

# Lakes College

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 130632

**Name of lead inspector:** Bev Barlow HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 10 December 2010

**Type of provider:** General Further Education College

**Address:** Hallwood Road  
Lillyhall Business Park  
Workington  
Cumbria  
CA14 4JN

**Telephone number:** 01946 839300

## Information about the provider

1. Lakes College is a small general further education college located on the west coast of Cumbria between Workington and Whitehaven. The college's students come from a wide geographical area covering 800 square miles. The majority travel from Copeland and Allerdale. Most courses are delivered at the main purpose-built site with four small outreach centres serving isolated communities. It is the only college within a 36-mile radius. The college provides vocational programmes in 12 subject areas and most offer a range of levels from entry through to higher education (HE). Apprenticeships are offered in six subject areas with a broader range of Train to Gain programmes and full cost recovery courses for employers, including collaboration with the other Cumbrian colleges to deliver additional contracts.
2. West Cumbria has a population around 164,000 with over half living in the four urban areas of Cleator Moor, Maryport, Whitehaven and Workington. Much of the area is sparsely populated and has pockets of socio-economic deprivation. The area has seen the closure of several major employers and is heavily dependent on the nuclear industry and Energy Coast developments. In 2009/10 the area suffered several major tragedies from the worst winter floods and freezing weather conditions since records began, to the shootings in June 2010.
3. Around one fifth of the college's students follow work-based programmes and half of all students study courses at entry or foundation level. Approximately 55% are women and very few, in line with the local population, are from minority ethnic groups. Most local secondary schools have a sixth form. The achievements of school leavers at GCSE are below average and one in five young people aged 16 to 24 are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The college delivers vocational courses and young apprentice programmes to pupils aged 14 to 16 and those who are NEET. The college's mission is to provide excellent education and training and to play a key role in the economic and community development of West Cumbria.
4. The inspection took into account all of the funded provision offered by the college. College and work-based provision in construction and in hairdressing and beauty therapy were inspected in depth.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - ConstructionSkills (CITB)
  - JTL
  - Gen II
6. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
  - Lawsons Training

- JTL
- ADG Insights Ltd
- Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
<p><b>Provision for young learners:</b> 14 to 16</p> <p>Further education (16 to 18)</p> <p>Foundation learning</p>	<p>330 part-time learners</p> <p>996 full-time learners 287 part-time learners</p> <p>308 full-time learners 123 part-time learners</p>
<p><b>Provision for adult learners:</b> Further education (19+)</p>	<p>263 full-time learners 993 part-time learners</p>
<p><b>Employer provision:</b> Train to Gain Apprenticeships</p>	<p>978 learners 316 apprentices</p>

## Summary report

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	1
Safeguarding	1
Equality and diversity	2
<b>Subject Areas</b>	
Construction	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2

## Overall effectiveness

7. This is a good college with outstanding features, including very effective strategic leadership and operational management. Its capacity to improve is outstanding as demonstrated by the high standards that have been maintained over the last three years. Students feel very safe and enjoy college life. Pass rates are very high and prompt intervention minimised the decline in retention experienced during the unforeseen and adverse external circumstances in 2009/10. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in this very inclusive college although teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop students' understanding of ethnicity issues in lessons. Learners on Train to Gain programmes are very successful in gaining qualifications but few apprentices achieve in the agreed time. Students gain in confidence and develop good employability skills. Progression to higher-level courses and relevant employment opportunities is good. Pupils aged 14 to 16 and those with specific learning needs achieve particularly well.
8. Extensive and very effective partnerships and collaboration enable the college to meet the needs of West Cumbria very successfully. A substantial range of courses is offered at all levels including innovative provision to attract disadvantaged groups. The college provides a positive and welcoming learning

environment at the main site and in its outreach centres. Additional learning support is very effective. Teaching and learning are good but there are too few outstanding lessons. Learning activities do not always provide sufficient challenge to more able students. Teachers are very accessible and provide good academic and personal support. However, the targets in individual learning plans are not always sufficiently specific and detailed to enable teachers to monitor students' progress consistently.

## Main findings

- Students achieve well and make good progress. Pass rates are very high and during the severe floods of 2009 the college took prompt action to minimise the fall in retention.
- High success rates have been maintained over the last three years although they vary too much across different subjects. Students develop their literacy and numeracy skills well although the success rates in key skills are only satisfactory. Very good support is provided for vulnerable and disadvantaged students who achieve very well, as do school pupils studying vocational courses.
- The college's ethos promotes social inclusion and around half of students are enrolled on entry and foundation level courses. These students make very good progress in developing their self-esteem and confidence. Progression to higher-level courses and relevant employment is good, although the college is unaware of the destinations of too many students.
- Employers speak highly of learners' employability and skills development. For work-based learners the apprenticeship success rates are low but they are very high on Train to Gain programmes.
- Most teachers use their industrial experiences to deliver good lessons with a broad range of vocationally-relevant activities that challenge and motivate students. A minority of learning activities are not sufficiently challenging and teachers do not always check fully what students have learned. Students effectively use technology to enhance their learning.
- Assessment is thorough. Students' individual learning plans pull together all aspects of their programme and are used effectively to monitor students' progress and identify those at risk of leaving college. However, the quality of students' targets is inconsistent; some are specific and measurable while others are too generic and do not have clear timescales for completion.
- The lesson observation process is thorough. Staff development is very good and teachers are supported to try out new learning techniques. However, the outcomes from some observations focus too much on teaching and do not always evaluate students' learning and progress.
- The college offers an extensive range of courses to meet the needs of students, employers and the wider community. Excellent partnerships include joint working with the Cumbrian colleges, the local councils, Jobcentre Plus and the Connexions service to extend what the college can provide for West Cumbria.

- Care, guidance and support are good. Information, advice and guidance, induction and the tutorial system ensure that students are on the most appropriate course at the right level. Initial assessment effectively informs literacy, numeracy and additional support.
- Ambitious strategic leadership and strong governance ensure that the college provides high-quality education and training opportunities. Excellent resources together with outstanding safeguarding arrangements create a positive and safe learning environment.
- Quality improvement arrangements are robust and have maintained high standards. The college's self-assessment report is broadly accurate in identifying the college's main strengths and areas for improvement. Action plans do not always focus sufficiently on strategies to improve students' experiences.

### **What does Lakes College need to do to improve further?**

- In order to help students to achieve even higher standards, ensure that the range of learning activities provides sufficient challenge for all students and that targets in individual learning plans are specific and measurable.
- Improve retention by developing a more consistent approach to the delivery of the tutorial programme and the use of clear criteria to identify students who are at risk of leaving college.
- Improve the focus of lesson observations, subject self-assessment reports and action plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to raise the proportion of outstanding lessons.
- Develop a more robust system to collect and analyse information about the destinations of students to influence future developments.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the way they are treated with respect
- the very helpful, supportive and friendly staff
- the wide range of courses and resources available
- the good personal support and help with progress from teachers
- the friendly and safe atmosphere in the college
- the good additional learning support.

#### **What learners would like to see improved:**

- the crowded and cramped teaching rooms
- the availability of hot food at night for students attending evening classes.

## **Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

### **What employers like:**

- how the college responds quickly to meet their training needs
- the flexibility of the college in delivering training at the most appropriate time and place
- their relationship with college link managers who provide very good support and clear communication
- the quality of training their employees receive and their improved employability skills
- the regular feedback they receive on their employees' progress.

### **What employers would like to see improved:**

- a more systematic approach to the evaluation of programmes which have been designed for employers.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 1**

9. The college's capacity to make and sustain improvement is outstanding. The college is highly inclusive and celebrates students' achievements very well. Success rates improved significantly following the last inspection and have been maintained at high levels over the last three years. Pass rates are very high and the majority of students make very good progress in developing their self-confidence and employability skills although a minority of advanced level students do not achieve the grades in line with their capabilities. The college has successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.
10. The college's ethos and values support it very successfully in achieving its mission to provide outstanding education and training opportunities for local communities and this is embraced by all staff. The determination to achieve challenging targets at all levels is clearly evident with robust performance management, the effective use of accurate data and close scrutiny by governors. Arrangements for quality improvement have recently been strengthened further and the self-assessment report is broadly accurate. Outstanding partnerships have widened participation and access to provision that meets the needs of young people leaving school, pupils disaffected at school, those in employment, the long-term unemployed and many other disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups. The college is a key player in the regeneration of West Cumbria. Financial management and risk management are outstanding.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

11. The college's overall success rate has been maintained at a consistently high level for the last three years. Lakes College students do very well when compared to those in colleges with similar levels of deprivation. In 2009/10 the success rate fell slightly as a consequence of a fall in retention; students aged 16 to 18 were affected more than adults. In December 2009 the local community was significantly affected by severe floods. The consequences had an impact on most students and staff and many experienced major disruption in their lives. For example, several lost their homes and for many the travel time to college increased from half-an-hour to over two hours. The broad range of effective actions taken to support students and staff in these extenuating circumstances minimised the adverse effect on retention. As a consequence, success rates for adults at all levels and for students aged 16 to 18 at foundation and intermediate levels remained above the respective national averages. In 2009/10 success rates for adults at intermediate and advanced levels were the highest ever. Current in-year retention rates are higher than for the same period last year. Pass rates have improved or been maintained at very high levels for both adults and students aged 16 to 18. The college is rightly



proud of the achievements of its students while having to overcome significantly adverse personal circumstances.

12. Success rates across the subject areas vary considerably. The college clearly identifies individual courses that do not perform and implements a clear action plan with evidence of good improvements in some courses while others have been withdrawn. Success rates in most subjects are good and the highest performing subjects, such as science and art, have relatively low student numbers. Short course success rates are high. Students aged 14 to 16 achieve very well and many progress to a full-time college course. In 2009/10 the achievement gap between men and women was reduced and the small number of students from minority ethnic groups achieved in line with the college average. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those receiving additional learning support achieve better than their peers.
13. Employers speak positively about the good standard of trainees' work and the development of their employees' workplace skills. On Train to Gain courses success rates are very high and most achieve in the planned time. However, the success rates of the small number of apprentices declined over the last three years and were very low in 2009/10. College data indicate a good improvement in apprentice success rates this year.
14. The college is highly inclusive and promotes a positive culture of aspiration and achievement. Many students start college with no formal qualifications or very low achievements from school. A high proportion of entry, foundation and intermediate level students progress to higher-level courses although fewer students move on to advanced level. Progression to HE is good although the college is unaware of the destinations of too many students.
15. Staff expect high professional standards and students develop good independent learning skills and improved self-confidence. Members of the college community respect each other and students display exemplary behaviour. The attendance rate is high and punctuality is very good. Students on advanced-level diploma courses do not make the progress expected of them given their starting point on entry. Many students have low attainment on entry in literacy and numeracy and they demonstrate good progress in lessons and in their written work. Key skills success rates declined between 2008 and 2010 and are now satisfactory. In 2009/10 functional skills success rates were good. Very good achievements on innovative programmes provide good opportunities for young people who are NEET and the long-term unemployed to progress to employment or college courses.
16. Standards of written and practical work are good. In some courses, for example health and social care, the range and level of activities could be developed further to provide more variety and challenge. Students participate in a good range of subject and cross-college events to develop their employability skills such as presentations, gala dinners and organising local music festivals.

17. Students' awareness of health and well-being is raised effectively across subject areas and particularly during enrichment activities and group tutorials. Successful partnerships give students easy access to information on drug and alcohol misuse, on-site sexual health screening, contraceptive advice and a support group for pregnant students. Students' contribution to the college and its community is good. They participate in a very wide range of fund-raising activities. During the floods the college actively supported those in the worst affected areas. Sustainability and environmental issues are promoted through tutorials and in catering, science and construction subjects.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

18. Teaching and learning are good. In the sample of lessons observed during the inspection many were judged to be good but none was outstanding. In most lessons teachers use their industrial experience well and include a good range of vocationally-relevant activities that promote learning. They are delivered at a good pace that maintains students' interest and consequently students make good progress. In a minority of lessons, activities do not meet fully the objectives of the lesson and they are not always sufficiently complex or challenging to develop the skills of the more able students. Teachers' questioning does not always fully check that all students are learning to their full potential.
19. Teachers use information technology well in lessons to enhance and develop students' understanding. Students have good and rapidly developing opportunities to use technology such as iPods and digital cameras to record their achievements and revise for national tests. Assessment and verification are thorough. Teachers' comments on marked work help students to understand what they need to do to improve. Initial and diagnostic assessments inform the good delivery of functional skills and additional learning support.
20. The outcomes from internal lesson observations are clearly used to provide very good staff development. Managers have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. Lesson observation records do not always pay enough attention to students' learning and their progress. Staff support following observation and the mentoring provided for new teachers are very good. Teachers are encouraged to develop innovative learning activities in the new staff resources area.
21. The college offers a very wide range of courses and there are clear progression routes from foundation to advanced level in all subject areas and many offer HE courses and foundation degrees. The college plays an influential role in the West Cumbria strategic partnership and has led on the review of skills and the development of provision.
22. Extensive partnerships and collaborative work exists with schools, other Cumbrian colleges, employers and the local authorities. Part-time vocational courses are delivered to almost 500 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools. Innovative courses for hard-to-reach groups have been developed with the

Connexions service and Jobcentre Plus to focus on enhancing job skills and reducing unemployment.

23. Employer engagement is very good. The college works very effectively with employers and provides a variety of work-based learning including apprenticeships, Train to Gain programmes, National Vocational Qualifications and bespoke courses. Employers feel that their needs are met very well. They are actively involved in the development of courses that are often delivered flexibly, either at college or on their sites, and at very short notice.
24. Care, guidance and support are good. Students receive effective advice and guidance prior to joining the college. Induction and one-to-one tutorials ensure that students are on an appropriate course at the correct level. A 'welcome week' in July provides a supportive induction for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students feel that they are supported well by their teachers and staff in the learning centre. The group tutorial programme contributes to students' personal and social development although there is inconsistency in the delivery of activities. The range of enrichment opportunities and work experience is satisfactory.
25. Initial assessment is effective in identifying learners' individual literacy, numeracy and any learning support needs. A team of specialist support staff works closely with vocational tutors to meet specific support needs effectively. A new system to evaluate additional learning support has been introduced but it is too soon to judge its impact. Students who receive learning support achieve better than those who do not receive support.
26. A new system to identify students at risk of leaving college was introduced in September. Based on the evidence in students' individual learning plans, the personal tutors decide on their students' rating. Tutors' interpretation of the criteria varies and they are not sufficiently detailed to ensure a more consistent system. Some individual learning plans contain relevant and quantitative targets but some are very general and do not include measurable outcomes and so there is a lack of clarity to support students in achieving their very best.
27. A wide range of specialist organisations provide additional welfare support. The take-up of financial support is high. Additional college funds, including free train travel, were available to many students following the floods. Careers guidance and support in making the next steps, including application to HE, are comprehensive.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 1**

28. Leadership and management are outstanding. The Principal's and senior managers' ambitious strategic leadership aims to provide the highest quality of educational opportunity to meet local needs and priorities. Together with staff, managers have developed the college's ethos and values to promote high standards and raise aspirations with a strong emphasis on promoting life-changing opportunities and adding value for students.

29. Communication is very good. The college's vision and objectives are articulated effectively in robust operational plans. Governors and senior managers monitor progress carefully against challenging targets. The college's friendly and supportive culture is highly valued by staff and students. Outstanding partnerships improve opportunities for students and effectively support staff development. Parents, carers, employers and students speak highly of their college experience.
30. Governors' range of expertise along with their sound understanding of all aspects of the college's performance has enhanced their level of scrutiny and challenge to college managers. A recently revised meetings structure, closely managed by the clerk, has resulted in a crisper focus to governance. Student governors are active and contribute fully to the work of the board.
31. College procedures for safeguarding students under 18 and vulnerable adults are outstanding and go beyond government requirements. A comprehensive safeguarding policy is in place and is reviewed annually. Criminal Records Bureau checks are carried out for all staff, governors and contractors. The checks are recorded and monitored through a single central register which also contains details of checks made on residency, qualifications and safeguarding training. Designated safeguarding staff are well known to students. Staff have developed close contacts with relevant local agencies. Comprehensive safeguarding and child protection training for all staff and governors have resulted in high levels of awareness of safeguarding, including bullying and harassment. Students feel that the college is a very safe place in which to learn. Risk assessments and the consideration of health and safety matters are carried out rigorously.
32. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college has all appropriate policies and action plans in place to meet its statutory duties and is developing procedures to cover wider diversity issues. The achievement of different groups is analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity. The college has taken appropriate action to reduce the achievement gap between men and women. Data for 2009/10 indicate no significant differences in the achievements of different groups. Staff development has raised the awareness of equality and diversity issues. Promotion in subjects and through reviews is good although in a few lessons teachers miss opportunities to expose students to ethnicity issues. Students value the college's inclusivity and participation opportunities for groups in isolated communities. In subjects where there is a gender imbalance staff do not have a sufficiently clear strategy to encourage the recruitment of under-represented students.
33. Students contribute well to college decision-making through a range of surveys, course representatives, focus groups and a recently elected student council. These have led to specific improvements such as changes to timetables and course delivery, access to learning resources and security in areas adjacent to the main college site.

34. Quality improvement arrangements have effectively raised standards. Managers at all levels focus effectively on the monitoring of progress against ambitious targets. Key performance indicators are published and monitored on the college's intranet. A revised quality review process clearly leads to targeted actions. Over the academic year the quality team will complete an holistic review of each subject area, including users' views and the observation of teaching and learning. Monthly course team meetings review the ongoing impact of their operational plan. Supportive action has led to improvement in most underperforming courses although intervention to improve apprentice success rates has been slow. The college's self-assessment process is good. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate in identifying the college's main strengths and areas for improvement. The report makes good use of the analysis of data to inform its judgements. However, at subject level the reports are too descriptive. The resulting course action plans do not always focus closely enough on actions to improve the quality of provision.
35. The college provides very good value for money. Financial management and control are outstanding and closely aligned to the college's strategy. Sustainability and environmental issues are considered carefully, the buildings' energy ratings are low, grey water is recycled and a variety of products from sustainable sources are used. The college plays a key role in up-skilling the local workforce to support the government's Energy Coast renewable energy initiatives. The college utilises its excellent resources very well and provides a pleasant and very welcoming environment for learning with good access for disabled students. Managers are working with public sector partners to look at how they can share services to be even more effective in their use of resources.

## Subject areas

### Construction

### Grade 2

#### Context

36. The college offers courses from foundation to advanced level in bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, and plumbing. There are 283 students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses, and 69 adults and 64 pupils on part-time foundation courses. Work-based learners include 26 apprentices and 24 learners on Train to Gain courses with 58 ConstructionSkills subcontracted apprentices. The vast majority of students are White British men.

#### Key findings

- Pass rates are very high on most courses. Success rates improved significantly in 2009/10. At foundation level they are just below average and at intermediate and advanced levels they are high. School pupils achieve well and many progress to full-time college courses.
- Apprenticeship success rates have declined and the proportion achieving in their planned time is low. College data show significant improvements this year. Success rates of apprentices on ConstructionSkills provision are high. Most Train to Gain learners achieve in the agreed time.
- In-year retention has improved significantly. Students enjoy their learning and develop good industry-standard practical and employment skills. They use tools with confidence and the standard of work is good. Students feel safe, and health and safety is actively promoted.
- Lessons are planned well and most teachers make use of a wide range of activities to engage students. Visual aids effectively link theory to practical applications and teachers frequently check students' learning. In a minority of lessons students are too passive and the range of activities is too narrow.
- Spacious workshops and industry-standard tools support good practical work. The access to, and use of, technology to support learning is mostly good. In carpentry and joinery, students use a touch screen monitor to review their skills to make a range of joints. Students value and use the increased range of construction learning materials on the college's virtual learning environment.
- Assessment and internal verification are well planned, regular and flexible. Students effectively self-assess their practical work. Teachers' feedback on students' written work and portfolio evidence is not always sufficiently detailed to inform students of how they can improve.
- Partnerships are very good and the provision effectively meets students' and employers' needs. Employers speak highly of the college's support and work with their employees. Collaboration with subcontractors is very good. Progression from entry and foundation levels to a higher level is good although fewer students progress to advanced level courses. The destinations of too many construction students are unknown. Enrichment, including site visits, is

satisfactory. Entry level students develop good team working skills through outward bound activities. Participation in cross-college enrichment and team sports is low and few students achieve additional qualifications.

- Initial advice and guidance are good and ensure that most students are placed on the right course at the end of the induction period. Initial assessment accurately identifies students' support needs. Teachers and additional learning support assistants work together to enable students to overcome any barriers and they achieve well.
- Teachers are highly accessible and provide good academic and personal support. Students value one-to-one tutorials and reviews. Most group tutorials effectively develop students' personal and social skills but their delivery is not consistent. Individual learning plans are used well to monitor students' progress but targets are often too general. On employer-based provision learners' progress reviews are good.
- Leadership and management are good. High priority has been given to improving the quality of delivery and learners' outcomes. Staff are aware of their role and contribution to meeting improvement targets. Sharing of good practice and staff development are good but too few tutors have had recent industrial updating.
- Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily although opportunities to develop students' understanding of key issues are missed in some lessons and reviews. Safeguarding, risk assessments and coverage of health and safety are given a high priority.
- Students' views are used to inform developments but the arrangements for feeding back the college's actions are not sufficiently developed. The self-assessment report uses data well to make judgements but it is too descriptive and insufficient attention is given to the quality of provision. Quality improvement actions have led to significant increases in pass rates but not all the targets in the current action plan are specific or measurable.

### **What does Lakes College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve success rates and the proportion of college apprentices who achieve in the planned time by closely monitoring their progress so that their achievements are as high as those for learners on subcontracted provision.
- Plan learning activities and the use of technology so that all students participate in lessons effectively in order to maintain the high pass rates and further improve retention.
- Promote and increase the participation of construction students in cross-college enrichment and team sports.
- Improve the quality of the construction area's self-assessment report to ensure it is more evaluative and that the quality improvement plan contains specific and measurable targets for all key aspects.

## Hairdressing and beauty therapy

## Grade 2

### Context

37. A wide range of hairdressing and beauty therapy courses is offered from foundation level to HE and foundation degrees. At the time of the inspection there were 131 full-time and 82 part-time students. The majority of students are women from White British backgrounds; 116 students are aged 16 to 18 and 97 are adults. In addition, there are 30 apprentices and 47 part-time pupils aged 14 to 16 from local high schools.

### Key findings

- Pass rates are very high on all courses. Success rates are satisfactory due to lower than average retention rates. College data show that current in-year retention is much higher than for the same period in 2009/10. Success rates on Train to Gain are very high but for the low number of apprentices achievement is satisfactory.
- Students' practical work is good and they develop skills beyond the course requirements. For example, in an intermediate level diploma lesson, students completed an activity to style long hair for an evening party. They demonstrated good creativity and produced advanced standards of work.
- Students achieve a high level of professional standards in the salons. Students' attendance, punctuality and professional appearance are good. They gain confidence and self-esteem and develop good conversational skills with clients. Assessment opportunities are planned carefully and students make good progress.
- Many students progress from foundation courses through to advanced level and into relevant employment. Of the students who left their course early in 2009/10, two-thirds gained related employment. Students' literacy and numeracy skills develop well through industry-relevant activities. For example, students gained a good understanding of measurements, scale, angles and dimensions through the design of a beauty therapy salon which they presented to their peers.
- Students' safety is prioritised very well and safeguarding is promoted by all staff. Students say they feel safe and know who to go to if they have any concerns. Students demonstrate safe working practices, particularly when working with chemicals, both in college and while on work placements. Detailed health and safety workbooks support good practice for students and employers.
- Students gain the necessary knowledge and a good understanding to enable them to make informed choices about their health and well-being. The group tutorial programme explicitly covers the dangers and risks associated with topics such as smoking, drug taking, sexual health, pregnancy and physical well-being.
- A wide variety of community-based activities supports the local area. In 2009/10 students raised significant amounts for charities. In beauty therapy they held manicure and Martini evenings for the flood appeal and the



hairdressing students' 'pink hair extensions' event raised money for breast cancer.

- Teachers use a broad range of activities to engage and motivate their students. Students enjoy lessons and learning is good. Teachers use technology effectively to support students' learning and skills development. For example, students film each stage of their practical tasks and effectively analyse their technique. In a minority of theory lessons teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for the more able students.
- Many additional qualifications and enrichment opportunities, such as ear piercing, nail art and competitions, extend students' skills and interests. Successful partnerships with local employers include professional updating seminars with celebrity hairstylists. These events provide a good forum to obtain employer feedback.
- Support is good. Initial advice and guidance and a more rigorous induction programme have improved in-year retention. Student feedback is positive and all feel that they are on the right level of course. Additional learning support assistants work closely with vocational staff and provide very effective support.
- Leadership and management are good. Communication is good and prompt action is taken to respond to concerns. Staff are set challenging improvement targets which are monitored closely at termly performance reviews and monthly course quality reviews. Staff development is good and an effective mentor system supports new teachers.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well although the under-representation of men is not sufficiently prioritised as an action for improvement. The opportunity to embed equality and diversity issues in lessons, such as the effects of treatments on different skin types and hair textures, is occasionally missed.
- The subject area self-assessment report is largely accurate and identifies the main strengths and areas for improvement. However, it does not fully involve all staff and is not sufficiently self-critical on some aspects. For example, teaching and learning developments are not clearly identified in the quality improvement plan.

### **What does Lakes College need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that prompt interventions are in place for at-risk students to maintain the current high level of in-year retention.
- Develop learning strategies to embed equality and diversity and to ensure that all students are challenged sufficiently in order to improve the quality of teaching further and increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons.
- Critically evaluate all aspects of provision in the self-assessment report and ensure that improvement plans include specific actions to drive forward areas of concern.

## Information about the inspection

38. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the college's deputy principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on students and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
39. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They 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)**  
**Lakes 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 <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>	1,234	0	1,000	234	0
Full-time learners	1,962	322	320	420	900
Part-time learners					
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	1				
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	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				
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
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?	2				
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	1				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	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?	1				

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