

Leicester College

Inspection report

Unique reference number:	131863
Name of lead inspector:	William Baidoe-Ansah HMI
Last day of inspection:	28 January 2011
Type of provider:	General Further Education College
Address:	Leicester College Freemen's Park Campus Aylestone Road Leicester Leicestershire LE27LW
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Information about the provider

1. Leicester College is the only general further education college (GFE) in the city of Leicester and one of the largest colleges nationally. Leicester also has three sixth form colleges, four schools with sixth forms, an adult education college and around 90 private training providers. The college has three main campuses, offers provision in over 80 community venues and, in partnership with others, provides for employees of over 1,000 businesses. The college has around 1,500 staff and an annual budget of £56.9 million.
2. Leicester is the 20th most deprived local authority area in England and its unemployment rate is 11.5% compared to 7.9% nationally. In 2009, the proportion of 16-year-olds achieving five GCSEs at grades A*-C was six percentage points below the national average. The city has a very diverse population, with the highest proportion of minority ethnic groups in the country.
3. The college makes provision in all 15 subject sector areas, although most enrolments are in vocational areas. It also provides higher education (HE) courses and is an associate college of De Montfort University. In 2009/10, around 28,000 learners studied at the college. There were around 864 work-based learners and 5,342 Train to Gain learners. The college's mission is 'to deliver a wide range of high quality learning experiences to support the diverse communities we serve and the personal, social and economic development of individuals and enterprises. We believe in learning for success'.
4. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - Brooks & Kirk
 - Cheshire Assessment & Training
 - Careers Advice Services and Training (CAST)
 - Construction Learning World
 - Construct Training
 - Greenlight Solutions
 - Leicestershire Care Providers
 - Key Training Ltd
 - Nuneaton Training Centre
 - Phoenix Training
 - Santy Ltd
 - Symphony Training
 - Upskill
 - Apex
 - Hathi
 - NDA

- Shama
- Youth Arts
- Melton Training
- Greenhills
- In Range Training
- Leicester College
- Charnwood 20:20
- MHYPC
- Mercia College
- Mere Lane Riding
- Talent 4 Life
- Wigston YPC
- YMCA Hinckley
- CEEP
- MDT

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
<p>Provision for young learners: 14 to 16</p> <p>Further education (16 to 18)</p> <p>Foundation learning, including Entry to Employment</p>	<p>631 part-time learners</p> <p>3,493 full-time learners 652 part-time learners</p> <p>27 full-time learners 30 part-time learners</p>
<p>Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)</p>	<p>1,961 full-time learners 7,290 part-time learners</p>
<p>Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships</p>	<p>5,342 learners 864 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 1
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	1
Leadership and management	1
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	1

Subject Areas	Grade
Health and social care	2
Health public services and care	1
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	2
Information and communication technology	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	3
Visual arts	2
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	2

Overall effectiveness

- Leicester College is a very good college with many outstanding features. The college has demonstrated an outstanding capacity to improve through its sustained improvements since the last inspection. Achievements for adult learners are outstanding on most programmes and Train to Gain learners enjoy high success rates. Learners aged 16 to 18 achieve broadly in line with national averages, make good progress and achieve high grades. Learners develop good vocational skills, feel safe and enjoy college life. The quality of provision is outstanding overall with good teaching and learning, assessment and feedback that help learners to improve their standard of work. The college provides an excellent range of courses to meet both learners' and employers' needs.

Learners benefit from the college's outstanding partnerships with other organisations. The college provides exceptional support for learners, which ensures that few learners leave their course early. Outstanding leadership and management provide excellent strategic direction and operational management and set very ambitious targets. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Equality and diversity are outstanding; they are promoted extensively throughout the college and contribute enormously to community cohesion in both the college and locality. The college engages with users well to support quality improvements and its self-assessment is accurate and effective in driving forward improvements.

Main findings

- Outcomes are good. Long course success rates for adult learners at all levels are outstanding. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are satisfactory overall although higher than average at foundation level. Learners on Train to Gain programmes enjoy very high success rates with most achieving within the expected time. However, success rates on work-based learning programmes were low in 2009/10 with some adverse affect from employee redundancies.
- Learners make good progress in their studies. Most learners on advanced-level programmes achieve much better than expected given their starting points and many progress to HE and employment. Achievements of pupils aged 14 to 16 are good. The success rates of most minority ethnic learners are above their own national average and the college average.
- Learners develop good vocational skills, which prepares them well for the world of work. Health and safety is promoted well and learners feel safe. Learners make an outstanding contribution to college life and their local community.
- Teaching, training and assessment are good. In the best lessons, learners enjoy a wide range of interesting activities and make rapid progress. Teachers take full account of their needs. Learners benefit from good support. In the minority of less effective lessons, teachers talk too much. They do not use the group profile effectively to meet individual's needs and learners make slower progress.
- Assessment and feedback are very effective in enabling learners to progress. In most cases teachers set and mark assignments very well. In a few examples teachers do not mark work carefully and feedback is brief. Internal verification is rigorous and improves assessment. Initial assessment outcomes inform group profiles and lesson plans appropriately.
- The lesson observation process is good and managers moderate outcomes very effectively. Most observation outcomes are valid and judgements are accurate. In a few cases, observers focus too much on teaching and over grade results.
- The college is outstanding at meeting the needs of learners, employers and the county's wider community. It provides an impressive and broad range of courses to meet the needs of all learners. Progression to higher education and employment is very good.

- Partnership work is exemplary. The college's reputation for flexibility and responsiveness is strong. Alliances with specialist organisations have helped the college make a significant contribution to both social well-being and community cohesion across the county.
- Highly effective learning mentors and additional support staff embedded within each curriculum area provide excellent support in a timely way, reducing the likelihood that learners will leave. The growing use of electronic means of sharing information with learners and between staff ensures regular monitoring of learners' progress.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Highly effective leadership together with detailed strategic and operational planning have led to significant improvements in accommodation and resources, whilst outcomes for learners have continued to improve. Governors provide excellent support for managers and monitor performance extremely well.
- Curriculum management is consistently good. Quality improvement processes, including self-assessment, are comprehensive and are extremely effective in securing improvement. However, the rate of improvement does vary between curriculum areas.
- The college makes an outstanding contribution to the promotion of community cohesion and manages equality and diversity very effectively. The achievement gap between different groups of learners has been successfully narrowed and the promotion of equality and diversity is very effective throughout the college.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Recruitment checks take place on college staff and detailed policies and procedures are in place to ensure learners' safety and well-being. The college has highly effective arrangements in place to ensure learners are involved in decision-making processes.

What does Leicester College need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 and work-based learners by sharing best practice from across the college so that achievements are equally high across all college provision.
- Increase teachers' skill in using the detailed information held about learners to provide appropriate learning activities that meet the needs of each individual and enables them to progress and achieve, irrespective of their different abilities.
- Increase teachers' understanding of how to mark learners' work thoroughly so that the meaning of learners' assignments is clear, and how to provide clear formative feedback so that learners know how to improve their future work.
- Move curriculum management from good to outstanding by continuing to provide effective coaching and mentoring of managers, to increase the rate of improvement more consistently in their areas of responsibility across the college.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the reliable, flexible and supportive staff
- the very good support from lecturers; being encouraged and enabled to progress
- the friendly and safe environment
- the good support on the course and for personal issues
- learners being valued, respected and treated fairly
- that lecturers are good at intervening when things go wrong
- the good help to catch up on work missed
- the excellent mentor support.

What learners would like to see improved:

- lack of social facilities
- work experience needed
- better access to the internet
- cover for staff illness.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the responsiveness of the college to employer needs
- the flexible, supportive and reliable assessors
- the speed of response by the college to enquiries or concerns
- the good network of advice and support at the college
- the commitment to ongoing training and development of staff
- the very good communication with college and assessors.

What employers would like to see improved:

- make employers more aware of the time required to do the course.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

6. The Principal and senior managers provide highly effective leadership. Governors monitor the college performance closely and make a significant contribution to the learners' experience by ensuring that appropriate resources are available for their benefit. Detailed strategic planning focuses on improving the learner experience, ensuring success in achieving qualification aims and in enabling learners to extend and fulfil their ambitions.
7. Well-established and highly effective self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements quickly identify areas of concern. Data are used extremely effectively to monitor and improve the performance of all groups of learners. The self-assessment report is mostly accurate and identifies the main strengths and areas for improvement throughout the college. Subsequent action planning is detailed, systematically monitored and leads to improvement. The college has an excellent history of continuous improvement, has remedied the issues identified at the last inspection, and has the necessary staffing and financial resources to continue improving learners' achievements.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Outcomes for learners are good. The overall success rate for long-course provision has been consistently above the national average for the past three years, increasing markedly in 2009/10 to well above the average. Long-course success rates for adult learners are outstanding and are particularly high at intermediate level. Success rates for the substantial number of Train to Gain learners are also high overall, with the majority of learners completing within the expected time in 2009/10. Retention is high across most college provision. The college has made a substantial investment in functional skills recently; success rates improved significantly in 2009/10 and are high despite a very substantial increase in learner numbers.
9. Provision for pupils aged 14 to 16 is good with high success rates and good progression into the college. The success rates for different groups of learners are mainly good. Female learners achieve marginally better than male learners overall and most ethnic groups achieve well, with most minority ethnic groups achieving significantly better than their own national average and the college average. The college is successfully improving the achievements of a small number of black African learners aged 16 to 18 who have tended to perform worse than other groups over the past two years. The standard of learners' work is high overall both in the college and in the workplace.
10. The overall success rate for learners aged 16 to 18 on long-course provision is satisfactory at one and a half percentage points above the average. They are three percentage points above the average at foundation level and in line with averages at intermediate and advanced level. Success rates on short courses

have declined in the past three years and are satisfactory. Overall success rates for framework completion in work-based learning are low, especially for advanced apprentices. Attendance for 2009/10 was low at 83%.

11. Learners generally make good progress. The majority of learners undertaking advanced vocational qualifications usually achieve better than expected given their prior attainment, with many learners achieving high grades. The proportion of learners progressing to higher education or employment has increased significantly in the last year and is high. Learners develop good personal and social skills and have good access to the literacy, numeracy and language skills they need to complete their programme. Many learners develop good technical and practical skills that prepare them well for employment.
12. The college provides a safe and secure environment for learners and pays good attention to health and safety, which is well promoted at induction and reinforced through courses and tutorials. Staff generally promote safe working practices in lessons. Learners feel safe on all college sites.
13. The college promotes health and well-being effectively, and the take up for a number of health-related clinics and services is good. Learners make an outstanding contribution to their community. An effective incentive scheme rewards learners for their involvement in college life and community activities. Many learners are involved in raising funds for charities and the college has a strong and successful focus on encouraging volunteering.

The quality of provision

Grade 1

14. Teaching, training and assessment are good. In most lessons, teachers plan lessons very well to include a wide and interesting range of activities that actively involve learners and aid learners' understanding. They give a high priority to equality and diversity and functional skills in their lesson plans and schemes of work and reinforce such matters in lessons when appropriate. Learners enjoy their learning and are very enthusiastic. They are willing to offer solutions to problems and suggest mature and sensible answers to challenging questions. The interaction between teacher and learner is harmonious, respectful and conducive to learning. Support for learners in lessons is good.
15. In the minority of less effective lessons, teachers talk excessively and learners are passive. The pace of learning is slow and the standard of learners' work is below that expected for the level and stage of their course. Teachers do not check that each learner understands the topic and questioning is too general. Teachers make insufficient use of the group profile and do not alter learning activities to meet individuals' needs. They miss opportunities to include equality and diversity matters and to emphasise functional skills.
16. The learning environment is of high quality and teachers and learners use information learning technology very effectively to aid learning and present complex images in an easily understandable manner. The use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) by

staff and learners is very variable. Advanced practitioners support new teachers and less confident teachers very effectively. Teachers, assessors and functional skills staff are appropriately qualified.

17. Assessment is good. Initial screening and diagnostic assessment are very good. The success rates of learners receiving support are higher than learners requiring support but who refuse it. The outcomes of initial assessment inform group profiles and most lesson plans fully. Managers do not monitor how soon learners receive support after starting their course. Internal verification is rigorous and accurate. Most learners find assessments and the associated feedback help them progress and improve. Very clear, comprehensive, and detailed assessment policies and procedures include a strong focus on safety, equality and diversity and different groups of learners and their specific needs. In most cases, teachers mark learners' work carefully and give constructive feedback. In a few areas, however, teachers do not correct spelling and grammar even where errors distort the meaning of the work. Occasionally, feedback is terse and too general. The reporting of learners' progress to parents, carers, guardians and employers is satisfactory.
18. The internal lesson observation process is good. It has a strong focus on equality and diversity and functional skills, and on learners and learning. In most cases, observers' findings are valid and judgements are accurate. Occasionally though, observers focus too much on teaching and insufficiently on learning and the resultant grading is generous. In most cases, inspectors agree with the findings of college observers. Managers are well aware of the areas for improvement and continue to take appropriate action to improve teaching and learning. Moderation of observers' findings is very effective and improves the quality of the lesson observation process. Lesson observation outcomes inform appraisal and staff development very effectively.
19. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners, potential learners and the communities of the city and county is outstanding. The college has developed a wide range of provision at all levels, providing very good progression routes. Internal progression is very high. Highly effective arrangements to help learners apply for higher education and very close cooperation with local universities has resulted in a high proportion of learners receiving offers of a university place. The college curriculum for school pupils aged 14 to 16 is extensive with a varied range of attendance patterns. Successful collaboration with other providers through franchise arrangements has contributed to the reduction in the proportion of young people who are not in education and employment. Provision developed for apprenticeships has provided a very effective alternative approach and flexible bespoke training for a number of local industries. Enrichment has improved and a well-planned programme is now in place that develops learners' wider understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Core themes address the Every Child Matters criteria well.
20. The college's partnership work is outstanding. Links with a wide range of community groups and voluntary organisations benefit learners greatly. Partnerships have resulted in very good success rates on provision designed for the most disadvantaged and demanding client groups in the area. The college's reputation for flexibility and responsiveness is strong. It takes a lead role in many productive partnerships including with the city council and private training providers, increasing the range and extent of

employer-based provision. Strong alliances with specialist organisations have helped the college make a significant contribution to both social well-being and community cohesion across the county.

21. The college's arrangements to provide individual care and support are outstanding. Information advice and guidance services are comprehensive. Well-qualified and experienced information assistants and careers advisors work closely with personal tutors providing good advice related to specific subject areas to ensure learners understand their future options. Learners have very good and timely advice and guidance about UCAS application procedures. Progression rates between levels and onto higher education are good. Learners' progress within vocational areas to employment is also good. Careers advice is also readily available to adults in the community.
22. Learning mentors attached to curriculum areas provide a highly effective and extensive range of specialist support for learners. They deal with a wide range of issues from emotional well-being and complex health issues to more routine matters. Staff are well qualified in a range of specialist areas and formal supervision is in place to ensure learners become more independent as support reduces. Staff respond rapidly to issues and because of this highly effective intervention the proportion of learners who leave their courses is very low.
23. The range of additional support provided for learners following early assessment of their needs is very good. Support from specialist teachers and staff is provided within curriculum areas making for well-planned and appropriate strategies to develop learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills and confidence. The application procedure starts early and good induction helps staff to provide appropriate support quickly. Individual learning plans are mostly good. The developing and growing use of electronic means of sharing information with learners and between staff is ensuring more effective monitoring of progress. It results in early identification of issues that might require specialist intervention. Personal support from tutors is good with staff giving time beyond that timetabled to help students who are having difficulties with assignments and assessments.

Leadership and management

Grade 1

24. Leadership and management are outstanding. The Principal provides excellent leadership and enjoys the full support and confidence of a very capable senior team. By placing the learners at the heart of the college's work, the highly effective leadership has successfully raised expectations and supported the drive towards excellence. The highly detailed strategic and operational plans reflect the very clear mission of the college. An extremely supportive yet challenging culture has been successfully created and the demanding targets that are set throughout the organisation are frequently achieved. The college uses data and information extremely effectively to plan and review curriculum provision and has a clear understanding of local, regional and national priorities. The management has made very significant improvements to accommodation, resources and the financial health of the college whilst success rates have

continued to rise. Curriculum management is consistently good although some staff appraisals are overdue in a minority of areas.

25. Governors serve the college extremely well and between them have an extensive range of skills that enable them to monitor both academic and financial performance rigorously. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and have a very clear strategic oversight of college performance. Sub-committees operate extremely effectively and corporation board meetings ensure the accountability of leaders at all levels. Governors are excellent ambassadors for the college and provide exceptional levels of support internally to the many events and activities with which they are involved.
26. Policies and procedures for safeguarding young learners and vulnerable adults are well considered. The college completes appropriate recruitments checks on staff and volunteers and has a single central register of all staff directly employed by the college. Staff have received appropriate safeguarding training and are aware of their responsibilities. The college has excellent links with an extensive range of agencies and professionals and supports vulnerable learners very well. The management of access to college buildings is generally appropriate although procedures are more effective during the day than they are in the evening. Health and safety is well managed and learners generally adopt safe working practices. Risk assessments are fit for purpose and accident reporting is thorough.
27. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The college is an inclusive community that welcomes learners from exceptionally diverse backgrounds. It provides good opportunities for learners who might not otherwise be involved in education or training to participate and makes a very significant contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. A culture of respect and tolerance is evident throughout the college and an extensive range of centrally provided activities and events promote equality and diversity. Analysis of achievement by gender, ethnicity and disability, has resulted in actions that have successfully narrowed the achievement gap between different groups of learners. Examples of the highly effective promotion of equality and diversity exist in most curriculum areas and the college has provided training for teaching staff, advanced practitioners and enrichment specialists to enhance further their confidence in dealing with issues of equality and diversity. However, in a small minority of lessons and occasionally during the reviews completed for apprentices, there are missed opportunities to further develop or reinforce learners' knowledge and understanding.
28. The college has highly effective arrangements to enable learners to be engaged in decision-making processes. Learner representatives meet with curriculum and senior managers at regular scheduled intervals as part of a well-considered learner engagement strategy. Learners are able to raise any issues of concern and their valued views result in swift action. A host of improvements to provision have resulted from the learner voice in most curriculum areas. The student council and two student governors ensure learners' views reach senior management and governors. The college engages very effectively with

employers and other stakeholders and seeks their views on how to improve provision to meet the needs of all learners.

29. Comprehensive and robust quality assurance arrangements are highly effective in identifying areas for improvement across the college. Effectiveness panels, monitoring and review panels, and individual course reviews inform the self-assessment process fully, and together with accurate management information are extremely effective in bringing about improvements. The improvements include the quality of provision and outcomes for learners, although the rate of improvement in some curriculum areas is more rapid than in others. Staff training and development are effective and aid quality improvement.
30. The college manages its resources highly effectively to meet the needs of learners. Considerable efficiency savings have been made whilst improvements in accommodation, resources and outcomes for learners continue. Resources are managed in a sustainable way and financial management and control are outstanding. The effective use of benchmarking data ensures high levels of accountability. Given the high and improving success rates and the outstanding quality of provision, the college provides outstanding value for money.

Subject areas

Health and social care

Grade 2

Context

31. The college offers a range of Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) programmes in health and social care from entry to advanced level for 339 mainly 16 to 18-year-old learners. Links with schools include career opportunities with planned taster sessions for 14 to 16-year-olds including specific sessions aiming to attract males into care work. A responsive range of vocationally relevant Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) programmes meets the needs of employers currently with 13 learners. A BTEC Award in health and social care in collaboration with the National Health Service (NHS) attracts 12 adults in response to a government initiative to reduce unemployment and improve recruitment to the NHS.

Key findings

- Programmes have good and improving success rates at foundation and advanced level. More than half of advanced-level learners achieved high grades in 2009/10. However, in the same year poor retention on the intermediate programme resulted in a decline in success rates to below the minimum level of performance. Current in-year retention has improved significantly to 100%.
- Learners enjoy their studies and make good progress in developing personal and vocationally relevant skills. These include improved self-confidence, communication, effective teamwork, problem solving, research and a good understanding of the importance of valuing and respecting individuals. Progression to further study within the college, to higher education or relevant employment is high.
- Teaching, training and assessment are good. Teachers know their learners well. However, they do not use information on groups of learners well to inform lesson planning, or assessment methods to challenge and extend the more able learners. In better lessons, teachers set an appropriate pace through a variety of learning activities to maintain learners' attention well. In less effective lessons, open questions fail to check adequately all learners understanding.
- Assessment of learners' work is good and is monitored by an effective internal verification system. Teachers set detailed assignment briefs within an interesting and engaging scenario and give learners constructive feedback with clear guidance on how to improve their work. However, in a few cases the brief lacks detail, lacks vocational context and the feedback fails to provide guidance to improve.
- The college has strong and productive links with a wide range of outside agencies, including initiatives with the NHS, links with Skills for Care, community groups, housing, faith groups and specialist support organisations. A wide range of employers provides work experience opportunities including care

homes and schools. NCFE awards, delivered on a flexible basis, meet the needs of local employers effectively.

- Care, guidance and support are very good. Initial advice and guidance ensures learners are on the appropriate programme. Early diagnostic testing identifies any potential personal, social or learning barriers with appropriate support provided by additional learning support arrangements or learning mentors. Learners state they feel safe and valued by approachable staff. Effective career advice enables learners to make informed choices.
- Leadership and management are good. A newly appointed manager and a well-qualified and vocationally experienced team have recently put in place many new strategies to raise the quality of provision. There has already been a significant improvement in the in-year retention on intermediate provision but many strategies have still to be fully implemented and evaluated. A pilot initiative to contact learners using mobile phones should a learner miss a session is proving successful.
- Safeguarding and equality and diversity are core values for the vocational area. All staff have undertaken training including health and safety. The college pays for learner CRB checks with any disclosures dealt with sensitively and a risk assessment undertaken where necessary.
- Managers and teachers promote a culture of inclusivity and mutual respect. Staff provide positive role models for learners. Managers monitor success rates by different groups to reduce achievement gaps. Work to attract more males into health and social care is ongoing through, for example, 'blood and guts' at school taster days.
- The self-assessment report covers the whole of the subject area but the report sometimes lacks the necessary detail to identify clearly the strengths and areas for improvement that inform the grades awarded. Teachers at course team level use data to monitor learner progress and attendance through a variety of paper-based and electronic tracking systems. Regular meetings are effective in monitoring those at risk.

What does Leicester College need to do to improve further?

- Revise group profiles to include a minimum target grade to challenge and extend individual learning, in order to improve success rates across all provision for learners aged 16 to 18 to well above national averages.
- Consolidate and build on the current systems and practices to develop a more holistic overview of the programme at course level and support improvement through the detailed analysis, evaluation and recording of all aspects of provision.

Health, public services and care

Grade 1

Context

32. One thousand and five-hundred learners are studying for qualifications across the area on employer-responsive provision. The vast majority of learners are on Train to Gain programmes with 135 learners on apprenticeship programmes. The majority of learners are studying health and social care. Around 200 learners are studying for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in providing security services under a partnership agreement with a private company; these learners are mostly male, the rest of the learners are predominantly female.

Key findings

- Success rates are outstanding. Both courses taught in partnership with a private training provider and those delivered directly by the college have high success rates, which have improved alongside a substantial expansion of provision. The majority of learners on the new apprenticeship programmes are successfully completing their programmes early.
- Learners make very good progress on their courses and develop good personal and social skills. They enjoy their learning. Many are inspired to continue studying at the next level. Learners also develop good work-based skills and a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work.
- Assessment practices are excellent. Assessors are well qualified and assessment is rigorous and thorough. Assessors work flexibly to meet learners' needs and work patterns.
- Learners are assessed quickly and comprehensively for additional support needs at the start of their programmes and effective arrangements are in place to meet identified needs. However, there is limited use of information and communication technology to give learners and teachers greater flexibility in the use of learning materials and assessments.
- Learners have a very wide choice of programmes, which are well adapted to meet their needs. Assessors are particularly flexible in their work to ensure learners with unusual or unpredictable shift patterns have every opportunity to succeed.
- Partnership working with a wide range of public, private and voluntary bodies is outstanding. It is well coordinated and relevant to community needs. Employers are particularly impressed by the speed of response of the college to their needs and the rigour and high standards of the college's work.
- Support for learners is outstanding. Learners have a good understanding of the wide range of support services available and they make good use of the academic, personal and financial support and advice. Monitoring of the use of support services by managers is thorough.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The college has a clear and realistic strategy for planning and developing learning programmes. Recent

management changes have seen the introduction of improved systems and processes that promote high standards in a positive and supportive culture. The provision has expanded rapidly without compromising quality.

- Staff work hard and support each other very well. Morale is high. Professional development is comprehensive and effective. Planning for the introduction of new qualifications is thorough. Staff have a good understanding of the new qualification framework and strategies for its introduction.
- Arrangements for receiving feedback from employers are good. Formal surveys, follow-up interviews and meetings with groups of employers influence the development and improvement of the provision. However, arrangements to gather and act on the views of learners are underdeveloped.
- Systems to improve the quality of the provision are outstanding. Monitoring of quality throughout the year has a high priority and ensures the early identification and resolution of weaknesses. However, published quality assurance materials do not focus sufficiently on strengths and areas for development.

What does Leicester College need to do to improve further?

- Develop information and learning technology resources, including both assessment materials and wider resources, so that learners are able to access them from their homes or workplaces to enhance their learning.
- Develop procedures for collecting and analysing learners' views to inform quality improvement plans.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Context

33. The college provision includes a wide range of apprenticeships across many engineering areas. One hundred and ninety-four learners are on apprenticeship programmes, evenly split between apprentices and advanced apprentices, including seven adult apprentices. A similar number of learners are completing Train to Gain qualifications. The proportion of female learners is 18% with approximately 30% of all learners from minority ethnic groups.

Key findings

- Success rates on Train to Gain programmes are very high. Rates for learners completing within their planned end date are 12 percentage points above national rates. Success rates for apprenticeships have improved steadily over the last three years and are now broadly average. Success rates on apprenticeships for 19-24 year-old learners are below national rates in some areas. Key skills success rates have improved over the last three years and are now high.
- Learners make good progress with many achieving their qualification by the planned end date. Learners enjoy their programme and speak very positively about their increase in self-confidence and the programmes as a whole. Learners' development of personal and practical skills is good; they produce work to a high standard at college and in the workplace. Employers speak positively about the skills learners bring into the workplace.
- Learners confirm they feel safe; health and safety arrangements are good. A comprehensive induction programme covers all health and safety legislation including safeguarding and digital safety. The emphasis on safe working practices and procedures introduced at induction is developed within specific units and consistently reinforced throughout the apprenticeship training programme.
- Teaching and learning are good; learners benefit from well-planned learning programmes with detailed lesson plans. Learning objectives are clear and the use of information and learning technology is satisfactory. Tutors make very effective links between theory and practice. Staff support for learners is good. Learners make good progress in both theory and practical lessons.
- Monitoring of learner progress is very effective. All learner contact is recorded in a database and together with the carefully monitored learner progress is used to develop precise targets and action plans for improvement. Observations of reviews in the workplace are frequent.
- Initial and diagnostic assessments are satisfactory. Assessments in the workplace and at the college are frequent and flexible to suit learner needs and availability of evidence. Internal verification of assessment is satisfactory. Progress reviews are frequent with previous targets evaluated and precise targets set for the next review, with employers fully involved in the process.

However, equality and diversity, and health and safety, are not sufficiently promoted or developed during the review process.

- The provision meets the needs and interests of users very well. Pathways onto apprenticeships are available from entry and foundation level. The college offers flexible start dates and a recruitment and selection service, which places apprentices with local companies. Employers confirm that apprentice programmes meet their needs very well.
- Very effective partnership arrangements exist with a wide range of local employers. Learners benefit from sponsorship arrangements. The college works closely with many local companies, customising provision to meet their specific needs whilst liaising with awarding bodies to ensure compliance. Where possible completion of all the evidence required for the NVQ is organised for learners made redundant. The college offers regular employer-updating workshops.
- Information, advice, guidance and support are good. The content of skills-specific units matches employer needs. Engineering staff or specialist tutors deal quickly with any educational needs identified during initial assessment. A planned programme of support deals with any areas of difficulty. Success rates for learners with support needs are high.
- Leadership and management are good. The management team is relatively new and the impact of new systems is beginning to show positively on projected success rates. Communication between all staff is good. Staff are well qualified and trained. Managers use data well. Formal two-weekly progress review team meetings take place along with extensive informal monitoring of apprentice progress with appropriate action planning when required.
- The college uses learner and employer feedback very well. Regular employer surveys identify any opportunities for improvement. Staff develop detailed plans with target dates for completion and keep users well informed of progress. The self-assessment report covers college provision well. However, it is not shared sufficiently well with employers and the impact of the employer provision does not feature appropriately within the report.

What does Leicester College need to do to improve further?

- Further improve success rates for 19 to 24-year-old apprentices by using data more effectively to identify and support learners at risk of not completing the programme by the planned end date.
- Improve learners' understanding of equality and diversity, and health and safety, by devising a broad range of relevant topics for discussion within learning sessions and the reviews.
- Improve the information and accuracy of the self-assessment report by including the positive impact of employer-responsive provision more effectively within the area.

Information and communication technology

Grade 2

Context

34. The provision in information and communication technology (ICT) includes courses from entry through to level 5 for learners aged 16 to 18 and adults. The college offers full and part-time courses. There are 436 learners of whom 61% are aged 16 to 18. The college offers ICT from its St Margaret's site. The department has 27 teaching staff, an advanced practitioner, a learning mentor, a business development manager, two programme area managers and one curriculum area manager.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high on all advanced-level courses as well as many at entry, foundation and intermediate level. Success rates show an improving trend over the past three years. Success rates on the BTEC National Certificate for IT practitioners are outstanding. However, success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 on the BTEC first diploma are low. Learners from different groups achieve equally well. Learners' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.
- Learners develop their vocational skills to a good industry standard, well supported by lecturers who are clearly competent and committed. Issues usefully introduced at induction continue to be reinforced by many references during lessons and tutorials. All learners observe good standards of health and safety practice. Learners feel safe, and the college provides a secure and supportive environment.
- The quality of provision, including teaching and learning, is good. Lecturers use a range of techniques to engage and motivate learners. Some lecturers make good use of ILT, using interactive software supported by clear handouts. For example, in one lesson learners were able to see the functioning of the intricate technology that supports the World Wide Web.
- Some lecturers volunteer answers too readily rather than use the power of questioning to enable learners to work out answers for themselves. Learning checks do not feature in some lessons. Assessment and verification are accurate and fair. Work is marked clearly and returned promptly. Learners feel that the comments written by lecturers are helpful. Lecturers are excellent in observing assignment deadlines and in feeding back to learners.
- Learners work well together regardless of background or ethnicity. Lecturers promote team working during lessons and equality and diversity feature prominently in the tutorial programme. Lecturers challenge any anti-social behaviour immediately. Learners show respect and support for each other inside and outside of their lessons.
- The breadth, levels and multiple-entry points offered by the provision are outstanding. The department works closely with the local university to improve progression to higher education. Links with employers are underdeveloped. They have little input into curriculum development. Work experience for

learners is underdeveloped, as is vocational updating for both learners and staff.

- Care, guidance and support for learners are outstanding. Initial advice and guidance ensure new entrants start on the right course and determine appropriate levels of support. The revised tutorial programme includes a well-structured programme of health and well-being sessions and provides learners with excellent support. Managers make outstanding use of learning mentors to support learners at risk and improve retention rates.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Inspirational leadership has been instrumental in targeting support, identifying and putting in place effective arrangements to secure improvement. Leaders listen to learners and deal with their concerns effectively and rapidly. Planning and progress reviews make routine use of data. Target setting is robust and challenging.
- The self-assessment report accurately identifies the areas for improvement. Staff development is generally matched well to curriculum and learners' needs. However, there is insufficient sharing of good practice between lecturers.
- There are good resources for developing ICT skills. Many computer rooms are large and well equipped. However, technical support issues involving internet access for evening classes are not dealt with promptly.

What does Leicester College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates at intermediate level for learners aged 16 to 18 by closely monitoring and identifying issues early to ensure that learners achieve their qualification
- Improve employer links to facilitate learner work experience and vocational updating for staff.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Grade 3

Context

35. The college offers NVQs from foundation to advanced level in hairdressing and beauty therapy and an advanced diploma in theatrical and media make-up. Five hundred and eighty-seven learners are enrolled on a range of full and part-time programmes. There are 98 hairdressing and beauty therapy apprentices. Twenty-one pupils aged 14 to 16 are enrolled on increased flexibility courses.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates are high on intermediate level beauty therapy adult courses and the diploma in theatrical make-up. Success rates on functional skill qualifications are also high. However, success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 on hairdressing courses at intermediate and advanced levels, and the BTEC national diploma in beauty therapy, are inadequate
- Learners are making good in-year progress on intermediate and advanced-level beauty therapy and intermediate-level hairdressing courses. The college has recently moved to a new hairdressing qualification, which is helping the learners to progress in a more timely manner.
- The development of skills in intermediate and advanced-level beauty therapy and intermediate-level hairdressing is good. Learners demonstrate good skills when they practise facials, manicures, and basic hairdressing treatments. Learners on advanced-level beauty therapy programmes gain very good employment skills when practising facial and body electrical treatments. Highly-qualified, experienced and enthusiastic staff use their experience effectively to set high commercial standards in many lessons.
- Learners say they feel safe whilst in college, and appreciate the strict enforcement of college security arrangements. They know who to speak to if they are concerned about bullying or harassment. Teachers, particularly in beauty therapy, reinforce health and safety constantly during practical lessons. Learners use personal protective equipment at appropriate times. However, staff in hairdressing do not routinely check that students sterilise equipment prior to the start of lessons.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers plan and use effective strategies to engage and inspire students. The pace is good and learners enthusiastically show off their skills and knowledge. In satisfactory sessions, teachers do not take sufficient account of individual learning needs in their planning and the pace is too slow. Open question and answer sessions are too often the preferred method to assess understanding and fail to challenge learners.
- Learning resources are good. All teaching rooms have interactive whiteboards connected to the internet. However, teachers do not always use them creatively to enhance learning. Learners value the college's virtual learning environment highly. They are able to check their targets agreed in tutorials, planned dates for

assessments, and access learning resources. Parents and carers can also check learners' progress online.

- Accommodation is satisfactory. Salons and theory teaching rooms are often crowded and sometimes there are not enough couches in beauty therapy for all learners to practise on clients at the same time. However, the provision of additional practical sessions helps to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged.
- The range of provision is good. Provision from introductory to advanced level in hairdressing and beauty therapy provides good progression routes for learners. The college has also introduced a foundation degree in theatrical and media make-up. Advanced learners are encouraged and supported to progress on to higher education. In 2009/10, fifteen learners from hairdressing and beauty therapy progressed on to honours degree courses.
- A wide variety of stimulating activities enrich learners' programmes; for example, bridal hairstyles, afro-Caribbean hairdressing, reiki, ear piercing, spray tan, "tooth fairy" and visits to London and national exhibitions. Three hairdressing students have reached the regional heats of a national competition.
- Learners receive good pastoral, financial and learning support. Learners value the supportive approach of their teachers, mentors and assessors. Success rates of those learners who receive additional learning support are high. Learners are able to access skills and development support through small bespoke classes and one-to-one mentoring sessions for learners with dyslexia or ESOL needs. The majority of learners in this area also receive financial support.
- Leadership and management are good. Quality improvement systems are well established. Managers have taken effective actions to reverse the declining success rates. They set demanding targets for success and retention. Teachers are enthusiastic and feel well supported and valued. All staff are involved in self-assessment through termly one-to-one meetings. The self-assessment report is mainly accurate..
- The management of equality and diversity is good. Managers use data well to monitor the performance of different groups. The area has had a recent drive to increase the number of male participants with some success. The college has invested considerable training and support in supporting staff to embed equality and diversity into the curriculum.

What does Leicester College need to do to improve further?

- Implement a rigorous and systematic process to focus on whole unit completion on programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 and advanced-level hairdressing to improve success rates.
- Review and reinforce sterilisation processes in hairdressing to improve safe working practices and learners' safety.
- Improve teaching and learning by supporting teachers to take better account of the individual needs of learners in planning and delivery so that all learners are suitably challenged and motivated to learn.

Visual arts

Grade 2

Context

36. The department offers a wide range of vocational and academic art and design courses from introductory to advanced level. Specialist pathways include fashion, graphics, photography and fine art. The majority of the 519 learners are aged 16 to 18 and study full time on advanced-level courses. Around a third of learners enrolled come from minority ethnic groups. Almost three quarters of the learners are female.

Key findings

- Success rates in 2009/10 increased significantly and are high overall. In 2008/09 retention overall was low. A high proportion of learners completing their courses obtained high grades. Success rates on the foundation diploma in art and design improved slightly to just below the national rate; however, the number of learners completing the course is well below the national rate.
- Attendance overall is satisfactory; however on the national diploma fashion, GCE A-level art and design, and the first diploma in art and design, rates are very low.
- Learners' work is of a high standard and shows good development of technical and practical skills. Well-annotated sketchbooks show evidence of thorough research and development of ideas. Learners experiment extensively with a wide range of techniques, methods and media. They develop good communication and interpersonal skills and are able to evaluate critically their own work and that of their peers.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Learners make good progress. Teachers plan lessons well and use integrated, interesting, and engaging activities. In a fashion enrichment lesson, for example, learners explored the concept of sustainability in the industry. They produced an excellent collection of well-designed, well-constructed and imaginative garments from a selection of discarded clothing. Assessment is regular, rigorous and fair.
- Staff do not always use group profile information effectively to shape their teaching and learning strategies. As a result, a small number of learners do not work as effectively as they are able and some tasks for more advanced learners lack challenge. Often the less able are not sufficiently well focused on achieving short-term targets.
- Accommodation and resources are excellent. Learners benefit from working with specialist industry-standard equipment. Teachers provide a good selection of reference and resource materials to inform learners' work. Teachers are not able to enrich their lessons using interactive technologies as the art and design and fashion studios do not have interactive whiteboards, data projectors or computers.

- The provision meets the needs of learners very well. The department offers a wide range of highly flexible vocational and academic courses in a range of specialisms. A high proportion of learners progress internally and on to university or employment. Curriculum enrichment activities are particularly good for photography and graphics learners, but much less extensive for those on art and design and fashion courses.
- Support for learners is excellent and applied cohesively. Learners value highly the wide-ranging personal and academic support that they receive from staff. A large proportion of learners benefit from the highly responsive mentor support. Additional learning support is effective in meeting learners' needs. Staff coordinate their activities well and provide a well-organised and consistent service.
- Managers have a clear and consistent strategy for quality improvement effectively shared with and supported by all staff. Managers' effective use of data has had a positive impact on many success rates and the very effective identification, support and monitoring of learners at risk. Managers consult with learners well and make improvements as a result of their feedback.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Effective management action has raised the success rates for Black learners. The equality and diversity champion is effective in raising awareness and promoting events. However, teachers do not always make full use of opportunities to promote equality and diversity though the curriculum, although there is some excellent practice in the department.
- Self-assessment is inclusive and thorough. Managers identify the main strengths and areas for improvement and devise appropriate strategies to develop the provision.

What does Leicester College need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve success rates, attendance and the quality of teaching and learning through the close monitoring of data, more effective use of group profile information, and by sharing existing good practice through appropriate staff development.
- Ensure that all learners participate in a wide range of appropriate curriculum enrichment activities to widen their experience, develop their understanding of the creative industries and raise aspirations.

English for Speakers of Other Languages

Grade 2

Context

37. Approximately 2,800 learners, mainly adults, are following ESOL programmes from entry level to intermediate level. Courses are provided during the day, evenings and weekends on a full-time or part-time basis at the college site and in community settings. Learners can also attend vocational subjects including ICT, office skills, baking, driving theory, and numeracy.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates in 2009/10 in reading and writing at entry and intermediate level are high. Success rates for speaking and listening and full qualifications are satisfactory.
- Learners make good progress. They develop a wide range of employment-related skills effectively, including job search, numeracy and driving theory. Many vocational lessons are highly effective in improving learner understanding of specific jobs including office work, catering and care work. Approximately 20% of learners achieve vocational qualifications in addition to ESOL qualifications.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most lessons are well planned and meet individual learning needs well. Topics are relevant to learners' everyday life and work interests. Resources, especially interactive whiteboards, are used well to engage learners. A minority of lessons do not focus sufficiently on meeting individual learning needs.
- Targets on individual learning plans do not always record all of the progress that learners make in lessons. The diagnosis of learners' skill development needs is thorough, but teachers do not always use the information effectively to plan overall learning programmes. Where learners attend several subjects, individual learning plans do not reflect the additional range of opportunities for developing skills in a variety of contexts.
- The range of provision is good and meets learners' needs well. Full-time, part-time, weekend and evening provision meets learners' personal and work commitments well. Courses include those for learners aged 14 to 19 and courses for adults. A comprehensive range of vocational options is also available to learners.
- The college provides work experience for ESOL learners who attend vocational classes; however, it does not provide sufficiently for learners attending discrete ESOL courses. Staff and learners agree that work experience would be beneficial. Enrichment is very effective in broadening learners' experiences outside of their own communities.
- Partnership working is outstanding. Very effective relationships with community groups have led to additional learning opportunities for non-traditional learners. An impressive 39 learning centres provide learning opportunities within the

community and increase participation by under-represented groups. Provision is exceptionally well planned and its success monitored.

- Support for learners is outstanding. Learning mentors are highly effective in supporting learners with personal problems. They work effectively with tutors. Faith ambassadors provide counselling and advice for learners and work with local communities to promote the benefit of attending learning programmes. Many learners have accessed learning through this liaison. Specialist support is highly effective. Learners speak highly of the support they receive.
- Curriculum management is good. ESOL provision meets needs effectively in areas with high levels of deprivation and low skill levels. Liaison with local communities is frequent and effective. Opportunities to develop courses with community centres are maximised to meet local demand. A comprehensive Skills for Life strategy clearly details learner entitlement, delivery methods and target groups. The college also contributes to national strategies and initiatives.
- Staff development is extensive. Most tutors have appropriate, or are working towards, qualifications in teaching and subject specialist qualifications in ESOL. Equality and diversity are integrated into most lessons and learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities.
- Governors provide specialist knowledge to managers through the curriculum standards and quality improvement committee, and were involved in the development of the Skills for Life strategy.
- The self-assessment process is inclusive and judgements are mostly accurate. The college's observations of teaching and learning are broadly in line with that of the inspection but in some cases were over generous. Some observations focus too much on teaching practice rather than learning activities.

What does Leicester College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates of entry level speaking and listening long qualifications through improved planning and tracking of learner progress over the full length of the programme.
- Further develop target setting for learners by using the individual learning plan to detail language and, where appropriate, vocational targets, informed by initial assessment, to ensure that the achievement of these are planned more effectively in lessons.
- Increase the numbers of learners receiving work experience, in particular for those attending discrete ESOL courses, to improve their employability prospects.

Information about the inspection

38. Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven 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.
39. 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 college. They 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)
Leicester 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					
Full-time learners	5,561	0	3,684	1,877	0
Part-time learners	10,607	322	551	5,282	4,452
Overall effectiveness	2	n/a	2	1	2
Capacity to improve	1				
Outcomes for learners	2	2	3	1	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
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>	1				
Quality of provision	1	n/a	2	1	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?	1				
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?	1				
Leadership and management	1				
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	1				
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?	1				
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?	1				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	1				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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