need a better understanding of the roles of course representatives. The very strong mutual respect between learners and staff is reflected in the way that buildings and their facilities are looked after. Learners benefit from good care, guidance, support and specialist advice.

Main findings

- Learners' outcomes are good. Overall success rates on long courses have improved year on year and are now at least satisfactory. Success rates on long courses for all foundation learners and for advanced learners aged 16 to 18 were high in 2008/09. Apprentices and Train to Gain learners achieve good outcomes. The progression of learners from Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes to further learning or employment is good.
- The standard of learners' work is good and helps to prepare them for further study or employment. Learners are attentive and they develop good teamwork, and study and presentation skills. Learners enjoy their work and college strategies have led to improvements in attendance which is now over 90% on long courses. The college celebrates annually the outstanding success of the many learners who have to overcome considerable difficulties in order to succeed.
- Learners make at least the progress expected of them and increasing numbers make good progress. The college recognises the need to improve progress in some subject areas. There is good progression by 14 to 16-year-old learners to further study and by college learners to courses at a higher level, including higher education.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. In the better sessions, good use is made of practical activities, tasks are tailored to individuals and all learners are challenged. In a small number of theory lessons, learners are not always involved sufficiently and the pace is too slow. Learners receive good constructive feedback on their work and how they might improve.
- The college's responsiveness to the needs of employers and those seeking employment is outstanding with long-term benefits for the local economy and learners. Its partnerships are exemplary and its work with local schools and community groups has helped it to develop courses and enrichment activities

that meet the needs of learners, including those who might not otherwise participate.

- Learners receive good care, guidance and support to help them achieve their learning goals. Good literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and information technology (IT) support help learners to achieve their main qualifications. Good information, advice and guidance effectively help learners to choose the right programme. Pastoral support is good and helps remove barriers to learning.
- Leadership and management are good. There is a clear vision for the college, strong partnership working and a marked upward trend in success rates. Governors work well together and with senior managers and effective organisational structures support the sharing of good practice.
- The college provides a safe and welcoming environment, where safeguarding has a high priority. All staff undergo safeguarding checks and attend regular training. Learners state how safe they feel in a college that they describe as welcoming, inclusive and well kept. Learners acquire knowledge to make informed choices about their own health, well-being and safe working.
- There is a strong commitment to equality and diversity from senior leaders. The college has a good understanding of the needs of the local population and has successfully developed courses for those who face significant barriers to learning. The 'respect initiative' has a positive impact on the college. However, there is insufficient promotion of some aspects of equality and diversity.
- Self-assessment is thorough and involves staff at all levels. There are effective processes for monitoring, evaluation and review, including curriculum scrutiny. The positive impact of improvement strategies can be seen in a number of areas.
- Learners make a satisfactory contribution to the college and the wider community. However, not enough learners are willing to become course representatives and existing representatives lack sufficient support to develop the communication and advocacy skills needed to express the views of other learners.
- The use of technology to promote and support learning is satisfactory. The college's significant investment in ILT is not yet having much impact on learning. In too many sessions ILT is only used for internet searches and quizzes and not to explore a topic or to extend and share learning.
- The college recognises the need to further improve success rates for adult learners and on short courses. In some subjects not enough learners exceed their target grades or achieve high grades.

What does Hartlepool College need to do to improve further?

- Further improve success rates on intermediate and advanced level programmes for adult learners, on short courses and in some subject areas.

- Further improve the achievement of high grades and minimum target grades in some subject areas.
- Extend the range of opportunities for learners to develop their advocacy skills in order to enhance their ability to contribute to their communities and to represent the views of their peers.
- Continue to improve the quality of theory teaching and extend the interactive use of ILT to enhance learning.
- Ensure more effective promotion of aspects of equality and diversity through teaching and on reviews for apprentices.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the welcoming atmosphere in college
- the help they receive when choosing courses
- how the support from tutors helps them to make progress with their studies and to resolve personal problems
- how teachers adapt their teaching to meet learners' preferred ways of learning and use their good subject knowledge effectively, with a good balance between formality and informality
- the facilities in the learning resource centre
- how the college has adapted its provision to meet the needs of a wide range of students and to help them achieve and make progress
- the help they receive when considering what to do when their course ends
- the trips, guest speakers and fund-raising events, which broaden their understanding of life and work.

What learners would like to see improved:

- social spaces in order to promote better integration between students on different courses
- the availability of free drinking water around college
- how they find out about enrichment activities
- the availability of computers at certain times
- car parking for students.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the excellent communications with the college which ensure a continued high level of mutual trust

- the considerable benefits that their links to college bring to their businesses and employees
- the rapid speed and willingness of the college in responding to requests for improvement
- the college's flexibility and responsiveness in meeting their needs
- the approach of the college to designing programmes which provide sustainable solutions to meet strategic needs
- the effectiveness of the employers' forum as a consultative and planning group.

What employers would like to see improved:

- employers have made no further recommendations for what should be improved.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

7. The college has a good capacity to improve. There has been a strong upward trend in success rates during the last four years. Targets and key performance indicators are used effectively to monitor progress. The college has made good progress in addressing all areas for improvement from the last inspection. Leadership and management are strong and governors use their expertise to good effect to challenge and support senior managers. Contributions by employers are used extremely well to enhance the quality and range of provision. The use of the views of learners is improving. Resources are used well to improve provision for the benefit of learners.
8. The college knows itself well and has effective measures to identify and address areas of underperformance. Self-assessment is thorough and involves staff at all levels. The process of using course reviews to contribute to self-assessment is effective. Stringent and ongoing monitoring, review and evaluation ensure that identified issues are acted upon through appropriate intervention strategies. Rigorous scrutiny of the curriculum results in detailed action plans to address areas for improvement. The success of improvement strategies is seen in many areas, such as travel and tourism, where success rates have increased greatly.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

9. Trends in learners' attainment of qualifications are satisfactory. Following year on year increases success rates on long courses improved to around national averages in 2007/08. Success rates for 16 to 18 year-old learners on courses at foundation and advanced levels were well above national averages in 2008/09. At intermediate level they improved to around the national average. For adult learners success rates are good at foundation level and satisfactory at intermediate and advanced levels. Apprentices and Train to Gain learners achieve good outcomes. Their timely success rates are improving. Success rates for the small number of learners on short courses are low. The progression of E2E learners to further education or employment is good.
10. There are few significant differences in success rates for different groups of learners. Male and female learners achieve similar success rates. Bangladeshi learners achieve success rates similar to the college average. Nearly all learners receiving additional learning support stay on programmes and over 70% achieve their learning goals. The number of subjects where learners achieve high grades and meet their target grades has improved year on year. Learners develop satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills and success rates in key skills are higher than the low national average. Most learners who come to the college with lower than average prior qualifications do well.

11. The standard of learners' work is good and helps prepare them for further study or employment. They learn to become attentive, focused on tasks, and to develop good teamwork and valuable study and presentation skills. Learners make good progress in lessons. Value-added data show that an increasing number of learners make good progress during their courses. The college recognises the need to improve progress in some subjects. There is good progression by 14 to 16-year-old learners to further study at the college and by college learners to higher levels, including higher education.
12. Learners enjoy their work and college strategies have led to improvements in attendance to 90% on long courses in 2008/09. Learners state how safe they feel in a college that they describe as welcoming, inclusive and well kept. They appreciate the training they receive on safe working, road and fire safety and safe travel. Learners talk positively about the college values of tolerance and being treated fairly as adults.
13. Learners acquire good knowledge to make informed choices about their own health and well-being. This includes aspects of healthy eating, mental health, emotional development and sexual health. The benefits to health of exercise and sport are well promoted. However, some learners state that they are not convinced of the value of changing eating habits or adopting healthy lifestyles.
14. Learners make a satisfactory contribution to the college and the wider community. The college offers good opportunities for learners to contribute to the community through practical projects such as re-decorating market stalls, international trips, participation in sports and fund raising for charities. Learners are increasingly involved in influencing decision making in the college. However, further work is needed to ensure that representatives understand fully their roles and are able to develop the communication and advocacy skills needed to express the views of other learners.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

15. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers set precise learning goals and make clear links to prior learning. Teachers design appropriate learning materials, activities and methods to meet individual needs. Good use is made of open and targeted questioning to check learning and of praise to motivate learners. Learning that includes practical activities is lively and engaging. Practical tasks are used to help learners better understand theory; for example, to ensure learners understand the relevance of anatomy and physiology to holistic therapy treatments. However, in weaker theory lessons learners are not challenged sufficiently and the pace is too slow. Skilled teachers use their expertise to inspire learners and to keep them informed of industrial developments. Learners receive timely feedback and oral feedback is particularly strong. Some written feedback is insufficiently detailed to inform learners of what they need to do to improve. Several staff are external examiners and verifiers and use their expertise well to help learners. Assessment practice is satisfactory in work-based learning.

16. Staff regularly review learners' achievements and progress. Learners receive good feedback to help them set priorities and know how to achieve their goals. Work-based learners' progress is monitored carefully by managers and most learners are given specific targets. However, on some programmes, including work-based learning, learners' individual targets are not sufficiently precise.
17. Learners receive good support to develop their literacy, numeracy, language and IT skills to achieve their main qualifications. Support is provided in a variety of ways in order to meet learners' needs. Skilled and well-qualified support workers give good individual support in classes and in small groups. Additional learning support is well resourced to ensure that learners get enough individual attention.
18. The use of ILT to support learning is satisfactory. The college has invested well in resources and staffing to support the use of technology but this is not yet having enough impact on learning. Technology is used well in construction but is more uneven in other subject areas. In too many lessons its use is restricted to internet searches and quizzes, rather than being used to extend and share learning.
19. The promotion of equality through learning, teaching, training and assessment is satisfactory. However, not all schemes of work clearly identify how equality and diversity can be promoted. Work-based learning reviews are not used sufficiently to promote or monitor equality and diversity.
20. Arrangements to assure the quality of teaching and learning are robust, with accurate and constructive judgements made by observers. Inspectors agreed with the judgements and grades awarded during joint observations. Observation outcomes are linked well to college priorities and to individual staff development needs. The observation system covers all teaching, including provision for learners aged 14 to 16 and E2E, but does not sufficiently include tutorials and Access to IT courses.
21. The college responds very well to the needs and interests of learners. The curriculum is broad and diverse and includes good progression opportunities in all subjects from entry level to higher education. The range of diploma courses is growing and the college plans to offer additional subjects in 2010. Recruitment to these courses is low at intermediate and advanced levels. There are common timetabling arrangements with partner schools. In 2008/09, 283 pupils aged 14 to 16, including some who were at risk of exclusion from school, took part in college programmes.
22. The college makes an outstanding response to meeting the needs of employers and considers well their longer-term strategic needs to increase their productivity and efficiency. The college is one of the first in the North East to be awarded the Training Quality Standard for excellence in meeting training needs in engineering, construction and building services. The college offers extensive

work-based learning programmes and the numbers of Train to Gain learners have increased significantly.

23. The college makes an outstanding contribution to partnerships in the community and is seen as flexible and highly responsive by its partners. It has very strong partnerships with schools and community groups. It plays a key role in driving the development of 14–19 Diplomas and successfully involves employers in their design. International partnerships with employers and colleges in France, Germany, Italy and China enrich the curriculum and significantly broaden learners' experience.
24. The college attracts significant external funding to support its work with unemployed people. It contributes very well to reducing the proportion of young people not in education, training or employment, through E2E and basic skills for life and work programmes. Because of funding restrictions the college has used its own resources to continue provision for many adult learners.
25. The provision for enrichment is good. In subject areas learners take part in educational visits and charity events or benefit from additional short courses. Tutorials and the 'Respect' initiative provide good opportunities for personal development. The range of sporting activities and participation in them has increased significantly. Through membership of the Hartlepool Sporting Association and partnership with local clubs, learners' participation in recreational opportunities is increasing further. The college promotes enrichment at its SPLASH (safety, personal effectiveness, lifestyle, activities, sport and health) event during induction but not enough learners are aware of the full range of opportunities available. Most learners have good access to work experience.
26. Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Objective advice to potential learners helps them make good choices about programmes that meet their needs. The full-time prospectus and website are informative and promote positive images of learners from different ethnic backgrounds and both genders in a range of occupations. Transition arrangements for school leavers moving from school to college are good. Initial assessment is used well to plan learning programmes for all learners, including apprentices. It begins well before learners start college through contact with schools. Good induction procedures help learners to settle in well.
27. Pastoral support is good. A wide range of services to keep learners on courses and attending well include counselling, help with travel arrangements and housing, and financial support. The college works well with agencies that support young parents, smoking cessation, drugs awareness, sexual health, condom distribution and alcohol awareness. Pregnant learners are very well supported to help them achieve. Support for entry to higher education is effective and the numbers progressing to higher education have increased significantly.

28. Tutorials work well and group tutorials provide guidance on a broad range of subjects including health, careers and citizenship. Staff meet each term to gather information on learners' progress and this is used well to inform personal tutorials. The best learning targets agreed during personal tutorials are precise and detailed. However, targets from work-based learning reviews are not specific or measurable. Parents and employers are kept well informed about learners' achievements and of any concerns about their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

29. Leadership and management are good. The clear vision for the college is effectively communicated to all staff. The college understands well local and regional needs and plays a key role in local initiatives. There is a marked upward trend in success rates over the last four years. Partnership working is particularly strong and engagement with employers is excellent. The college structure works very effectively, supporting both the sharing of good practice and the empowerment of staff.
30. The governing body has developed well since the last inspection and governors have an appropriate range of relevant skills and experience. They understand their statutory duties and actively challenge and support senior staff. Governors have supported the new building project and recognise its contribution to promoting ambition and raising aspirations in the college. They have a detailed knowledge of the college, its strengths and areas for further development.
31. The college provides a safe and welcoming environment for users, with high priority given to safeguarding. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and attend regular training and updates on child protection issues for children and vulnerable adults. Learners feel safe and know where to get help and support for their problems. The college's single central record shows that all required checks and processes are in place to meet staff recruitment criteria. The college collaborates well with other agencies, including the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Through regular 'road shows' the college works hard to ensure that learners are fully aware of safety issues. Relevant aspects of health and safety have a high profile in subject areas.
32. The very strong commitment to equality and diversity from senior leaders is reflected in college values and the single equality scheme, in place since 2007. Its application is regularly monitored and equality impact assessments are carried out. The college is an inclusive environment, with effective strategies to address major local equality issues. It has successfully developed a range of suitable provision for learners who are traditionally under-represented, including disengaged young people. The college's 'Respect' initiative has helped to improve learners' understanding of equality and diversity and fostered an atmosphere of tolerance, where all groups of learners feel at ease. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups reflects that of the local population. The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is insufficient promotion of equality matters in progress

reviews for apprentices. Insufficient positive action has been taken to attract females to subject areas traditionally dominated by males such as construction and to attract males into subjects such as hairdressing.

33. The college makes good use of data to identify gaps in achievement and for self-assessment. An analysis of the performance of different groups reveals no trends of underperformance by particular groups such as learners from minority ethnic groups. The college has acted effectively to improve the performance of learners facing major barriers to successful learning and has narrowed the achievement gap.
34. Communications with partners, especially employers, are excellent and support the drive to secure improvements in provision. Employers' views are harnessed effectively through their steering group. The college makes good use of learners' views when seeking ways to improve provision. They provide their views through surveys, 'Learner Voice' events and opportunities to question the principal. The college acts to address learners' concerns and is seeking to increase survey response rates. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well in making their views heard. The student council is involved well in planning events. The role of the student council and student representatives is not promoted sufficiently well.
35. The college manages and uses its resources well to provide good value for money. Existing buildings are very well maintained and recent developments, such as the cubicles for personal reviews, have improved facilities for learners. The temporary accommodation in engineering and construction is of a high standard and has ensured that current learners are not disadvantaged whilst new accommodation is being built. There are many schemes to improve sustainability and save money for the direct benefit of learners. These include selling the scrap metal from the engineering and construction areas and using the crushed rubble from a demolished building to form the foundations of the new building.

Subject areas

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Context

36. The college offers a number of full- and part-time courses, apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes. Courses range from entry level to higher education. Currently, 248 full-time learners and 84 part-time learners are studying mechanical, electric/electronics, motor vehicle or aircraft engineering. A further 181 learners are following fabrication and welding, mechanical production, electrical or motor vehicle apprenticeships and 333 learners are taking Train to Gain qualifications.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates on most foundation and advanced level programmes are high. At intermediate level success rates are satisfactory with the exception of the level 2 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in performing engineering operations on which success rates have declined and are now low. Outcomes for all apprentices and Train to Gain learners have improved in the last three years and are now high. Success rates on business improvement techniques qualifications are outstanding.
- Learners develop good practical skills in workshops and in the workplace. Full-time learners enjoy the opportunity to mix vocational and academic studies and acquire additional NVQ units in welding, fabrication and machining techniques. Apprentices progressively develop skills to industry standard. Many learners produce work above the standard expected, including skills in fault finding on high technology machine tools.
- Learners feel safe and health and safety awareness and compliance are given a high priority in all engineering activities. Learners have a good awareness of safeguarding procedures and industry standards and many successfully complete risk assessments as part of their studies. Teachers emphasise the importance of healthy lifestyles at induction but this is not sufficiently reinforced in their courses. Most learners contribute enthusiastically to community and national projects aimed at raising funds for underprivileged or homeless people.
- Teaching and learning are especially good in lessons involving practical activities, which learners enjoy. Group work enables them to explore new concepts and applications such as fabrication, welding, and aircraft maintenance. However, in less effective lessons teachers spend too little time checking that learners understand new material. In a few lessons teachers did not enhance sufficiently students' learning through the interactive use of ILT.
- Resources in workshops and classrooms are well managed, are of a good standard and meet the needs of learners well. The college works well with local companies to find good work placement opportunities for full-time learners. Teachers make good use of their up-to-date technical experience to enhance

learners' understanding of work environments. Some staff have written authoritative subject textbooks.

- The monitoring of learners' progress is good in all elements of their apprenticeship or college courses. Information is regularly shared with companies and parents, and learners have clear action plans for improvement. Work-based assessment is good. Staff give good support to enable learners to develop workplace skills and provide assessment on demand. Targets set in work-based learners' reviews are not always precise and are insufficiently monitored at subsequent reviews.
- Learners have a thorough knowledge of the good progression routes available from entry level through to higher levels. Progression from advanced level is particularly good with approximately 75% of completing learners successfully progressing to higher education or employment.
- Outstanding links exist with many local companies, who comment very positively about the flexibility of staff in arranging learner assessments to suit company shift patterns. The college has recently achieved part B of the Training Quality Standard "excellence in engineering" award. Learners on business improvement techniques programmes carry out projects which significantly improve the performance and competitiveness of the company and the sustainability of local industry.
- Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are clearly assessed early in their programme. Where additional learning needs are identified, appropriate support is given. Learners value this support greatly and recognise its contribution to improving their achievements. Learners speak highly of the excellent academic and pastoral support received from curriculum staff.
- Leadership and management are good. Recent curriculum changes enable learners to achieve nationally recognised qualifications at advanced level after each year of study, resulting in high success rates. All staff participate in training opportunities, including industrial visits and updating. They are fully aware of the procedures for dealing with safeguarding issues and safe working practices are prioritised effectively.
- Learners' understanding and knowledge of equality and diversity are not developed and monitored sufficiently during work-based progress reviews or during teaching and learning. There are good activities to raise learners' awareness in the learner induction programme but this knowledge is not consolidated during courses. Some engineering courses have no course representatives. Learners are not sufficiently aware of the work of the student council and some report that issues raised by them are not effectively followed up.
- All staff are actively involved in self-assessment and the process is well understood. The subject self-assessment report recognises accurately most strengths and areas for improvement.

What does Hartlepool College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rate on the level 2 NVQ in performing engineering operations.
- Improve the quality of teaching in theory lessons by more interactive use of ILT and engaging learners in practical activities.
- Further reinforce equality and diversity in teaching and learning and within workplace reviews.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Grade 2

Context

37. Around 70% of the 561 construction learners are aged 16 to 18 years. They study programmes from foundation to advanced levels which include construction crafts, technical and professional programmes. Most attend full time, based at the college's main sites. Nearly all of the 162 adult learners study part time at intermediate and advanced levels. A further 190 apprentices are employed locally by around 150 employers. There are 138 learners on Train to Gain programmes and 68 learners on E2E courses. About 95% of learners are male. The college manages a large apprenticeship programme for a national construction managing agent.

Key findings

- Overall success rates for learners are satisfactory. They are very high for the large numbers of 16 to 18-year-olds at foundation level, satisfactory at advanced level but below the national rate at intermediate level. Success rates are inadequate for adults at intermediate level and have declined at advanced level, where they are now just satisfactory. Progression rates are high for E2E learners, good for college learners from foundation to intermediate levels and satisfactory at advanced level. Attendance rates are high.
- Success rates on work-based learning programme are good. Framework success rates for apprentices are around the national rate. Their timely rates are above the national rate. For advanced apprentices success rates are high. Success rates for Train to Gain learners are high. Success rates on the college's franchised programme on behalf of a construction company were very high among the 54 leavers in 2008/09.
- Learners enjoy their work at the college. The standard of their practical skills is good and they are able to explain clearly what work they have completed and the skills gained. They speak enthusiastically about their courses and in particular the practical craft skills they develop in workshops.
- Arrangements to manage the health and safety of learners in workshop areas are good. Learners wear appropriate protective equipment and clothing and health and safety matters are reinforced by teachers when explaining tasks. Learners can explain the type and use of safety equipment and the risk assessments they produce as part of their college practical projects. Arrangements for the safeguarding of learners and apprentices are good. Learners feel safe and understand the reporting system and the support available.
- Teachers use good methods to engage learners and sustain their attention. There is good use of new technologies to enhance learning. Practical resources, including tools and equipment, are good. Learners' practical work is improved through regular support from teachers. In weaker lessons uninspiring tasks are

set and teaching techniques are insufficiently varied. The pace is too slow for more able learners.

- Teachers offer good support and constructive feedback to both groups and individual learners. Teachers use their industrial skills and expertise to appraise learners' work. Assessment practice is satisfactory.
- There is a broad range of construction courses for learners, covering all of the main crafts from entry level to advanced and higher level technical and professional programmes. The qualifications learners achieve are highly valued by employers. The offer meets the goals of the learners and provides good progression opportunities. Enrichment is good and offers learners opportunities to contribute to community projects.
- Initial advice and guidance are satisfactory. Construction teachers visit schools to help pupils make choices about courses they want to study. This is followed up through specialist advice and guidance in the college. Parents of younger applicants are encouraged to speak to tutors during the recruitment process to ensure that the course is suitable.
- Courses and programmes are well managed. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and makes good use of data to inform judgements, to identify areas of concern and to set targets for improvement. Course teams are involved actively in the process. The quality of physical and learning resources is good. Arrangements to ensure that resources meet the need of learners during the redevelopment of the main site are excellent. Staff share their expertise well with learners and physical resources are good.
- There is insufficient active encouragement of women to participate in construction courses. The college places no barriers to women undertaking construction programmes but numbers of female learners are low. There is insufficient checking of equality issues during apprentice reviews.
- Employers contribute actively to developments in the construction curriculum and offer employment opportunities for apprentices. Employers support the college through a range of initiatives, including sustainability programmes and apprenticeships with the main contractor for the redevelopment of the college site. The involvement of learners is less well developed. Many are not sufficiently aware of the roles of student representatives in taking forward student feedback.

What does Hartlepool College need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of 16 to 18-year-olds and adults who complete their college training programmes at intermediate level and increase the number of college apprentices who complete their framework.
- Improve the quality of weaker lessons and ensure that more able learners are sufficiently challenged.
- Develop strategies to promote greater participation by women in construction courses and ensure that apprenticeship reviews give priority to the checking of equality issues.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Grade 2

Context

38. Some 385 learners follow a range of full- and part- time programmes in hairdressing and beauty therapy from foundation to advanced levels. Less than a third of learners are on programmes funded specifically to meet the needs of employers. Of the 183 full-time learners, 126 are aged 16 to 18. There are 66 part-time learners and 85 adult learners on personal development programmes. Fifteen learners study the 14–19 diplomas in hairdressing and beauty therapy. There are 25 hairdressing apprentices and 11 Train to Gain learners on a barbering programme. Numbers of hairdressing work-based adult learners have increased and summer schools are offered to learners progressing from E2E programmes.

Key findings

- Learners' outcomes are good. Success rates are high and for 16 to 18-year-olds on courses at foundation and advanced levels they are above national averages. The achievement of key skills is good. Success rates for adult learners on the beauty therapy level 1 and 2 courses, and on nail services at level 2, are low.
- Learners make good progress and develop a range of practical skills at all levels in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Challenging activities enable learners to develop technical skills and to improve their personal confidence and employability skills. Learners are able to demonstrate these skills through teamwork and according to industrial standards in realistic working environments in both hairdressing and beauty therapy.
- Learners state that they feel safe in college. Learners' well-being is improved through tutorials and good access to external agencies. They receive informed guidance on matters such as sexual health, and equality and diversity issues. Learners make positive contributions through many fund-raising campaigns, and close links with local schools, where they offer make-up and hairdressing services for adults and children.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lesson planning is detailed, with varied tasks that challenge and motivate learners. Teachers make good use of practical tasks to make it easier for learners to understand theory. Teachers are enthusiastic and use praise and feedback to encourage learning. In less successful lessons teachers do not allow more accomplished learners enough opportunity to complete tasks independently. These teachers make insufficient use of ILT to reinforce learning.
- Well-qualified and experienced teaching staff set high standards and use their expertise to inspire learners. Teachers extend their industrial skills and knowledge and keep them up to date.

- Support for learners is good. The quality and volume of learning support in classes is good. The learners' individual learning needs and support requirements are well planned for. Specialist support workers reinforce and consolidate learners' learning effectively.
- The range of provision allows good progression opportunities for hairdressing and beauty therapy learners from foundation to advanced levels, except for intermediate level hairdressing apprentices, who cannot progress to advanced level in the college.
- Enrichment activities are good and include guest speakers, competitions and fairs, and trips to hairdressing and beauty therapy exhibitions. Good links with the local hairdressing industry provide suitable placement opportunities for learners.
- Leadership and management are good. Communications are enhanced by regular team meetings. Course targets are set and monitored effectively. Course reviews inform the self-assessment report, which highlights strengths and areas for improvement clearly. The process for course self-assessment is well understood by staff. Verification processes are rigorous and recommendations are acted upon swiftly.
- Resources and equipment reflect industry standards. Good training opportunities ensure that staff can help learners to make good progress. The organisation and layout of facilities and furniture in one hairdressing salon prevents the tutor from observing learners adequately and poses a potential risk. There were minor health and safety problems in a manicure training session and a beauty therapy practical session.
- Learners' views are sought and acted upon to improve the quality of learning. The system works well and in one instance learners' feedback led to a programme that was not satisfactory being restructured.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Learners and teachers treat each other with respect and understand that any form of discrimination will be challenged. Schemes of work do not clearly identify where equality and diversity can be promoted. Lessons are not used sufficiently to raise learners' awareness of different cultural backgrounds, influences and practices.

What does Hartlepool College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rates for adult learners on the beauty therapy courses at levels 1 and 2 and nail services at level 2.
- Develop more extensively the use of information and learning technology to improve learning.
- Improve the monitoring of health and safety in vocational work spaces.

Literacy, numeracy and Entry to Employment

Grade 3

Context

39. Currently 229 learners aged 16 to 18 follow the E2E programmes across a wide range of vocational disciplines. In key skills there are 716 learners aged 16 to 18 and 152 adult learners. There are 22 full-time learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and 309 part-time adult learners following literacy and numeracy programmes.

Key findings

- Standards of learners' work and their progress are satisfactory overall and learners enjoy their learning. Success rates in literacy and numeracy qualifications have improved year on year. Most key skills results are now satisfactory and well above the low national averages. Learners make satisfactory progress in the skills required to achieve their qualifications, and for learners with learning difficulties progress is good. The college has maintained its trend of continuous improvement.
- Progression to further education, training or employment on E2E programmes is good and has improved year on year; rates at 70% are significantly higher than national rates (54%). Learners are confident and have high ambitions to gain skills and work. Courses have successfully retained learners and supported them in progressing to further learning, training and employment. Recently, one learner became apprentice of the year in motor trades.
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in developing communication skills, particularly speaking and listening, and some of these learners develop good writing skills. However, numeracy skills are less well developed. Personal confidence and success in work placements are also good.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan with care and learners make progress in lessons. There is some outstanding teaching and learning where lessons both meet individual needs well and raise learners' expectations of themselves by challenging them to aspire. However, too much teaching is just satisfactory. In literacy and numeracy lessons most teachers do not plan well enough to challenge learners to aim higher or to raise their confidence or personal effectiveness.
- In key skills and E2E, learners' vocational needs and interests are met well through diverse vocational learning opportunities in hairdressing and beauty therapy, motor vehicle, construction and engineering skills. Learners consistently report high levels of satisfaction with their courses. They learn good vocational skills and are confident to enter the work place. However, many vocational learners are frustrated by the lack of jobs for them when they complete their courses. Some return to pursue a different course, hoping that this will improve their chances of finding employment.

- Good systems for the care, guidance and support for learners are especially effective in enabling learners to complete their courses successfully. For example, one learner has been supported during her pregnancy to stay on her hairdressing programme. Teachers and those providing additional learning support work well to help disengaged learners such as 'school refusers' and young offenders back into learning.
- Managers work hard to promote good progress and improvement. Course reviews are good. Self-assessment judgements are broadly accurate but some areas for improvement have been missed, such as the low attendance on E2E programmes. A small number of opportunities to address areas for improvement are missed by staff; for example, using their local contacts to increase work-placement options. A small percentage of lessons are graded too highly by observers and feedback to staff lacks detailed improvement targets for teachers.
- The safeguarding of learners has a very high profile. Learners and staff are fully aware of the importance of learners' safety and how to promote it and seek advice and support. There are very good systems to train and refresh staff in this important aspect. Learners feel safe and secure and pay very good attention to health and safety matters.
- The impact of the college's drive to identify and serve disadvantaged groups and those at risk has been very good. E2E programmes and low-cost courses for adults are testament to this. However, there is insufficient active promotion of equality themes and some staff lack the confidence to challenge discrimination.
- There are satisfactory arrangements for involving learners in reviewing programmes. Not all learners are aware of the existence and the use of representative forums, and part-time evening learners report that their views are currently not represented. However, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good representation and E2E learners have regular opportunities to share their views with staff and they report positively on the responses they receive.
- Resources are satisfactory and in some aspects good. The level of skilled support staffing is generous and helps learners to make progress. Although there has been good investment in ILT and staff training in its use, inspectors found very little use of technology by teachers or active use by learners in classes.

What does Hartlepool College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to at least 'good' in the majority of lessons.
- Promote the full range of equality and diversity in the curriculum and increase staff confidence to challenge discrimination.
- Further promote and extend the enrichment programme to benefit the full range of learners.

- Improve the accuracy of self-assessment and the identification of needed improvements.
- Promote more extensive use of learning technology by teachers and learners in classes.

Information about the inspection

40. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the college's assistant 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 local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other 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.
41. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Hartlepool 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	4,713	133	1,434	1,597	1,549
Full-time learners					
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2	2	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>	3				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	1
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?	2				
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?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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