

Kendal College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130631

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Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Kendal College is a small general further education college located in the southern part of the Lake District. The population of South Lakeland is 103,800, with a working-age population of 62,600. Economic activity is high. A large proportion of adults have intermediate level qualifications and over a third are qualified to higher levels. This compares favourably with the rest of the country. The proportion of people out of work for more than 12 months is under the national average. The proportion of students achieving five GCSEs grade A* to C at district level compares well to the rest of the North West and nationally. The proportion of learners aged 16 to 19 not in education, employment or training is low and declining. The college's mission is to provide a local, exciting quality curriculum for its community, that will enable students to achieve their full learning and skills potential.
2. The college offers further education courses in all subject areas apart from agriculture. Some programme areas offer the full range of levels from entry through to higher education. The college has a small amount of outreach provision for pupils aged 14 to 16 in hairdressing and beauty therapy in Penrith. The college also offers a growing range of apprenticeship programmes and, as part its strategy for employer engagement, offers an increasing range of courses for adults who pay their own fees. The college is a partner in Cumbrian Colleges Ltd, which has been set up to secure and manage additional contracts.
3. The college also collaborates formally with the other four Cumbrian colleges. The college is actively involved in the development of provision for pupils aged 14 to 16 in South Lakeland and Eden. In conjunction with partner schools the college provides young apprenticeships in hospitality, sport and creative and performing arts. The college has the lead role in developing the collaborative diploma at intermediate level.
4. In 2009/10 some 3,420 learners aged 16 to 18 and adults enrolled at the college. Compared with declining demographics the college's enrolment of learners aged 16 to 18 has increased. In addition there were 449 pupils aged 14 to 16 enrolled.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - CSkills (bricklaying, wood and trowel occupations)
 - JTL (plumbing).

| Type of provision | Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10 |
|--|---|
| <p>Provision for young learners: 14 to 16</p> <p>Further education (16 to18)</p> <p>Foundation learning, including</p> <p>Entry to Employment</p> | <p>449 part-time learners</p> <p>687 full-time learners 157 part-time learners</p> <p>113 full-time learners 155 part-time learners</p> <p>0 learners</p> |
| <p>Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)</p> | <p>200 full-time learners 899 part-time learners</p> |
| <p>Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships</p> | <p>973 learners 237 apprentices</p> |

Summary report

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

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Overall effectiveness of provision | Grade 1 |
| Capacity to improve | Grade 1 |
| | Grade |
| Outcomes for learners | 1 |
| Quality of provision | 1 |
| Leadership and management | 1 |
| Safeguarding | 2 |
| Equality and diversity | 1 |
| Subject Areas | |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy | 2 |
| Visual and performing arts | 1 |

Overall effectiveness

6. Kendal College has improved consistently since the last inspection and is now outstanding. Managers, teachers and other staff are excellent role models for learners. They set themselves high standards and have high expectations. The college is highly inclusive and very effective in removing barriers to learning so that the majority of students make very good progress during their time at college. Learners enjoy college. They are able to choose from a very wide range of provision that ensures they enrol on a course that meets their future career intentions. Learners benefit from excellent support, extensive enrichment opportunities and additional courses that enhance their progression between levels of courses and to employment and higher education.
7. Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Learners aged 14 to 18 are extremely successful in gaining qualifications. Adults and learners on work-based provision do very well. Very high numbers of learners studying full time achieve key skills qualifications and adults perform very well on literacy and numeracy courses. Learners make an outstanding contribution to the community. Their personal and social skills develop significantly. They attend well, are punctual to lessons and their behaviour is excellent. Learners treat each other, staff and visitors with courtesy and respect.

8. The college is very well led and managed. Governors and senior managers provide very strong leadership and are successful in achieving their high ambitions. The college has established excellent partnerships that have secured its current and future direction. Arrangements for quality assurance are highly effective in driving improvement. Learners, parents and employers speak very positively about the services the college provides and have few suggestions as to how it could improve further.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Managers, teachers and support staff are extremely effective role models for learners in setting high professional standards and promoting a culture of inclusion, courtesy and respect for each other. Learners develop maturity and self-confidence that raise their aspirations for success at college and in the future.
- Success rates are high overall. For learners aged 14 to 18 success rates are very high. For adults, success rates have improved faster than those nationally and are now high. However, rates vary between subject areas. For work-based learners success rates are high. The college's very strong focus on equality of opportunity has been extremely effective in ensuring that male and female learners achieve equally well and those requiring additional support achieve at higher levels than their peers.
- Learners enjoy college life. Most make excellent progress, achieving higher grades than predicted from their prior qualifications. Very high proportions progress to courses at a higher level within the college. At the end of their programmes similarly high proportions progress to university and to employment with prestigious companies. Adults and learners aged 16 to 18 are very successful in developing their skills and attaining qualifications in literacy and numeracy.
- Learners' development of social, personal and employability skills is outstanding. They feel very safe at college and are very well prepared to make informed choices about their future health and well-being. Excellent attention to developing their understanding of health and safety in the workplace prepares them very well for employment. Learners make an outstanding contribution to the community.
- Teaching and learning are good, with an increasing amount that is outstanding. Teachers use a good range of strategies to encourage students to learn quickly and make good progress. The best lessons use a range of strategies that motivate students and challenge them to achieve their best. Teachers use their vocational expertise expertly to excite and inspire students to learn. In the small number of less successful lessons, teachers do not check learners' understanding sufficiently and do not plan enough activities to challenge and stretch learners, especially the most able.
- The college's responsiveness to the needs of learners, employers and the wider community is outstanding. A very wide vocationally based curriculum provides extensive progression opportunities for learners aged 14 to 18, adults and those

- on work-based programmes. Flexible arrangements for delivering courses enables employed and vulnerable learners to access the provision.
- The college has established outstanding collaborative partnerships, which enhance and expand the provision across Cumbria. The college plays a significant and leading role in many strategic educational partnerships in the region and acts as a key link with business and education consortia.
 - The college provides extensive enrichment opportunities and additional courses which broaden and enhance learners' experiences, employability skills and well-being. These make a considerable contribution to the excellent progression of learners to higher education and employment.
 - Guidance and support to help learners succeed are outstanding. Learners in need of additional support are provided with help very quickly and this makes a real difference for those who have struggled in the past. Learners speak very positively about the help they receive from experienced and committed support staff, particularly the in-class assistants. Learners who receive additional learning support make excellent progress.
 - The Principal and governors provide very strong leadership. They have inspirational vision and high expectations. They monitor the performance of the college robustly and are very successful in achieving their high ambitions. Within the constraints of a small college they have secured very good value for money and wise investment in sustainable accommodation developments.
 - The college is a highly-inclusive community. Outstanding promotion of equality and diversity is supported by exceptionally detailed analysis and monitoring of the performance of different groups of learners. Actions to remove barriers to learning are highly effective in widening participation and ensuring that learners reach their potential.
 - Arrangements for quality assurance and self-assessment are highly effective in raising standards. Self-assessment is informed by accurate data, robust observation of teaching and the views of learners and staff. The college's self-assessment report is very clear, succinct and accurate in its identification of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. Quality improvement plans are understood by staff and are regularly monitored.

What does Kendal College need to do to improve further?

- Continue to implement, evaluate and review current strategies for improving the success rates for adults and work-based learners, so that success rates are equally high across all subject areas.
- Continue to increase the amount of good and better teaching by improving teachers' questioning techniques so that learners' understanding is checked more thoroughly in less effective lessons. Plan learning activities so that they match the abilities and capabilities of all learners, providing greater challenge, especially for the more able learners.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the friendly and supportive teachers, tutors and other staff who give their time freely
- the modern and attractive buildings that provide an adult and welcoming learning environment.
- well-organised lessons, especially those that include a good variety of activities
- the materials available on Moodle to help with work outside of lessons
- the excellent support from in-class assistants
- the very well organised work-placements for most students
- the very good resources in most curriculum areas
- that staff have high expectations and support those that are falling behind or having difficulty
- the support from staff in student services
- residentials, visiting speakers and local, national and international trips
- the range of food in the canteens on both sites.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the length and organisation of queues in the canteen on the main site
- kit store and locker access for some students
- some slow computers and problems with laptops.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the high professional standards of college staff
- the very good communication between employers and the college
- the high standards the college demands of learners
- the innovative manner in which the college engages with industry
- the significant role the college plays in the local community and economy
- the flexibility in the way the college delivers programmes in response to employers' needs.

What employers would like to see improved:

- employers did not have any suggestions for improvement.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

9. The college's capacity to make and sustain improvements is outstanding. At the previous inspection in 2006 the college was judged to be good. Excellent progress has been made since then. Very strong strategic leadership and excellent partnership working have widened access to provision for young people, adults and employers and this is contributing significantly to the regeneration of the local and wider area of South Lakeland. Very high quality provision for pupils aged 14 to 16 is extremely successful in increasing participation in vocational learning. Managers and teachers provide excellent role models for learners. Outcomes for learners have improved consistently and are now outstanding.
10. Governors and senior managers rigorously monitor performance against challenging targets. Quality assurance arrangements, including the self-assessment processes, are robust and result in very detailed action plans. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly. The college's strong focus on inclusion is supported by comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of the performance of different groups of learners.
11. Governors' and senior managers' meticulous planning and monitoring of accommodation developments and their very strong financial management have resulted in high-quality accommodation on the main site and impressive plans for future developments. Sustainable development is a key feature of the college's plans.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 1

12. The college takes very effective action to raise learners' aspirations. Staff at all levels of the college are extremely good role models for students in the high professional standards they promote within lessons and around the college. As a result, learners treat each other, visitors and members of staff with courtesy and respect. Highly effective action by teachers and managers removes barriers to achievement for students, increasing their social mobility. Staff promote a culture of inclusion and high expectations for all learners, which ensure that male and female students achieve equally well and those in need of extra support attain higher than their peers.
13. Overall, the level of learners' attainment of qualifications is good. Learners aged 16 to 18 on courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level attain very high success rates. Success rates for the large numbers of students aged 14 to 16 following college courses are outstanding. For adults, success rates are high at all levels. Success rates vary across subject areas. In Skills for Life, catering and hospitality, information and communication technology, and creative and performing arts, success rates are very high. However, they are satisfactory in health, care and public services, engineering and construction. Learners produce good standards of work. In creative and performing arts their work is

outstanding and the very high professional standards in catering and hospitality ensure that learners develop outstanding employability skills.

14. The standards reached by learners on provision for employers are high. Success rates for apprentices are very high. For advanced apprentices the success rate is low. On Train to Gain courses success rates are high. For the large numbers of learners on Train to Gain courses in education and training, catering and childcare, success rates are very high. Employers speak positively about the good standards of work and the effective communication skills and maturity in the workplace that their employees develop. Work-based learners' attendance is very good.
15. Learners enjoy college and most make outstanding progress in their personal and social development. Their behaviour in lessons and around the college is excellent. Considering that many have large distances to travel their punctuality to lessons is exemplary. Learners are enthusiastic and articulate in describing their achievements and the progress they make in their social and personal development. A very high proportion of learners progress between levels of provision within the college and to relevant employment and higher education. For example, motor vehicle students secure employment with large car manufacturers; hospitality students progress to high-quality hotels and restaurants both locally and nationally; and technical theatre students use their skills to secure employment at a prestigious local company.
16. Most learners make very good progress in achieving challenging targets. Value-added data indicate that a very high proportion of advanced-level students make very good progress. Very high proportions of learners attain high grades on all levels of qualifications. Success rates and the progress learners make based on their prior qualifications are very good on key skills courses. For adults on Skills for Life literacy and numeracy qualifications success rates are also very high. Learners' economic and social well-being are excellent. Learners' good attendance, excellent punctuality and high levels of social awareness prepare them very well for life after college.
17. Learners feel extremely safe at college. They appreciate the effort the college makes to provide them with additional courses in areas such as health and safety, and organising presentations from visiting speakers from the police and the fire service. These prepare them very well for life at college and to make informed choices about their safety outside college. Learners demonstrated exceptional understanding of health and safety practices in practical workshops during the inspection and they make an excellent contribution to the risk assessment of learning activities.
18. The college's canteens and restaurant offer an excellent range of healthy options and drinking water is available freely around the college. Healthy living is promoted well through termly, learner review weeks. Learners are well informed about matters relating to their physical and mental health and well-being. A range of activities to promote physical health is offered but participation in these is patchy.

19. Learners are encouraged to become active citizens, for example, by representing their peers on the student council. They make an excellent contribution to local and international communities through wide-ranging volunteering activities and extensive fund-raising. For example, construction students have worked with Kendal United Football Club to build a shelter for their supporters and have raised funds for primary schoolchildren in Ethiopia to build libraries and water sources.

The quality of provision

Grade 1

20. Teaching and learning are good with much that is outstanding in areas such as hospitality and catering, and visual and performing arts. Relationships between teachers and learners are excellent. The best lessons are well-planned and purposeful, and lead to brisk, lively and imaginative teaching that enables all learners to make good and better progress. Outstanding lessons are characterised by passionate and enthusiastic teachers who use their extensive vocational expertise to inspire a culture of learning and challenge. In these lessons, teachers' expectations of their students are high, checks on learning and understanding are frequent, questions are probing and work is appropriately challenging. As a result students learn quickly and make rapid progress.
21. In the small number of less successful lessons, teaching is insufficiently challenging and the more able learners do not always have the opportunity to progress at a faster rate. Teachers tend to lead too much and the range of teaching and learning strategies is not always matched to the needs of all learners.
22. Initial assessment to identify learners' additional learning needs is rigorous. Learning support, usually provided in class, is tailored to meet individual needs. Those receiving additional support do better than their peers.
23. All areas of the college radiate a strong subject identity, founded securely on real work experiences and this often results in vibrant, high-quality displays of learners' work. Resources to support learning are very good in many areas and outstanding in catering. Learners benefit from high-quality, realistic work environments. The use of information learning technology (ILT) to enhance learning is satisfactory.
24. A comprehensive and robust lesson observation programme is carried out by a team of well-trained observers. Sound arrangements are in place to moderate and validate the lesson observation grades. The outcomes of lesson observations are used effectively to inform both individual and college-wide professional development. A team of advanced practitioners work closely with individual teachers to help them improve their practice. Learners' views are actively canvassed and they show high levels of satisfaction with teaching.
25. The college offers wide and responsive provision which provides very clear progression pathways and meets the needs of learners, employers and the local economy exceptionally well. The range of courses at foundation level has

- increased since the last inspection and continues to develop in line with the college's highly successful strategic vision for 14 to 19 provision and work-based learning. Courses are offered flexibly to meet employers' needs. For example, new engineering and construction provision has been developed in partnership with local industry. Work-based provision and bespoke courses are highly responsive to local skills needs. As a consequence, employers think that the college is innovative and proactive in its approach. A very large number of pupils aged 14 to 16 benefit from highly successful vocational courses delivered at college and in a number of schools. The college also provides successful specialist provision to ease transition to college for learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties from residential schools in the locality.
26. The college plays a significant and leading role in a wide range of very effective partnerships across the region. It is highly successful in its collaboration with local schools, colleges and universities. The college is a key partner in the South Lakes Federation, Eden Partnership and Cumbrian Colleges Collaboration. Close and highly-productive partnerships have also been established with employers, industry and government, which provide learners with access to a wide range of career opportunities and work-experience. Employers and community leaders value this link and speak very highly of the role the college is playing in the future development of Kendal and South Lakeland.
 27. The college's provision and commitment to enrichment and additional activities bring outstanding benefits to learners and the wider community. Course tutors are given time to plan and deliver enrichment for their learners. Events and activities are based around themes such as equality and diversity, healthy living, sport and learners keeping themselves and others safe. Inter-college themed days such as 'Challenge Cumbria' and 'Celebrating Diversity' prepare learners very well for the future. Individual subject areas provide extensive vocationally focused enrichment, including residential trips, guest speakers and visits. Learners engage actively in working with and raising funds for local, national and international causes and charities; for example, for local hospices, care for the elderly, children in need and working with a school in Ethiopia. Many learners participate in these activities and comment very favourably on such opportunities.
 28. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The college has a holistic and robust approach to advice and guidance and the identification of learners' support needs is thorough and timely. Highly-effective individual support is provided and those in receipt of additional learning support make excellent progress. Pre-course advice is thorough and great care is taken to ensure all learners are on the correct course and that the college is the right choice for them.
 29. Learners benefit from an early assessment of their needs and support is generally in place prior to the commencement of their course. Those needing support have highly detailed 'Inclusion Plans', which are regularly negotiated and reviewed to ensure they are making effective progress. In-class assistants provide high levels of support in lessons and many learners also benefit from one-to-one study support. Vulnerable learners and looked after children receive

very effective help and guidance on entry to the college. Parents and employers are kept informed of learners' progress and speak very highly of the support provided by the college.

Leadership and management

Grade 1

30. Leadership and management are outstanding. The Principal and governors have inspirational vision and high ambitions which drive robust strategic planning and highly effective quality improvement. The college is very successful in achieving its aims: to be a major driver for regeneration; to develop learners so that they reach their potential; to widen opportunities in an inclusive environment; and to provide high-quality accommodation and facilities.
31. Excellent partnerships contribute significantly to securing the college's current and future strategic position. Key stakeholders, including local MPs, enterprise advocates, employers and regional and national partners, are actively involved in college planning events. Employers are supporting plans for the development of an international hotel school and the college has taken over the operation of the Kendal Museum in partnership with the local council, to provide unique heritage courses, which are contributing to the regeneration of the town. The college is highly responsive to the needs of employers by expanding the range of work-based courses for adults and young people. In an area of high post-16 participation in school sixth forms the college's enrolment of learners aged 16 to 18 has increased steadily.
32. Governance is good. Experienced governors are well informed about external factors which impact on the college and monitor regularly its performance. Governors have established an effective committee structure. They are aware of the need to critically review and improve their attendance at meetings, which is occasionally low. This sometimes hinders their ability to make key decisions.
33. Arrangements for quality assurance and self-assessment are highly effective in raising standards. Self-assessment is informed by accurate data, robust observation of teaching and the views of learners and staff. The report is very clear, succinct and accurate in its identification of the strengths and areas for improvement. Quality improvement plans are understood by staff and are regularly monitored. Arrangements for setting and monitoring targets for staff, which are closely linked to the strategic plan, are rigorous. Systems for identifying and improving underperforming courses are effective. However, in a very small minority of cases, actions for change have not been sufficiently swift.
34. Learners' and stakeholders' views about the quality of the services the college provides are actively sought and used to promote improvement. The college's learner forum is chaired by a student with the Principal and senior managers attending. Minutes of meetings and actions taken are published on the college intranet and on posters around the college. Learners value this feedback. Course representatives meet with managers regularly. Employers' and staff views are also critical in making improvements.

35. The college is a highly inclusive community. Outstanding promotion of equality and diversity is supported by exceptionally detailed analysis and monitoring of the performance of different groups of learners. Comprehensive statistical analysis includes indicators for gender, age, ethnicity, disability, race, socio-economic factors and progression from feeder schools. Evaluation of the data highlights gaps in performance, which are thoroughly investigated and result in effective action. For example, the college has resolved differences in the performance of male and female learners and has been effective in increasing the number of male enrolments through changes to the curriculum and improved arrangements for providing guidance onto courses. Equality and diversity are integral to the tutorial programme and the curriculum. An excellent example is of construction students visiting a 200 year-old Buddhist temple to look at different building methods and materials.
36. Accommodation and resources are mostly very good. The buildings on the main site are modern, bright and welcoming. Excellent industry-standard kitchens and restaurant areas in catering and hairdressing are an important part of learners' preparation for the world of work. Sustainable development has been integrated into the college's accommodation. The recently opened construction building is a model of best practice. The roof is sedum, reclaimable materials have been used in its construction and curriculum consumables are recycled. Solar panels, arrangements for measuring and displaying energy efficiency, and the composting of all catering and kitchen waste are other aspects of the college's attention to sustainability.
37. Governors and managers place high priority on safeguarding learners. Governors review and update the safeguarding and safe-recruitment policies annually and these cover effectively all government requirements. Governors monitor the effectiveness of the college's policies through regular reports which ensures that they fulfil their legislative duties. Arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff are robust. Vetting checks are carried out on all staff and the college has appropriate records to monitor compliance with legislation. Working with partner colleges, the college has established effective links with local safeguarding and children boards that support learners identified to be in need of help. Designated senior staff and governors have been trained appropriately and other staff have followed online training which is refreshed through annual updating and is prioritised at whole college staff development events. Staff from across the college work together very well to identify and support learners who are vulnerable and at risk. The college buildings provide a very safe and welcoming environment for learners, staff and visitors.
38. Arrangements for health and safety are comprehensive and thoroughly implemented. Risk assessment of activities that take place both in and outside college are carried out rigorously. The extensive involvement of students in the risk assessment of activities and learning environments ensures that they develop the vocational skills needed for employment.
39. Financial management is very strong and resources are utilised exceptionally well. The college has achieved an operating surplus for each of the last seven years despite an impressive capital programme. Collaborative and consortium

funding arrangements are used to maximise investment in the curriculum. The college provides very good value for money.

Subject areas

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Grade 2

Context

40. The subject area offers full- and part-time courses from foundation to advanced level in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Of 497 college-based learners, 123 are aged 16 to 18 and are studying full time, 17 adults are enrolled on full-time courses and 234 are following part-time courses. For employers, the area offers apprenticeship programmes to 53 learners and there are 19 Train to Gain learners. Around 123 pupils from local schools are following foundation level programmes.

Key findings

- Learners' attainment of qualifications is good overall. However, success rates vary between courses. They are very high on foundation level and the intermediate level diploma in hairdressing and intermediate level beauty therapy. Success rates are low on intermediate nail technology and advanced beauty therapy. Success rates for pupils aged 14 to 16 are outstanding. Success rates for apprentices are high and most complete in the planned time.
- Most learners make good progress at college in developing practical skills. During challenging salon sessions they develop good technical skills and personal confidence in communicating with clients. These accomplishments enhance their employability skills. Learners produce good standards of work. They take pride in their work, presenting their assignments and portfolios well. Learners develop a good understanding of the industry through work placements in local hairdressing and beauty salons.
- Learners feel safe at college and in the workplace. Teachers ensure that training in health and safety is a priority early in learners' induction to the college. Learners wear appropriate uniforms and in salon sessions demonstrate safe working practices when carrying out practical treatments. Learners value highly the safe and welcoming college environment in which they learn.
- Learners make a very positive contribution to the community. For example, learners on hairdressing courses provide salon sessions in residential settings for older people and beauty therapy learners provide specialist pamper sessions for cancer patients. These activities increase learners' understanding of the diverse needs of clients and promote their understanding of equality and diversity very well.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' detailed lesson planning ensures that most lessons have a variety of tasks that challenge learners throughout the session. They ensure that learners understand the links between the theory and practice in salon sessions and this reinforces their learning well. Teachers make good use of praise and positive feedback that motivates learners and raises their self-esteem. Information and learning technology is not used sufficiently to reinforce learning.
- Teachers' assessment of learners' work is accurate and well-planned and provides regular and constructive feedback that supports them in improving

their skills. Learners' progress is monitored thoroughly during tutorial sessions, using an online system that evaluates how well they are doing against their targets.

- The college offers a good range of provision that allows learners to progress from foundation to advanced level. The curriculum is enhanced by interesting enrichment activities that learners participate in fully, making college life enjoyable. These include trips to hairdressing and beauty therapy exhibitions; competitions; trade fairs; and residential events, including overseas trips to Italy to visit high profile companies such as Lancôme and to Paris to visit Wella International.
- Learners benefit from very effective support from their tutors and very good additional learning support. Well-planned tutorial sessions support them to make informed choices about their health and safety at college and in their wider lives. This includes helpful advice on sexual health and substance misuse. Learners treat each other, clients and staff with courtesy and respect, and such practice prepares them very well for employment.
- The quality of provision for pupils aged 14 to 16 is outstanding. The college has established highly effective working relationships with schools from across the South Lakes. Provision is offered at college and on school premises if distances prevent easy travel to the main college site. A large number of learners aged 14 to 16 benefit significantly from being able to develop their personal and vocational skills through this provision. Very good guidance and helpful taster sessions for learners and parents are provided prior to starting college courses.
- Leadership and management are good. All staff are involved in the course review process, which informs the overall self-assessment report. The report accurately identifies the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision and informs robust plans for improvement. Progress against action plan targets is monitored regularly. Learners' and stakeholders' views are used to evaluate the quality of the provision. Learners feel that their views are valued.
- Accommodation and specialist resources are good and are managed well to maintain high professional standards. Hairdressing salons reflect modern commercial settings providing high-quality learning environments for learners. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and benefit from good opportunities to update their industrial skills, ensuring that learners find salon sessions motivating and relevant.

What does Kendal College need to do to improve further?

- Monitor, evaluate and review action plans to resolve the variations in outcomes for learners and to improve success rates in intermediate level hairdressing and nail technology, and advanced level beauty therapy.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by using a wider range of strategies to challenge learners in training and salon sessions, including the further development and use of ILT.

Visual and performing arts

Grade 1

Context

41. The college has 224 learners on full-time programmes in art and design, music and performing arts from intermediate to advanced level. Foundation studies in art and design is also offered. The majority of learners are aged 16 to 18 and study full time. Around 50 school pupils aged 14 to 16 are enrolled on the level two Diploma in creative and media and 53 adult learners are on non-funded evening courses.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Success rates have been very high on all courses for a number of years. Significant numbers of learners on all courses achieve high grades. In addition to their main programmes a very high proportion of learners are successful in attaining key-skills qualifications.
- Learners produce very high standards of work on all courses. On intermediate level art and design they develop very good critical analysis skills and in performing arts they demonstrate high level African dance techniques. Advanced level theatre learners produce very high standard performances for local primary schools and in drama characterisation work is sensitive. Learners on music courses are very competent in microphone setting.
- Learners make very good progress. Most make significantly better progress than predicted from their prior qualifications, particularly in art and design courses. Progression between levels of courses within the college and from advanced-level programmes to higher education is very good. Progression to employment from technical theatre courses is very good. For example, 12 former learners progressed to technical production careers at Kendal Brewery Arts Centre.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers' energy, enthusiasm and passion for their subjects inspire learners to work hard and to have high aspirations. Teachers' detailed planning uses the individual assessment of learners' levels of ability and information on their progress very well to ensure that they all develop the knowledge and skills needed. Teachers' very good management and organisation of intermediate level lessons ensures that learners produce creative work and develop mature attitudes to their studies.
- Teachers check learners' understanding of activities and techniques with care during lessons, ensuring that their knowledge and skills are developed very effectively. They provide thorough and regular assessment feedback that learners find very useful in helping them understand what they need to do to improve. Learners' targets are set and monitored efficiently, using an online system where assignment marks and improvement advice are recorded comprehensively, allowing students and teachers to monitor precisely how each individual is progressing.
- Learners receive outstanding support from teachers and other staff. In-class assistants provide excellent support for learners during lessons and this helps them to make very good progress. Learners value highly this support. Additional learning support is promoted exceptionally well to learners as part of a strong

ethos of inclusion. Learners see the additional support they receive as natural and key to their success as they are aware that many famous creative people have similar learning needs.

- Learners are able to choose from a wide range of provision, which is enhanced by additional qualifications in, for example, video production and health and safety. These qualifications prepare learners very well for progression to employment or further study. Learners studying full time benefit from enrichment opportunities such as participating in many local arts festivals and events that make their courses enjoyable and relevant. The department also offers higher education courses and part-time provision for adults paying the full cost of their courses.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Accurate self-assessment, underpinned by detailed analysis of key performance data and the views and experiences of learners and staff, informs a detailed and rigorous quality improvement plan and targets for staff. Managers have ensured that the curriculum responds extremely well to local needs and national strategies. They are leading the development of Diplomas for learners aged 14 to 16 and of young apprenticeships.
- Partnership working with local schools, higher education establishments and the local community is excellent. Managers are involved in a unique partnership with the adjacent Kendal Museum to develop heritage qualifications. Local employers collaborate with the college to develop bespoke commercial evening provision and to support the young apprenticeship programme.
- Learners contribute fully to the development of the curriculum. They participate actively in learner consultation groups. They feel their opinions are valued highly by college staff as their feedback is used to improve the provision. Learners' work is displayed and celebrated very professionally around the college.
- Learners' understanding of cultural diversity is developed very well through the curriculum. Teachers develop projects and assignments that encourage learners to appreciate the art, music, plays and dance of other cultures.
- Resources are generally good. However, some art rooms do not have sufficient sinks.

What does Kendal College need to do to improve further?

- Implement plans to install sinks in art and design and print rooms to enable learners to work more efficiently and safely.

Information about the inspection

42. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the college's director of curriculum, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, 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.
43. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and emails to gain the views of learners, parents and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. 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)
Kendal 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 | 865 | 0 | 711 | 154 | 0 |
| Part-time learners | 2500 | 406 | 103 | 452 | 1539 |
| Overall effectiveness | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Capacity to improve | 1 | | | | |
| Outcomes for learners | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning? | 1 | | | | |
| How well do learners attain their learning goals? | 2 | | | | |
| How well do learners progress? | 1 | | | | |
| How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development? | 1 | | | | |
| How safe do learners feel? | 1 | | | | |
| <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 | 1 | 1 | 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 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 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> | 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? | 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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