

Warrington Collegiate

Inspection report

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Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Warrington Collegiate is a general further education college with its main campus situated just to the north of Warrington, where it has a new purpose-built campus. It has a town-centre site and provides adult and community education on both sites and at a variety of other locations throughout the town. Although there are areas of affluence in the borough, approximately one third of learners are from areas of high social and economic deprivation. The percentage of learners achieving five or more GCSE grades at A* to C is above 60% in Warrington; however, only 19% of 16-year-olds joining the college achieved this figure. The vast majority of learners are white, but the percentage of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than that for the local population.
2. Since the previous inspection employer responsive provision has grown from 13% to 43% of the overall provision. Courses are provided in all but one sector subject areas and at all levels from entry to level 4. The areas with the highest numbers of enrolments are: preparation for life and work; health, care and public services; retail and commercial enterprise; and business administration and law. The college is an Associate College of the University of Chester and provides a varied higher education (HE) vocational curriculum together with Access to HE courses. The college also has a Business School which offers work-based learning and Train to Gain courses in a number of vocational areas.
3. The college’s mission is, ‘We will realise the potential that excellent education and training has to transform lives for the better.’

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Provision for young learners: 14 to16	425 part-time learners
Further education (16 to18)	1,299 full-time learners 399 part-time learners
Foundation learning	233 full-time learners 103 part-time learners
Entry to Employment	44 full-time equivalent learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	378 full-time learners 2,781 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	1,310 learners 196 apprentices

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	1
Equality and diversity	2

Subject Areas	Grade
Transportation and operations	1
Building and construction	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Arts media and publishing	1
Foundation for life and learning	2
Business, administration and law	2

Overall effectiveness

- Warrington Collegiate is a good college with outstanding features. The college has shown a good capacity to improve through its steady and sustained improvements since the last inspection. Learners enjoy college life. Learners on Train to Gain and apprenticeship programmes achieve particularly well. Learners aged 16 to 18 on advanced-level courses make good progress, achieve high grades and progress well to HE and employment. Learners feel very safe and most are well prepared for the world of work. The quality of provision is good overall. Most teaching and learning is good and in many lessons theory and practice are linked well to keep learners' interest. Assessments are well thought out and help learners to improve. The range of courses is good and learners benefit from the outstanding partnerships that the college has with a wide range of organisations, particularly employers. Learners receive excellent advice, guidance and support to help them to get the most out of the college.

The college leadership and management provide very good strategic direction and set ambitious targets. The college prioritises safeguarding and has outstanding arrangements. The college engages with users very well and ensures that their views inform its quality improvement arrangements. It promotes equality and diversity well. The self-assessment is accurate and used well to drive forward improvements.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. The substantial employer responsive provision enjoys very high success rates on the Train to Gain programme, where most learners achieve within the expected time. Apprentices also succeed well. Learners develop a good range of skills, which prepares them particularly well for employment.
- Learners make good progress in their studies. Learners aged 16 to 18 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 excellent. The success rates of different groups of learners are broadly similar however, learners who receive additional learning support achieve significantly better than others.
- Safe-working practices and a secure learning environment underpin learners' feeling of safety. Learners have good opportunities to make a positive contribution to the life of the college and their local communities.
- Teaching and learning are good. The majority of lessons are well prepared and delivered. Teachers keep up to date with industry standards and link practical work to theory well. A minority of lessons are less well organised and do not take sufficient account of the needs of individual learners. Most areas of the curriculum use information and learning technology (ILT) effectively, but a few teachers are not confident in using it to support learning.
- Assessment procedures are good. Learners appreciate the regular feedback that they receive on their work and the opportunity to access assignments and learning resources on the college's virtual learning environment (VLE). Assessors for work-based provision have high levels of commercial knowledge and use a good range of techniques to assess trainees. Assessment plans are flexible to meet employers' needs.
- Additional learning support is good. Learners benefit from effective sessions to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and attendance at these sessions has increased this year. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good specialist support. However, in a few cases, specialist support staff do not have sufficient opportunity to work with teachers in the preparation of lessons.
- The college's arrangements to meet the needs of users are good. Learners of all ages benefit from a wide range of vocational courses, providing good opportunities to progress from foundation level to HE. The Warrington Business School's large apprenticeship and Train to Gain provision covers a good range of vocational areas.
- Links with partner organisations are outstanding. The college is a key member of many local and regional partnerships groups which include the local

authority, community groups, voluntary organisations and a range of employers. Collaborative work with schools is highly effective.

- Care, guidance and support are outstanding for all learners including those on work-based learning programmes. Initial information and guidance is very effective, provided promptly and directs learners to the correct choice of course. Learning coaches support learners very effectively.
- Employer responsive provision training advisors carry out comprehensive progress reviews every eight weeks in the workplace, providing very effective support and guidance. The review process is subject to internal audit with plans at an advanced stage to introduce direct observations.
- The principal, governors and senior leaders provide a clear vision and strategic direction to the college. College values underpin all aspects of the college's work. A strong culture of high expectations and raising aspirations exists. All staff are set ambitious targets and supported well through good professional development. Staff value this support and morale is high.
- Safeguarding is outstanding and forms a significant part of the overall college strategic plan. Staff and learners are proactive in assessing risks and taking action to prevent them. Staff are well trained to identify vulnerability and respond quickly and effectively.
- Excellent arrangements exist to promote and act upon the learner voice. A comprehensive system of well-trained course representatives allows learners to contribute at course team meetings and influence modifications to their programmes. The college is very responsive to their concerns.
- The self-assessment process is thorough and includes learners, governors and staff at all levels of the organisation. Self-assessment is accurate and used to raise standards. Action planning is effective in driving improvements. Courses causing concern are identified early and effective action is taken. Learners' and employers' views are actively sought and responded to promptly.

What does Warrington Collegiate need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop and use value-added measures so that all learners exceed their expectations.
- Ensure that all lessons are planned thoroughly to take into account the different needs of individuals in the group.
- Continue to develop staff's skills in the use of information and communication technology to support learning.
- Ensure that the increased take up of additional learning support is maintained and that specialist support staff have sufficient opportunities to work with teachers so that all staff are fully confident in working with learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Continue to develop and implement a system to observe and evaluate progress reviews in the college's employer responsive provision.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the good teaching and training
- approachable staff that provide good support
- the strong links between training and work
- the good advice on how to progress
- the way the college is well organised
- the safe and secure college environment
- the opportunities to engage in community projects
- the confidence that the college gives to learners
- the small groups for training
- the opportunities to go on visits.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the disruption faced by some courses because of staff absenteeism
- the lack of sports facilities at the Winwick campus
- a better understanding of the need to study functional skills
- the occasional disruption from school pupils
- the noisiness in parts of the main college.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the excellent support and communication from college staff
- the very good progress that employees make
- the wide range of training available
- the speed at which the college responds to training needs
- the good communication with assessors and training advisors
- the way the college keeps employers informed of changes in legislation
- the help with recruitment.

What employers would like to see improved:

- better marketing and publication of college activities.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

5. The college has a sound record of improvement. The college has successfully managed a steady improvement in success rates in line with the national averages, while significantly changing the focus of its provision. Outcomes on employer responsive provision are outstanding. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Ambitious targets are set for all staff. Performance management is strong and supported by an effective and well-developed staff development programme. Curriculum management is now consistently good. The self-assessment report is accurate and used effectively to drive improvement. Governors use their expertise appropriately to challenge senior managers and raise standards. Internal progression for learners has improved since the last inspection, and is good. Learners' and employers' views are used highly effectively to raise standards. The college has continued to develop successful and productive external partnerships to support local and regional priorities.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

6. Success rates for the large numbers of Train to Gain learners are outstanding and have been very high over the past two years with nearly all learners completing their programmes within the expected time. Success rates for framework completions are good and have been well above the national average for the past three years.
7. In 2009/10, success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 on advanced-level programmes improved significantly despite learner numbers almost doubling. College value-added data for the past two years indicate that learners on advanced programmes generally achieve better than expected given their prior attainment, with a significant number of learners achieving high grades. The proportion of learners progressing to HE or employment has increased significantly in the last year. Provision for students aged 14 to 16 is very good with outstanding achievements of qualifications and good progression into the college. Key skills success rates have remained well above the average for the past two years. Learners in receipt of additional learning support achieve significantly better than those not receiving support. The success rates of different groups of learners are similar regardless of gender or ethnicity.
8. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 on foundation and intermediate-level programmes are around comparable averages, as are those for adult learners on intermediate level programmes. Success rates on short courses are broadly in line with averages.
9. The standard of learners' work is good overall. Apprentices work is well presented and demonstrates their knowledge well. Arts and media learners work to very high professional and industry standards producing work of great creativity and skill.

10. Learners make good progress and develop a range of practical, technical and employability skills. Many learners undertake English and mathematics classes to improve their employment prospects. Learners develop particularly good vocational skills in the work-based learning provision and Train to Gain where they learn new techniques to complement and extend their existing knowledge and skills. Qualification success increases their confidence and enhances their employment prospects.
11. All learners, including vulnerable adults, feel safe and secure within the college and workplaces. Staff promote safe working practices well in both practical and theory lessons.
12. The college promotes health and well-being effectively, and the take up for a number of health-related clinics and promotions is good. Learners make a positive contribution to the community through a variety of opportunities and projects provided by most subject areas. Many learners are involved in raising funds for charities and some are involved in campaigns around local and national issues.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

13. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, keep up to date with industry standards and prepare lessons well. They link practical work to theory well and their enthusiasm and imaginative use of resources successfully engage learners' interest. Many teachers are skilful at meeting the needs of different learners, for example, by good use of group work and questioning techniques that offer the right level of challenge to individuals. Staff in these lessons make frequent checks on learners' understanding. A minority of lessons are less-well organised: they lack sufficient stimulus for learners and take insufficient account of individual needs. A small proportion of teachers are not sufficiently skilful in their use of questions to learners.
14. The use of ILT to support learning is improving. Inspectors saw effective use of technology in most curriculum areas but this is not yet consistent across the college. Similarly, there are excellent examples of the promotion of equality and diversity within teaching and learning but in a few lessons teachers missed opportunities to explore issues adequately.
15. Assessment procedures are good. In most courses, teachers make good use of assessment to inform the development of learning plans. Learners appreciate the timely marking of their work and the detailed feedback they receive in many cases. They are positive about the improved scheduling of assignments and their availability on the college's VLE. The VLE also allows learners to access presentations from classes and resources to help them with their work. Assessors for work-based provision have high levels of commercial knowledge and use a wide range of methods to assess trainees' skills and knowledge. They plan assessments flexibly to meet employers' needs.

16. Additional learning support is good. Learners attending extra literacy and numeracy sessions receive effective support to develop these skills. In 2009/10, the college recognised that a proportion of learners, assessed as needing extra support, were not attending the sessions. Effective action to address this has led to an increase in the uptake of additional learning support this year. Learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good specialist support to help them access learning. Support is gradually withdrawn when it is no longer needed in order to promote independence and there is sufficient flexibility to reintroduce support where needed, for example, where a learner progresses to a higher level course. Many staff are skilful at modifying lessons for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, occasionally specialist support staff do not have sufficient opportunity to work with vocational staff in the preparation of lessons.
17. The college monitors teaching and learning carefully. Staff and managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for further improvement. Inspectors agreed with the college's overall judgement on teaching and learning. The college has extensive and effective staff development to improve lessons, training sessions and assessment practice. Within work-based learning, training and assessment sessions are observed for monitoring purposes; this does not yet extend to reviews that take place with individual trainees but plans are in place to address this.
18. The college's arrangements to meet the needs of users are good. Learners of all ages benefit from a wide range of full-time or part-time vocational courses providing good opportunities to progress from foundation level to HE.
19. A wide range of courses are available for learners aged 14 to 16. The Warrington Business School's large apprenticeships and Train to Gain provision covers a good range of vocational areas. The college has a large number of community-based locations providing a variety of courses with a strong focus on personal and community development. The overall key skills curriculum is flexible and provides good coverage of literacy and numeracy that appropriately meets learners' needs. The enrichment programme is largely based on subject-based activities. However, managers do not fully monitor the uptake of faculty-led enrichment activities.
20. Links with partner organisations are outstanding. The college is a key member of many local and regional partnerships groups, which include the local authority, community groups, voluntary organisations and a range of employers. Staff at all levels are involved in the highly effective partnership working. The college works closely with employers to develop a vocational curriculum with a strong focus on employment and the employer responsive provision has grown significantly since the last inspection. The Warrington Business School works in partnership with employers to help develop full cost recovery provision, which addresses their specific training needs. The college plays a key role in the Cheshire and Warrington Consortium of colleges. The college has successfully developed a range of programmes for learners aged 14 to 19, including Diplomas, through highly effective collaboration with schools.

21. Care, guidance and support are outstanding for all learners including those on work-based learning programmes. Initial information and guidance is very effective, provided promptly, and directs learners to the correct choice of course. Staff support learners effectively through the transition from school to college with very good early identification of support needs. Well qualified and skilled staff, who are experienced at dealing with a wide range of complex issues, support the welfare needs of learners extremely well. Tutorial support is very effective. The group tutorial programme is well developed and covers a wide range of personal and social development topics. Learning coaches use the individual tutorial programme very effectively to support learners in their course work, and are skilled at referring learners who require more specialist support or guidance. In employer responsive provision training advisors carry out comprehensive progress reviews every eight weeks in the workplace, providing very effective support and guidance. The review process is subject to internal audit with plans at an advanced stage to introduce direct observations.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

22. The principal, governors and senior leaders provide a clear vision and strategic direction to the college. College values underpin all aspects of its work and there is a strong culture of high expectations and raising aspirations. Underperformance is tackled robustly. All staff are set ambitious targets and are supported well through good professional development. Staff value this support and their morale is high. Curriculum management is good. The college is highly responsive to the needs of employers and local and regional priorities. Excellent partnership arrangements exist to enable learners to succeed. Strategic planning is good and the college develops innovative approaches to sustainability which support learning effectively.
23. Governance is good. Governors know the college well and have excellent local knowledge. They monitor key performance indicators rigorously. Members of the Corporation gain additional understanding of the college through regular training and strong curriculum links. College management ensures that safeguarding is a significant part of the overall college strategic plan and is outstanding. It is embedded within the curriculum and learners adopt safe working practices. Staff and learners are proactive in assessing risks and taking action to prevent them. Staff are well trained to identify vulnerability and respond quickly and effectively. Being safe and staying safe has a strong focus throughout the tutorial programme. Attendance is rigorously monitored and followed up to identify learners at risk and, where appropriate, to provide practical support. Student welfare is prioritised and learners understand and appreciate measures taken to protect them. The college employs closed circuit television highly effectively. Learners of all ages have a good understanding of the potential dangers on the internet. Following consultation with learners, advice and guidance on personal safety, bullying and abuse is readily available in a variety of appropriate ways. All staff understand safeguarding and the college fulfils its legal responsibilities very well. Risk assessments are thorough and learners are alerted to recent avoidable accidents via a large display in the foyer.

24. The college is committed to embedding equality and diversity throughout the curriculum and is making good progress both in college and in the workplace. The college supports learners across all the equality strands well. Project work successfully enables hard to reach learners, such as looked after children, to achieve well. The college is continuing to develop strategies to identify achievement gaps and ensure that all learners diagnosed as requiring additional support take it up. The impact of the single equality scheme and action plan is monitored carefully and challenging targets are set for improvement. The college plays a key role in ensuring the Local Strategic Partnership 'Closing the Gap' strategy is achieved. Diversity champions represent each faculty and diversity is celebrated fully in Diversity Week. High levels of respect exist between learners and staff and the college is an inclusive and welcoming community.
25. Excellent arrangements exist to promote and act upon the learner voice. A comprehensive system of well-trained course representatives allows learners to contribute at course team meetings and influence modifications to their programmes. Representatives are elected from every course at each level and are confident and understand and appreciate the responsibility their position affords them. They attend faculty meetings and the college is very responsive to their concerns. The student liaison officer supports an active student council well. All cross-college strategy groups have learners represented on them. The college uses its VLE to access their views, in addition to a range of surveys that it uses. The college is exceptionally responsive to the needs of employers, schools and community groups and is resourceful in meeting their needs.
26. The self-assessment process is thorough and includes learners, governors and staff at all levels of the organisation. Self-assessment is accurate and used to raise standards. Action planning is effective in driving improvements. Courses causing concern are identified early and effective action is taken. Learners' and employers' views are proactively sought and responded to promptly.
27. Resources are industry standard and used effectively to enhance learning. The accommodation is attractive and well managed although in a few cases rooms are too cramped. Financial management is strong. Staff are well qualified, many have industrial experience and they are deployed effectively and efficiently. Sustainability is prioritised and the college has implemented a number of successful initiatives to embed it within the curriculum, including harvesting rain water for construction programmes. The student council has raised the profile of climate change within college and its members are advocates of the recycling approach. The college provides good value for money.

Subject areas

Transportation and operations

Grade 1

Context

28. Some 1,087 learners are on employer responsiveness programmes in transport operations and maintenance. Of these, 1,041 learners are working towards Train to Gain intermediate qualifications in road passenger vehicle driving, passenger carrying vehicle driving (taxis), driving goods vehicles, carrying and delivering goods and logistics operational management. The remaining 46 learners are working as apprentices towards intermediate or advanced qualifications in motor vehicle maintenance and repair.

Key findings

- The Train to Gain programmes have had very high success rates for the past three years. Learners enjoy their learning and achieve well. Learners' success rates within the expected time period are exceptionally high and markedly above the national average. For apprentices in motor vehicle maintenance engineering, framework completion success rates are satisfactory.
- Learners are achieving very good personal and vocation-related skills. In Train to Gain, learners gain exceptional additional skills and knowledge in handling people with disabilities, current legislation regarding taxi laws, and conflict resolution. In motor vehicle work, a learner interviewed was gaining good vocational skills and doing work which is normally suited for older apprentices. Learners' knowledge of safety in the workplace is exceptionally good.
- The development of skills contributes to learners' economic well being. Taxi drivers gain qualifications in professional competency which enables them to improve their employment prospects. They also take a course in defensive driving techniques, making them safer drivers. Bus drivers become more familiar with health and safety action regarding their buses. Safe working practices are strongly promoted in the classroom and learners report that they feel safe.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are very effective. Teaching and learning are very good and tutors and assessors have good and relevant vocational experience. Lessons are well structured with good linking of theory and practice, aided by practical pieces of equipment.
- Assessment is thorough, well planned and executed, with good feedback to candidates. Assessment and teaching classes are adapted to suit candidates' shift patterns in Train to Gain programmes. Learners' feedback is very positive. One taxi driver was able to draw on the content of his course to deal effectively with a passenger who had collapsed while getting into the driver's taxi.
- Courses for Train to Gain learners completely meet both learners' and employers' needs. In motor vehicle maintenance, the qualification has been chosen to match employers' needs and courses are scheduled to match employers' shift patterns.

- Excellent partnership arrangements exist to enable the current provision to be expanded. In motor vehicle maintenance, the college has good links to 41 garages to train apprentices, which gives learners access to good resources and good skills development. In Train to Gain programmes, 47 companies are utilised for assessment and training purposes. Excellent partnership arrangements exist with borough councils and licensing authorities.
- Support for learners is outstanding. Progress reviews are thorough and well recorded with clear and concise targets for the candidate to meet over the next few weeks. However, the reviews are not observed sufficiently to assure quality and consistency. In motor vehicle maintenance drop-in sessions are offered two evenings each week for information, advice and guidance.
- Reviews are carried out more frequently than the contractual minimum. All learners have assessors' and tutors' mobile telephone numbers and assessment is available on demand or can be changed to match shift patterns, especially on Train to Gain programmes. Much assessment and course delivery is carried out outside of normal day-time working hours.
- Strategic and operational management are outstanding. Staff are well aware of the business plan, how it affects their part of the business and what targets have been set. The monitoring of financial tracking against targets is good. Managers have a very good overview of the provision as a whole. The Train to Gain provision has expanded rapidly over the last three years, particularly in the last contractual year and the college has a clear strategy for future development.

What does Warrington Collegiate need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the progress reviews are periodically observed so that the college can assure itself of their quality and consistency.

Building and construction

Grade 2

Context

29. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in construction from foundation to advanced levels. Of the 359 learners currently enrolled on learner responsive provision, 156 are adults and 203 are aged 16 to 18. Some 272 learners follow full-time courses and 87 follow part-time courses. In total, there are 117 learners at foundation level, 147 learners at intermediate level and 95 learners at advanced level. Three per cent of learners are female and 2% are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key findings

- Success rates for construction programmes are good overall, with outstanding rates for intermediate-level programmes. However, the national certificate continues to have retention rates that are significantly below the average. Learners enjoy their courses.
- Many learners demonstrate good practical skills and produce work of a high standard, particularly in adult evening classes. All trades are represented at skill-build competitions with recent successes for brickwork and plumbing learners.
- Learners feel very safe. Following implementation of a range of strategies all staff and learners wear identification badges at all times in addition to appropriate protective equipment during practical sessions. Learners demonstrate safe working practices. Teachers reinforce safe working practices regularly during both practical and theory lessons.
- The college has a strong emphasis on health and well-being. Clear promotion of healthy eating through the refectory menu is supported by a free healthy breakfast, between identified times, in order to encourage individuals to select healthy options. Sporting activities in the form of inter-departmental tournaments and college-wide competitions support individual well-being.
- Teaching and learning are good. Clear lesson planning with shared objectives is supported by effective use of ILT in the majority of lessons. Teachers use a variety of activities to stimulate learners' interest and promote a friendly learning environment. Informative tracking charts are displayed in practical lessons. In a minority of lessons teachers do not make sufficient use of directed questions to check individual learners' understanding. Internal verification and assessment procedures are effective.
- The enrichment programme is good and benefits learners. The area makes good use of educational visits to support learning including a trip to Blackpool Pleasure Beach to learn about drainage and sanitation systems. Guest speakers are invited to tutorials where appropriate, and a variety of inter-departmental sporting activities are available. Sustainability is encouraged with a range of recycling policies.

- Links with local employers are limited and opportunities for full-time learners to gain work experience are limited. Strong partnerships exist with the local community, which provides realistic working opportunities for full-time learners in painting and decorating, carpentry, joinery and brickwork.
- Guidance and support are good. All learners receive initial assessment pre-entry and are advised of additional support availability where appropriate. Vocationally qualified technicians provide lecturer support in practical workshops. An effective tutorial programme includes one-to-one and group sessions with the opportunity to monitor progress towards targets and update individual learning plans on line.
- Leadership and management are good. Overall performance has continued to improve and an accurate self-assessment report identifies strengths and areas for improvement well with a strong emphasis on teaching and learning. Scheduled meetings for managers and curriculum teams are held to monitor programme effectiveness and produce a quality improvement action plan with identified accountability. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of equality of opportunity.
- The college has effective user engagement arrangements. Learner voice meetings are scheduled half-termly for class representatives to discuss curriculum provision and learners' issues. Learner focus groups meet to discuss issues which are recorded with responses, and learners confirm that the college is very responsive.
- The college has a wide range of equipment to support practical training. Resources are generally good with access to ILT for supporting delivery in all classrooms. Workshops are clean, tidy and well organised with a good range of tools and equipment. However, the portable classrooms are cold during early morning sessions resulting in an uncomfortable learning environment.

What does Warrington Collegiate need to do to improve further?

- Improve retention on the national certificate advanced programme by close monitoring of attendance and at risk learners.
- Standardise the use of directed question and answer techniques to confirm individual learners' understanding.
- Extend partnership arrangements with employers to develop a range of work experience opportunities for full-time learners which will enhance employability skills and prepare them for future employment.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Grade 2

Context

30. Some 410 learners follow a range of full- and part-time programmes. Currently, 183 full-time learners aged 16 to 18 and 83 full-time adult learners are studying programmes from foundation to intermediate level. One hundred and forty-four learners study part-time. A further 23 learners are studying 14 to 19 Diplomas in hairdressing and beauty therapy, and 59 learners are studying pre-16 school link hairdressing and beauty programmes.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are above the national averages across all levels. Success rates have been maintained at high levels over the last three years. However, success rates for adult learners on the beauty therapy intermediate course, barbering intermediate courses and nail services intermediate and advanced programmes are below national averages despite improving in the last year.
- Learners make good progress developing a range of practical skills at all levels in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Activities delivered in the sessions are challenging and enable learners to develop their technical skills, personal confidence and employability skills. The area has a strong focus on developing skills that improve the employability of learners.
- Learners feel that both the college and workplaces are secure and safe environments. They are aware of their responsibilities towards health and safety and all demonstrate safe working practices when carrying out their practical treatments.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lesson planning is detailed, with a variety of tasks that challenge and motivate learners. Good links between theory and practice are made clear to the learners in all lessons which help to reinforce learning. Enthusiastic teaching, appropriate use of praise and feedback encourage positive and effective learning. In a minority of instances, teachers use a limited range of teaching styles and make little use of ILT to support learning.
- Staff are well qualified, experienced and commercially competent. Teachers have the appropriate skills and continually update their industrial skills and use their knowledge and expertise to inspire the learners.
- Enrichment activities are good and include a range of guest speakers and demonstrators coming into college. Trips to hairdressing and beauty therapy exhibitions, competitions, team-building events, trade fairs and residential events extend and enhance learners' experience well.
- The range of provision overall is good; however, opportunities for advanced learners to progress to level 4 or HE are limited, particularly in beauty therapy. The college has a very effective close working relationship with local schools, and provides information and helpful taster sessions for learners and parents

prior to starting on programme. Good links with the local hairdressing and beauty industry provide work placement opportunities for learners.

- Tutorial support is very effective. Learners' well-being is improved through the support of their tutorial sessions, one to one sessions and the learning coaches, who provide them with the relevant support, information and guidance on matters such as sexual health, student life and equality and diversity issues.
- Leadership and management are good. Staff are clear about their roles and a clear structure of accountability is in place. Tutors are well supported by senior staff and there are good opportunities for staff development. Communications are effective through regular team meetings where tutors review learners' progress. Accommodation and specialist resources are good and are managed well.
- Learners' views are used well to evaluate the provision and bring about improvements. The self-assessment process includes all staff and is broadly accurate.
- Learners have good opportunities to develop an understanding of the diverse needs of clients, by working with clients who are terminally ill or who are receiving medical treatments. Learners and teachers treat each other with respect and learners understand that any form of discrimination will be challenged. Session plans clearly identify where equality and diversity can be promoted in teaching and learning, and learners develop a greater awareness of different cultural backgrounds.

What does Warrington Collegiate need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates for adult learners on the intermediate beauty therapy and barbering courses and the intermediate and advanced nail services courses by closely monitoring learners' attendance and retention.
- Develop further the use of ILT within the training and theory sessions to enhance and reinforce learning.
- Ensure that there are progression routes for advanced-level learners, particularly in beauty therapy, so that they can further develop their skills.

Arts media and publishing

Grade 1

Context

31. The college offers a wide range of full-time programmes including art and design, media, music and performing arts from foundation level to advanced level. Currently 326 full-time learners are enrolled on courses. The majority of these are male, 219 are aged 16 to 18 and 107 are adult learners.

Key findings

- Learners' outcomes are very good. Success rates are very high on introductory diplomas, first diplomas and on many national diploma courses. Success rates declined on the performing musicians', production arts and audio producer advanced courses. Learners make excellent progress relative to their prior achievement. Progression internally and to higher education is very good. Attendance and punctuality during inspection were good.
- The standard of learners' work is outstanding. Learners work to both professional and industry standards and produce high quality written and practical work across all areas. The best work demonstrates excellent research and evaluation, a creative approach to problem solving and good visual skills. Learners' critical skills are well developed and in many lessons learners demonstrate independent learning skills.
- Teaching and learning are very good and some teaching is outstanding. Music teachers use storytelling techniques well and their considerable experience and expertise in the music industry is well received by learners. Teaching on musical theatre and dance is stimulating and challenging, and learners perform exercises with accuracy and technical precision. High quality outcomes are produced in fine art, fashion and graphics, and theory is linked well to practice.
- Lessons are well planned and teachers use a variety of teaching and learning methods to motivate and inspire learners. Teachers prepare very detailed pen portraits of learners' learning needs and styles but some schemes of work contain a limited range of teaching methods to accommodate these. The use of ILT in lessons is good.
- Assessment and verification of learners' work is very well organised and robust. Assignments are submitted electronically and feedback to learners is prompt and contains clear guidance on how they can improve their work. Teachers are skilful in using a range of techniques to assess learners' knowledge and understanding particularly on interactive media courses.
- Support for learners is outstanding. Teachers give liberal sprinklings of praise and encouragement to ensure that learners improve the standard of their work. In addition, specialist technicians and learning coaches effectively support the learning process. Learners speak very highly of the quality of the support that they receive and they value the commitment teachers have to ensure that they succeed with their studies.
- Enrichment activities for learners enliven their courses. A wide range of activities include visits to galleries, museums and trips to Europe. Learners

also write, produce, direct and perform numerous productions together. They also take part in competition work and media learners won a national award for the best student film at a short film festival.

- Learners demonstrate very good levels of skills, knowledge and understanding relevant to community cohesion and sustainable development. Performing arts and musical theatre learners developed a successful touring children's theatre show. Audio producer learners produced a professional audio relaxation CD for the National Health Service to help patients with respiratory conditions. Fashion learners won a prestigious Fairtrade award for their work with the community.
- Leadership and management at faculty and course level are outstanding. The new management team has a clear understanding of key areas for improvement and is committed to raising standards. Teams are strong and share a clear vision to deliver high quality provision for learners.
- Learners enjoy their studies and they value the positive rapport that they have with teachers, they also value their teachers' considerable industrial skills and experience and they perceive the college to be a very safe environment in which to study.
- The curriculum self-assessment is accurate in highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. Staff are well qualified and all complete a range of continuing professional development activities to help enhance their teaching skills.
- Teaching accommodation is very good and learners have access to an impressive range of learning resources and specialist facilities. The appearance of many teaching spaces is appealing and displays of learners' work are used to maximum effect. However, some teaching spaces used for theory classes are dull and uninspiring and would benefit from the display of key concepts and language to aid learning.

What does Warrington Collegiate need to do to improve further?

- Continue to work with advanced practitioners to further develop excellence in teaching and learning across all curriculum teams.
- Utilise display areas in theory classroom more efficiently to present key concepts and language associated with the creative process.

Foundation for life and learning

Grade 2

Context

32. The college offers flexible access for adult learners to part-time courses at the main college campus and the town centre. Four hundred and eight learners attend the adult literacy and numeracy courses across all levels from entry level to intermediate level. In addition, the college provides functional English and mathematics qualifications for all learners studying on vocational courses.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good overall. The standard of learners' work is good and learners receive valuable written and oral feedback. Learners are enrolled onto the right level of course for their individual needs and make substantial progress towards achieving the qualification and through the levels of learning. Learners on part-time literacy and numeracy courses effectively negotiate their personal targets and contribute to regular reviews of their individual learning plans.
- Success rates improved significantly in 2009/10 but remain satisfactory overall. Intermediate success rates are outstanding and well above the average. All other levels for both literacy and numeracy have success rates around the national average.
- Many learners seek to improve employment and recognise the value of developing skills for this. Learners aged 16 to 18 on vocational courses generally enjoy mathematics and English lessons, demonstrating their understanding of the importance of improving these to support achievement of vocational and work skills.
- All learners, and especially vulnerable adults, feel safe and secure in college. Learners aged 16 to 18 have not witnessed or experienced any bullying and they respect the restriction applied to internet access. They enjoy the opportunity to make choices with regard to wider college activities. Part-time learners are fully aware of what is available but there are restrictions to what they can attend due to personal circumstances.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and outstanding for part-time literacy and numeracy courses. The best literacy and numeracy lessons are planned effectively to meet the wide range of skill levels and learning styles of individual learners. Information and learning technology is used effectively to engage and interact with learners. Skilful questioning techniques stretch learners and develop their problem-solving skills, which inspires confidence and self-esteem.
- There are some examples of good contextualisation in the delivery of English and mathematics lessons for learners on vocational courses but this is not reflected in the planning process. In these lessons initial and diagnostic assessment are not fully utilised for planning, delivery and setting targets to meet individual skill needs.
- Literacy and numeracy courses are flexible and learners can enrol onto these at any time, while the number of weeks studying to achieve a qualification is

negotiable. The town centre site provides easy access for hard to reach vulnerable learners. However, courses in community-based centres are not sufficiently developed.

- Strong partnerships with a range of community organisations support promotion and recruitment of learners to the college-based provision. These partnerships have especially benefited those learners not in education and training onto courses which include a strong element of functional English and mathematics.
- Support for learners is good. They receive high quality initial advice, guidance, and support in making choices for the right course and preparing for their next steps to support achievement of their personal goals. Learners value the support they receive while they are on their course but tutors have not received sufficient training to meet specialist support needs for learners.
- Leadership of the part-time literacy and numeracy programmes is strong and the coordination of the English and mathematics across the college vocational courses is good. Teachers engage in relevant professional development opportunities and the majority have gained or are working towards specialist English and mathematics teaching qualifications. All staff have completed safeguarding training and actively promote safe practices with learners, including vulnerable adults.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well in the curriculum and learners value the experience and knowledge gained from working with a wide range of ages and cultures. Managers do not sufficiently analyse the overall success data for different groups.
- The self-assessment for the part-time literacy and numeracy courses area is honest and accurate and coordinators are fully involved in the process. However, the overall faculty self-assessment lacks focus on literacy and numeracy. Learner feedback and surveys are integrated well within the process. The whole college approach and strategy for delivery of literacy and numeracy is not sufficiently developed and does not provide a clear overview of quality improvement strategies.
- Resources are of a high standard but some of the classrooms on the main site are very small and limit the range of activities which can be carried out. On both sites, there is lack of facilities to develop a bank of resources in a base room to support individualised learning for a wide range of levels and needs.

What does Warrington Collegiate need to do to improve further?

- Systematically assess the impact of quality improvement strategies and continue to implement strategies to improve success rates for foundation level provision to above the national average.
- Develop a college-wide strategy for Skills for Life and functional skills to ensure that there is a standardised approach for monitoring and tracking which fully integrates within the whole college self-assessment and quality improvement plan.
- Improve responsiveness to engage hard to reach learners through further development of community-based literacy and numeracy provision.

- Develop and extend planning of contextualisation and individual target-setting for English and mathematics in vocational courses to meet individual learners' needs better.

Business, administration and law

Grade 2

Context

33. The college offers apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in its range of work-based learning. Of the 203 learners, 27 are advanced apprentices, 38 are apprentices and 16 are on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 4 programmes. A further 122 learners are on Train to Gain programmes.

Key findings

- Learners' outcomes are good. Success rates are very high for apprentices and high for advanced apprentices, and are well above the national averages. Success rates for Train to Gain programmes are satisfactory and improving at intermediate level. However, success rates within the planned period on advanced NVQ programmes are below the national average. All groups of learners achieve equally well.
- Learners develop good work-related skills including commercial and communication skills. Apprentices' confidence levels are significantly increased. A minority of advanced apprentices in accountancy programmes progress onto NVQ at level 4, some of whom are sponsored by their employers.
- Progression at work is good. Temporary staff become full-time employees and some learners are promoted into supervisory roles. Apprentices produce well-presented written work. They have well-organised NVQ portfolios that contain very good examples of work-based evidence including work-specific projects. Learners feel very safe in the work place and at college.
- Assessment practices are particularly good. Assessors have good and up-to-date occupational knowledge. They plan and record assessments thoroughly and use a wide range of good assessment methods. The process is thorough and rigorous. Feedback to learners is clear and assessors make clear judgements. Employers find the well-planned process most beneficial in keeping lost production time to a minimum.
- The range of provision is good for learners of all ages and at all levels with good opportunities for apprentices to progress to advanced courses in accountancy. Progression between levels is good. The college designs the provision to incorporate current employer and commercial needs well. College staff work with learners to incorporate employers' requirements into learning programmes. Employers are fully involved in the training.
- The college has very good partnerships with employers and schools to meet the needs of young and adult learners. Managers work well with employers to ensure that qualifications are relevant to their needs. College staff respond rapidly to provide training that local employers need. Employers value the level of support provided by the college in their recruitment activities.
- Support for learners is good. Induction is comprehensive and learners receive clear initial information and guidance. This continues throughout their learning. College staff provide good individual support for learners needing additional help or guidance. Most employers provide mentors to help and encourage learners at work, which enables them to carry out NVQ-related written tasks in

the workplace. Learners are also given leave of absence for examination preparation.

- Individual learners' progress reviews are very effective. They are very frequent, well planned and learners are set clear, meaningful targets. Work-based managers are involved very effectively. Reviewing of targets is good. Reviews are well recorded; however, the design of the review record limits the level of the information that can be written.
- Identification of learners' additional learning needs, during induction, is satisfactory. Learners who require support welcome the help available. Assessors are internally trained in support techniques and provide informal support. Formal support is referred to a qualified member of staff.
- Leadership and management are good. Effective management and the development of new responsibilities provide a much sharper focus on improving outcomes for adult learners. The area has a high level of focus on employer responsive activities. Staff are set challenging performance targets. Self-assessment is broadly accurate.
- Both the college and employers promote the safeguarding of learners well. The majority of learners undergo formal training. Criminal Records Bureau checks are carried out appropriately. Policies and procedures are clear and up to date. Training has been effective, and staff have a good understanding of safeguarding.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good, particularly in the workplace. Learners work in good environments free from harassment and discrimination. Learners have adequate initial equality and diversity training at their induction. This is reinforced particularly well during training and at learners' progress reviews.

What does Warrington Collegiate need to do to improve further?

- Improve timely success rates on Train to Gain programmes by continuing to implement action plans and continuously monitor their effectiveness.
- Improve the design of the learners' progress review record to enable more effective and detailed recording of information.
- Further develop the quality assurance activities of key learner processes such as the observation of learners' progress reviews.

Information about the inspection

34. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven additional inspectors, assisted by the provider'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 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.
35. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings
Warrington Collegiate

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

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	1,815	0	1,360	455	0
Full-time learners	3,443	325	149	1,036	1,933
Part-time learners					
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2	1	2	2	1
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?	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>	2				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	1				
Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
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?	1				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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