

Lincoln College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130762

Name of lead inspector: Lindsay Hebditch HMI

Last day of inspection: 18 February 2011

Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Lincoln College is a large general further education college which serves a mixed rural and urban hinterland within the counties of Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. It has three main campuses in Lincoln, Gainsborough and Newark but also operates from a number of community venues, mainly providing courses for learners with learning difficulties, community learning and equine programmes.
2. The college provides courses in all subject areas but with more than one third of learners following programmes in preparation for life and work. Just over half the learners are aged 16 to 18 and the vast majority follow full-time courses. Most of these younger learners follow courses at intermediate and advanced levels. The majority of the college's adult learners follow part-time courses at intermediate and advanced levels. Pupils aged 14 to 16 attend the college as part of their school Key Stage 4 programme and follow courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy, motor vehicle studies, hospitality, skills for working life and in childcare, society, health and development. The college's work-based learning provision includes the Train to Gain programme and apprenticeships in eight subject areas.
3. For the area served by the college the number of Year 11 pupils who achieve five A*-C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics is above the national average and the unemployment rate is below average. The proportion of learners from ethnic minority heritage groups at the college is 8%, above the figure locally. The college has similar proportions of male and female learners. The Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency fund the majority of the college's provision.
4. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - British Aerospace Engineering Systems
 - Construction Skills (CITB)
 - JTL
 - Lincolnshire County Council
 - NTU
 - Remit
 - Siemens
5. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - Boston College
 - CG Partnership
 - Ervanti
 - First College
 - Focus Management

- Gilfillian Associates
- Grantham College
- ISIS Training
- JHC Skills for Business
- LAGAT
- Library and Cultural Services
- Options (Mouchel)
- New College, Stamford
- Nottinghamshire Enterprises
- Nurture 4 Growth
- Retford College
- Stanford Management
- TerraTrain

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
<p>Provision for young learners: 14 to 16</p> <p>Further education (16 to 18)</p> <p>Foundation learning</p>	<p>266 part-time learners</p> <p>3,263 full-time learners 347 part-time learners</p> <p>1,144 full-time learners 85 part-time learners</p>
<p>Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)</p>	<p>1,187 full-time learners 3,219 part-time learners</p>
<p>Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships</p>	<p>4,123 learners 913 apprentices</p>
<p>Adult and community learning</p>	<p>330 learners</p>

Summary report

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

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

Subject Areas	Grade
Health and social care	1
Construction	1
Hospitality and catering	2
Visual arts	1
Literacy and numeracy	2
Business management	2

Overall effectiveness

6. The success rates for learners of all ages on long courses have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now high. Success rates in work-based provision are satisfactory but current learners are making good progress. Learners on all courses develop high levels of specialist skills which improve their employability. Learners enjoy their time at the college and many exceed the expectations they had when enrolling. All groups of learners achieve high standards and make good progress, regardless of their backgrounds in education.

7. Teaching and learning are good, and on occasions outstanding. The vast majority of lessons are planned well with a good range of learning activities. Assessment practices are very effective and the monitoring of learners' progress

is good, although in a few cases learners' targets lack clarity. Provision meets the needs of learners well; progression between courses at different levels, and then into employment or higher education (HE) is very good. The college's outstanding partnerships help it to maintain its strong commitment to social inclusion and develop provision which is closely matched to local community needs. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Learners who find learning difficult receive excellent support which enables them to achieve at least as well as other learners.

8. Outstanding leadership and management from the Principal and senior managers, coupled with excellent support from governors, have underpinned the college's improvement since the last inspection. Rigorous quality assurance procedures ensure the focus of all managers remains on achieving and maintaining high standards. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Management information is used well to monitor all aspects of provision and learners' views are keenly sought and acted upon.

Main findings

- The college provides an outstanding environment for learning within which learners achieve very well and feel safe and happy.
- Success rates are high on long courses at all levels and for learners of all ages. Learners on most courses achieve more high grades than expected, based on their starting points, and make good progress. The proportion of high grades is slightly below average in AS- and A-level subjects.
- Success rates in work-based provision, including those for the timely completion of qualifications, are average but current learners are making good progress and developing excellent specialist skills.
- There are no significant differences in performance between learners on long courses grouped according to their gender or ethnic heritage. Learners who require additional help with their learning receive very good support which enables them to achieve success rates which are at least as high as those learners who do not require it.
- Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are planned well. Teachers use a broad range of interesting activities to promote learning and make good use of questioning to check progress.
- In outstanding lessons teachers use assessment well to plan learning and allow learners to take responsibility for their own learning. In less successful lessons activities are too teacher led and expectations of learners are low. The use of information and learning technology (ILT) varies between subjects; some teachers are more confident about using it than others.
- Procedures for setting targets for learners and monitoring their progress work very well in the vast majority of subject areas. A few targets, for example for learners in some GCE AS and A-level subjects, do not make it clear what learners have to do in order to fulfil their potential.
- Assessment in both work-based learning and college provision is good. Assignments are linked closely to qualification aims and feedback on completed

work generally provides learners with plenty of suggestions about how it could be improved.

- In work-based provision a number of different processes are used to monitor learners' progress. These mostly work well, although some targets are imprecise.
- The college provides a broad curriculum and learners progress well between different levels. Enrichment opportunities are good but not all learners who would benefit from work experience have the opportunity to participate in it.
- Partnerships are outstanding and help maintain the college's commitment to social inclusion. The college has excellent working relationships with local schools and is a main driver in joint curriculum developments. The college responds well to the needs of local employers.
- Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Learners are carefully guided onto the correct course and provided with excellent personal and academic support. Learning support assistants generally provide excellent individual support but sometimes their contributions are not planned in sufficient detail. Tutorial provision is very good.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Strong leadership and highly effective management by the Principal and senior managers underpin the outstanding outcomes for learners. Expectations of staff and learners are consistently high and nearly always met. Governance is outstanding.
- Quality assurance is rigorous and self-assessment is accurate. Improvement plans focus sharply on tackling the few areas of underperformance that remain. A few aspects of provision, including the quality assurance of tutorials and learning support activities, are not evaluated fully.
- Managers and teachers use data skilfully to analyse trends and inform targets. Learners' views are used well to help monitor college performance and plan improvements.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good and the inclusion of learners, particularly those from hard to reach groups, is outstanding. The highest priority is given to providing a safe environment for learners and plans are in hand to strengthen security at all three main campuses still further.

What does Lincoln College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rates on work-based provision by ensuring that targets are sufficiently challenging and simplifying the systems used to track their progress.
- Increase subject specific support on advanced level courses and make more effective use of target setting and monitoring systems in order to increase the proportion of high grades that learners achieve.
- Extend the use of ILT and e-learning, including the effective use of the college's virtual learning environment (VLE) by providing further training in the use of new technology and sharing good practice between subject areas more effectively.

- Improve the quality of group tutorials by undertaking a detailed analysis of the evidence from observations and producing a summary evaluation to inform improvement planning. Include the observation of learning support assistants in lesson observation arrangements.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the wide choice of courses
- the support from approachable and helpful college staff
- the quality of the off-the-job training sessions
- being treated like an adult
- the quality and range of careers advice
- training whilst earning
- the experienced practitioner assessors available in the workplace
- the safe and welcoming college sites
- the progression opportunities afforded by training
- the gains in confidence and skills and the broadening of career aspirations following training.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the lack of space in the college canteen
- cover arrangements when teachers are absent
- the amount of paperwork involved in National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good development of vocational skills by learners
- the responsiveness and flexibility of college staff
- the ways that training develops learners' confidence to take on new tasks.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the clarity of NVQ programme information.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

9. The college has built on its strengths from the previous inspection and secured a significant improvement in standards. Success rates are now high across the majority of the college's provision and improving at a rate which is well above that seen nationally. Quality assurance procedures are rigorous and promote consistency and high standards. The self-assessment process is self-critical and accurately identifies the main strengths and areas for improvement. Management information is reliable and used well. The college's track record in financial and resource management is very strong. The improvements made to provision at the Newark campus are impressive and have brought tremendous and sustained benefits to learners. The college's reputation is high amongst stakeholders and partners. Governance is outstanding. Learners' and employers' views are used constructively.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 1

10. Success rates are high on long courses at all levels and for learners of all ages. Since the previous inspection, success rates have improved significantly and consistently across subject areas as a result of improvements in both retention and achievement. College data indicate that this strong improvement will be maintained by learners in the current year. Success rates have also improved in functional skills and are now well above the national average. Success rates in the college's work-based provision, including those for the timely completion of qualifications, are broadly average but recent improvements to quality improvement procedures in work-based learning have supported a considerable improvement in achievements, particularly for learners following the Train to Gain programme. Success rates on short courses are average.
11. The majority of learners make good progress and on most courses achieve more high grades than indicated by their starting points. However, in GCE AS and A-level subjects the proportion of high grades is slightly below average. Learners in the college and at the workplace develop very good levels of specialist skills which equip them well for employment or future training. Learners in construction demonstrate particularly high levels of craft skills and use them to excellent effect in a variety of community projects. Progression between courses at different levels within the college is good and the proportion of learners who apply successfully to enter HE is high and improving. Learners aged 14 to 16 do well and the majority progress to full-time courses at the college.
12. The college works hard to ensure that there are no significant differences in the performance of different groups of learners. Learners of minority ethnic heritage achieve success rates that are similar to those of other learners; male and female learners on long courses also achieve similar outcomes. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve excellent success rates whilst

learners who require additional support with their literacy and numeracy development achieve higher success rates than the college average.

13. The vast majority of learners enjoy their time at college and benefit from the broad range of opportunities to develop academically, personally and socially; their achievements are celebrated widely. The development of learners' economic and social-well being is good; learners develop good skills for their future careers and make good improvements to their standards of literacy and numeracy. The overwhelming majority of learners say they feel safe in the college. Learners have a good understanding of risk and adopt safe working practices in lessons, although some learners are more aware of the dangers of inappropriate internet use than others. The college provides an excellent range of information and additional services on health and well-being and offers good opportunities for learners to eat healthily, although a significant minority of learners do not eat as healthily as they might. Participation in organised sports and games is low. Learners make an outstanding contribution to the community, particularly through fundraising for local and national charities and their excellent support for local community groups.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

14. Teaching and learning are good but inspectors also observed a minority of lessons that were outstanding. The large majority of lessons are planned well and are matched closely to learners' needs and interests. Teachers use a broad range of interesting activities to promote learning, and make effective use of questioning to check learners' progress. In outstanding lessons teachers use assessment well to plan learning. They also provide learners with good opportunities to take control of their own learning and this enables them to make very good progress. In the minority of less successful lessons teachers dominate activities and learners carry out tasks at a similar pace, regardless of how much they understand. In these lessons teachers make ineffective use of questioning to check progress, challenge learners or foster independent learning. The majority of teachers use ILT to add variety and interest to their lessons but some teachers lack the skills to use the technology creatively. Similarly the VLE is used more effectively in some subjects areas than others.
15. Assessment is good. Assignments are linked closely to qualification aims and are moderated carefully by course teams before they are issued to learners. Most teachers provide prompt and useful feedback on written work with clear explanations of how it could be improved. Assessment is also good in work-based learning; recent improvements in assessment practices have helped apprentices to complete their programmes in good time.
16. Good target setting and progress monitoring help develop high aspirations among learners, including those from vulnerable groups, and make a significant contribution towards improving learners' success rates. Progress is monitored in part through a newly installed online system which works very well in the majority of subject areas although a few learners do not have their targets recorded on the system. For learners on GCE AS and A-level courses it is not

always clear what they need to do if they are to achieve their aspirational targets. Progress reviews are mostly good in work-based provision but a number of different systems are currently in use to monitor progress and some learner targets are imprecise.

17. Provision to meet the needs of users is good. A broad curriculum is in place and nearly all subject areas offer clear progression routes from foundation to advanced level and beyond; learners often progress further than they expect. The college continues to offer some courses where funding is no longer available where they believe that particular groups of learners might be disadvantaged. The college also provides a good range of provision at entry level in a variety of community venues to encourage hard to reach groups to continue in education.
18. Enrichment, including the opportunity to study for additional qualifications, is good but the college does not evaluate how significant enrichment activities are to learners' experiences whilst at college. Work experience is satisfactory. Some subject areas offer a very good range of opportunities including work with leading companies, placements in the community and with voluntary groups. However, work experience is not provided for all learners who might benefit from it and its provision is not co-ordinated at college level.
19. Outstanding partnership work improves learners' opportunities and maintains the college's strong commitment to social inclusion. The college has wide representation on strategic groups within Lincolnshire and works closely with schools, voluntary organisations and community groups to encourage participation in further education (FE). Enrolments have risen steadily since the previous inspection, particularly from groups of learners who are often underrepresented in FE.
20. Learners benefit significantly from the college's partnership work through curriculum enrichment, the provision of additional learning resources, and work placement. The college plays a full part in the development of the 14-19 curriculum in each of the areas it serves. The consortium in Gainsborough is particularly successful where a selective, a non-selective and a special school work closely with the college to offer an innovative curriculum to local young people. The college responds well to the needs of local employers who appreciate the rapid response to their needs and the good quality training provided.
21. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Potential learners receive accurate and detailed advice regarding courses on offer. Information is provided in a variety of different media and is designed to be clear to learners from different backgrounds. An excellent range of support services is available to learners in the college and is used well. Links with external agencies to provide specialist support when it is required are outstanding.
22. Learning support assistants give learners outstanding individual support which helps them to develop their personal and social skills and progress in their studies. They also work successfully in lessons by supporting both individuals

and groups of learners who find learning difficult. However, in a minority of lessons, there is insufficient planning for learning support assistants to support learners with identified needs.

23. Tutorial provision is very good but individual tutorials are more effective than group tutorials. Arrangements for monitoring attendance are good; tutors and staff in learner services work closely together to provide appropriate interventions for learners whose attendance becomes a concern. Learners receive comprehensive guidance on their next steps in education or employment. The college has good systems to maintain contact with the parents and carers of learners aged 16 to 18. It communicates regularly about learners' progress, encourages parents and carers to visit the college with learners and provides parents evenings twice each year.

Leadership and management

Grade 1

24. The Principal and his highly capable senior management team provide strong strategic leadership and communicate this to staff well. The impact of their actions is apparent in much improved, and now outstanding, outcomes for learners, the high morale at the Newark site since merger and the excellent quality of learners' experiences at college. Staff welcome the open management style and aspirational culture that have become an integral part of college life. Managers are clear about their roles and are fully accountable for their areas of responsibility. The majority of curriculum management is outstanding. The management of work-based provision has improved and is now good.
25. Governance is outstanding. Governors use their wide range of skills expertly to oversee the college's strategic direction. They play a key role in shaping the vision of the college and keeping its focus on improving standards. Governors monitor both the financial position and the quality of learners' experiences closely. Their role in assessing and monitoring risks to the college, particularly those attached to several major capital projects, is outstanding.
26. The promotion of safeguarding is good. The college attaches a high priority to safeguarding and is constantly striving to improve its procedures, for example through the use of photographic identity badges for staff and all visitors, new initiatives to raise the profile of e-safety and the production of a wide range of high quality guidance on safety matters for learners. Security vetting checks on staff and safeguarding training are complete, including for governors. The management of health and safety has been strengthened considerably but the analysis of accident statistics to inform actions to reduce further the frequency of accidents is underdeveloped.
27. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The proportion of learners of minority ethnic heritage has increased each year since the previous inspection and the college is now working to improve the proportion of managers, teachers and governors from a minority ethnic background, which is currently lower than the learner population. Initiatives to engage hard to reach learners, such as those who are homeless, are successful. College managers use data

well to identify any differences in performance between different groups of learners according to their gender or ethnicity and have reduced variations in achievement. The college's equality and diversity plan is monitored rigorously. Appropriate equalities policies are in place but managers have not met fully the specific duty of assessing their impact.

28. Arrangements for learners and employers to contribute their views and promote improvement are good. Learners' views are canvassed actively through a well-developed system of learner representatives and focus groups. Learners are confident their opinions are listened to and displays throughout the college illustrate what the college has done to address their issues. Employers' views are also sought, and there are successful industry forums in construction, but employers' views do not figure as prominently as those of learners in the college's quality improvement actions.
29. Managers use data skilfully to monitor and evaluate the quality of the college's work and intervene quickly if any areas are underperforming. Self-assessment is accurate and used well by managers at all levels to identify areas for improvement. Improvement plans are of high quality; inspectors identified notable early impact from a number of improvement actions in the current year. For example, the progress made by learners on work-based provision has improved significantly. The college has a very clear and well-focused teaching and learning strategy which plays a major part in shaping improvement activities. Arrangements for observing lessons are rigorous, although some aspects of teaching and learning such as the quality of tutorials and the impact of learning support assistants in lessons are underrepresented in the college's observations and not given sufficient priority in the college's evaluations. Staff development activities are closely linked to the areas for improvement identified through lesson observations.
30. The college provides outstanding value for money. Financial management is strong. The vast majority of teachers are well qualified and the college is making very good progress towards meeting its responsibilities for workforce reforms. Accommodation and resources at Newark in particular have been modernised and improved but all three campuses have benefited from significant capital investment and provide good facilities for learning.

Subject areas

Health and social care

Grade 1

Context

31. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in health and social care, and in child development and well-being. Of the 417 learners currently enrolled on college provision, 307 are aged 16 to 18 and 110 are adults. Some 349 learners follow full-time courses and 68 follow part-time courses. In total 39 learners are at foundation level, 140 learners at intermediate level, 231 learners at advanced level and seven learners at higher level. An additional 18 pupils aged 14 to 16 follow courses in health and social care. In work-based provision, some 377 learners are on the Train to Gain programme, mainly in health and social care and 77 are on apprenticeships in child development and well-being.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners on college-based programmes are outstanding. All full-time courses demonstrate a three-year improvement in success rates to well above the national average. Current learners are making very good progress and exceeding the target grades predicted for them.
- Outcomes for learners on work-based programmes are average but current learners are making very good progress and college data suggest a significant improvement in success rates this year. Train to Gain achievements are good in health and social care but lower in childcare where there are far fewer learners.
- Learners develop an excellent range of skills, including communication and research skills, which improve their employability. They collaborate well with others to complete tasks within set timescales. Learners' strong performance towards achieving their personal targets demonstrates their growing self-awareness.
- All learners develop a very good understanding of equality and diversity and demonstrate respect for each other. They adopt safe working practices in their work and personal lives. Learners recognise their responsibilities to safeguard others at college and within the workplace.
- Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are planned well and provide a wide range of challenging learning activities. In the majority of lessons teachers use questioning very well to check progress and encourage deeper learning. Teachers who are confident with ILT use it to good effect to add interest to their lessons but those who are less confident do not use the resource to its full potential or encourage their learners to do so.
- Assessment is good. Assessment procedures are reliable and fair. Teachers provide detailed and constructive feedback on completed assignments which helps learners improve their work. In work-based provision training and assessment are matched well to the work patterns of individual learners.
- The range of provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. There is a broad range of courses in childcare, counselling, and health and social care.

Learners also benefit from a very good range of enrichment activities and the opportunity to study for a good variety of additional qualifications. Progression between courses and into employment or HE is very good.

- Partnership working is outstanding. Employers offer placement opportunities for learners and industrial updating for staff. Collaboration with providers overseas gives learners excellent opportunities to undertake work experience in a different country and compare services. There is a well-established nursing cadet programme linked to the United Lincolnshire Healthcare Trust. However, employers are not fully involved in assessment or curriculum planning.
- Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Initial advice and guidance is thorough, ensuring that all learners are placed on an appropriate programme. Learners receive excellent formal and informal support from their teachers and tutors, helping them to overcome barriers to their progress and ensuring that challenging personal targets are set and met.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers use data extremely effectively to monitor standards and they take prompt remedial action if improvement is needed. Self-assessment works well; all staff are involved in the process and use its outcomes fully in course improvement plans.
- Accommodation and resources are good. Classrooms are generally well appointed, although some lack computers so that learners are dependent upon portable laptop computers. Teachers and assessors are well qualified and possess good experience of the care sector.

What does Lincoln College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates in work-based provision by ensuring that both candidates and employers are fully aware of programme requirements.
- Improve the use of ILT in lessons by providing more staff development on its use and encouraging childcare learners in particular to use the interactive whiteboard in order to match current practice within the sector.

Construction

Grade 1

Context

32. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in construction. Of the 440 learners currently enrolled on college-based provision, 337 are aged 16 to 18 and 103 are adults. Some 352 learners follow full-time courses and 88 follow part-time courses. In total 155 learners are at foundation level, 243 learners at intermediate level, 42 learners at advanced level and 173 learners at higher level. An additional 72 pupils aged 14 to 16 follow courses in construction as part of their Key Stage 4 programme at school. In work-based provision some 47 learners are on the Train to Gain programme and 128 are on apprenticeships, mostly at level 2.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Success rates are very high on most construction, electrical and technical and professional courses but low on the small number of plumbing and plastering courses. Success rates are also very high on literacy and numeracy qualifications.
- Learners make outstanding progress and demonstrate exceptionally high standards in their practical skills. In some instances craft learners are able to undertake successfully practical tasks set a level above that at which they are studying. Full-time learners have an exceptionally good understanding of materials, tools and working processes and also develop other skills, including communication and problem solving, that are highly valued by employers.
- Success rates for apprentices declined in 2009/10 to near the national average but the college's own data indicate a significant improvement this year. Current apprentices are making good progress.
- Learners are involved in a very good range of community projects including construction projects with local schools, charities and community groups. Learners have good awareness of the importance of sustainable developments and actively seek opportunities to consider aspects of sustainability in their project work.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are planned very well to match the needs of individual learners and much teaching is imaginative and fun. Assessment is good, although for apprentices, particularly those in electrical installation, evidence for assessment is not always collected sufficiently early in the apprenticeship programme.
- The range of provision is outstanding. The development of the curriculum through partnership working is a strong feature and has resulted in a range of courses which meets employers' needs well. Progression to courses at higher levels and into employment is very good.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Learners' targets are generally specific enough to enable learners and teachers to measure small steps of progress accurately and to help plan learners' individual routes towards accreditation.

Tutorials are good and provide an appropriate forum in which learners can discuss their progress.

- Leadership and management are outstanding and have played a major role in improving success rates. Managers use data well and have put in place a broad range of initiatives to improve standards still further. Quality improvement procedures are rigorous and self-assessment is accurate. Action plans provide clear targets and are monitored carefully. Teamwork is strong and the promotion of equality and diversity is very good.
- Workshop resources for timber trades and electrical installation are very good and those for other crafts are good. Teachers are well qualified and benefit from excellent opportunities for staff development, including industrial updating and experience of new sector technologies.

What does Lincoln College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that evidence for assessment is collected earlier in apprenticeship programmes so that learners can make more rapid progress towards accreditation.

Hospitality and catering

Grade 2

Context

33. The college offers mainly full-time courses in hospitality and catering. Of the 116 learners currently enrolled on college-based provision, 75 are aged 16 to 18 and 41 are adults. Some 75 learners follow full-time courses and 41 follow part-time courses. In total 23 learners are at foundation level, 77 learners are at intermediate level and 16 learners are at advanced level. In work-based provision some 95 learners are on the Train to Gain programme and 80 are on apprenticeships.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates on the majority of courses are high but the success rate for level 2 apprentices is low. Learners are punctual and their attendance is outstanding.
- Learners make very good progress and the quality of their work is good. They develop a good range of relevant practical skills which prepares them well for future employment or training and their progression to higher level courses is good. Learners feel safe and display high standards of hygiene and health and safety practice in practical skills lessons.
- Teaching and learning are good. Learners respond positively to the challenging food preparation and cooking lessons and work well to complete their set tasks, often benefiting from very good individual coaching. The majority of lessons are planned well but some theory lessons do not provide sufficient different learning activities to capture and hold learners' interest. Insufficient use is made of ILT to promote and support learning.
- Assessment is rigorous and fair. In the majority of cases teachers provide prompt and detailed feedback to learners to indicate how they could improve their work. Assessment on work-based provision is very good and involves both learners and employers fully.
- Provision meets learners' needs well. The college provides an extensive range of main qualifications and a wide range of additional qualifications which enhance learners' employability. Enrichment is good and includes competitions, visits to trade fairs, local hotels and restaurants.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Good pre-course information and initial assessment ensure that learners are placed on the right course and that any additional support needs are identified promptly. Learning support assistants generally provide good support in lessons but their work is not planned in sufficient detail to maximise its benefit. Learners' progress is monitored well through a highly effective tutorial system.
- Leadership and management are good. Communication and teamwork are good; the sharing of good practice is a strong feature. Self-assessment is mostly rigorous. Quality improvement procedures are strong and course performance is monitored carefully. Actions for improvement are appropriate

and in nearly all cases supported by clear and challenging targets. Staff development is good.

- Resources for learning are good. Practical training facilities reflect current industry standards but teachers and learners do not have easy access to ILT. Some classrooms also lack access to ILT equipment. Staff are well qualified and demonstrate high standards of professional practice.

What does Lincoln College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the access to ILT in practical areas and ensure that teachers make better use of it to add interest and variety to lessons.
- Ensure that a greater variety of learning activities is included in lessons so that learners have more opportunities to become actively involved in their learning.

Visual arts

Grade 1

Context

34. The college offers mainly full-time courses in visual arts. Of the 363 learners currently enrolled on learner responsive provision, 304 are aged 16 to 18 and 59 are adults. Some 354 learners follow full-time courses and nine follow part-time courses. In total, 41 learners follow courses at intermediate level and 322 at advanced level.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Success rates have improved significantly over a three-year period and are now high, although learners' achievement of high grades on a minority of advanced level courses is satisfactory. Learners from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve very well on all courses.
- The standard of learners' work is very high. Learners acquire excellent drawing, painting and graphics skills, and the standard of garments produced on fashion courses is extremely high. Learners work on exciting projects and build an excellent awareness of fashion trends.
- Learners make excellent progress in lessons. The vast majority progress to higher-level courses on completion and the proportion who ultimately progress into HE is increasing.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers are talented practitioners and are highly committed to helping learners achieve their full potential. The most successful lessons allow learners to experiment with an unusually wide range of materials, including metal, wood, plaster and fabric. Learners are encouraged to take risks in the techniques they use. A small minority of advanced level lessons are too teacher-led to allow learners sufficient autonomy.
- The assessment of learners' work is excellent. Marking standards are particularly rigorous and internal verification is thorough, timely and well managed. There is a growing emphasis on embedding assessment criteria into lessons to enable learners to achieve the highest grades.
- Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Learners negotiate their targets maturely, ensuring that they set themselves demanding personal goals. Tutors provide thorough and helpful progress reviews to ensure that learners maintain an excellent level and rate of progress.
- The college provides an outstanding range of courses and a wide variety of inspirational enrichment activities. The annual foreign trips are exceptionally well attended and provide learners with an additional insight into the creative arts. The department regularly invites established artists to work with learners and demonstrate their practices.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The growth of the department has been managed very well; intermediate level provision attracts three times more learners than at the time of the last inspection but standards have

continued to rise. There is a high degree of trust between teachers and managers and the teaching team shares good practice very effectively between the different sites. Self-assessment is rigorous and accurate.

- The college has managed its financial resources well to refurbish the art studios at Lincoln to an outstanding standard, with professional grade photography facilities and spacious, well-equipped studios. Facilities at Newark are good, and very good for ceramics. One graphics classroom in Newark has insufficient computers.

What does Lincoln College need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve high grade achievement by focusing rigorously on individual target setting in lessons and tutorials.
- Further develop advanced level learners' creative independence by offering greater autonomy and choice in practical sessions.

Literacy and numeracy

Grade 2

Context

35. The college offers part-time courses in literacy, numeracy from entry level to intermediate level. Many full-time learners take functional skills as part of their studies and apprentices take key skills. Of the 2,245 learners currently enrolled on college-based provision, 1,320 are aged 16 to 18. Some 532 are on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes, 146 on adult literacy, 174 on adult numeracy and 1,393 on functional skills in English and/or mathematics. Some 1,414 learners study full-time and 831 follow part-time courses. In total 920 learners are at entry level, 931 are at foundation level and 394 learners are at intermediate level. Some 126 learners are on the Train to Gain programme.

Key findings

- Success rates are high on the vast majority of courses. They have improved significantly over the last three years as a result of improvements in both retention and achievement.
- Learners make good progress, take pride in their work and show commendable curiosity in their learning. They concentrate in the main on the skills that will help them pass their examinations but also develop skills which help them improve their confidence and employability. Learners' progression to courses at higher levels is good.
- Learners feel safe. The college is welcoming to adult learners and those from different language and cultural backgrounds. In community venues, learners value the convenience of studying close to home. Learners know who to contact if they have any problems.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers use practical and imaginative activities to help learners improve their literacy and numeracy but in less successful lessons teachers have unrealistic expectations of learners' abilities and leave some confused by rushed explanations, insufficient practice and few specific checks on their understanding.
- Provision meets the needs of learners well. The college provides a wide range of courses which are timetabled to allow learners to honour their personal commitments. Literacy and numeracy courses in the community are resourced appropriately and targeted at the areas of greatest need. The college makes good use of partnerships to enhance and develop community provision.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Learners' additional support needs are identified quickly and accurately through initial diagnostic testing. Good levels of support are then provided in lessons by learning support assistants. In the best cases learning support assistants offer well integrated support which enables more vulnerable learners to make good progress. However, in some lessons the support is planned ineffectively and its impact is not evaluated in sufficient detail.

- Leadership and management are good. Actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been well-considered and implemented effectively. Subject leaders intervene and take robust action if teaching and learning are satisfactory rather than good or better. Subject leaders have good links with college departments which helps them implement the functional skills strategy.
- Self-assessment is thorough and includes the detailed analysis of a wide range of statistical information at course level. However, managers have insufficient evidence of the quality of functional skills across the whole college. A new system for tracking learners' progress and achievement is enabling more rigorous internal verification and quality checks to be carried out.

What does Lincoln College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by planning activities more carefully and adopting a broader range of tasks to consolidate and check learners' understanding.
- Improve the effectiveness of in-class support by planning the contributions of learning support assistants more carefully and providing a full evaluation of the quality of support they provide.

Business management

Grade 2

Context

36. The college offers full-time courses in business management. Of the 169 learners currently enrolled on college-based provision, 134 are aged 16 to 18 and 35 are adults. In total 10 learners are at foundation level, 77 learners at intermediate level, 82 learners at advanced level and 43 learners at higher level. In employer responsive provision some 325 learners are on the Train to Gain programme and 49 are on apprenticeships, mostly at intermediate level.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates on the majority of courses are well above national averages although they have declined on a few courses over the past three years. Success rates for apprentices are high.
- Learners, including those who receive additional support with their learning, make good progress. The majority of learners achieve at least the grades expected of them. Learners produce good standards of work and demonstrate good levels of business skills, supported by high standards of literacy and numeracy.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lesson planning is generally rigorous, particularly for lessons on foundation courses where teachers ensure that there are appropriate activities to engage all learners, regardless of their prior knowledge and learning style. In the minority of less successful lessons, more able learners are not challenged sufficiently by what is expected of them and do not have enough opportunities to take control of their own learning.
- ILT is used well in the majority of lessons by both teachers and learners. The college's VLE is currently underused by learners outside of lessons to reinforce their learning.
- Assessment is good. Teachers use peer-assessment in lessons very effectively. Assignments are planned well and marked accurately. Teachers provide detailed feedback on how learners could improve the content of their work but do not provide sufficient corrections to inaccurate spelling and grammar. The progress of apprentices is monitored and assessed extremely carefully.
- There is a satisfactory range of courses. There is a good range of full-time courses from foundation to higher level but few professional courses. Learners have good opportunities to participate in curriculum enrichment but those on foundation courses have better opportunities to undertake work experience than learners on intermediate and advanced courses.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Learners receive good initial guidance to make sure that they are on the correct course and their subsequent progress is monitored carefully. Support in lessons is good; teachers and learning support assistants co-ordinate their efforts very well to ensure that learners who require additional help make good progress.

- Leadership and management are good. Communication is good; managers and teachers are clear about their roles and use data very well to set appropriately challenging targets. Self-assessment is well understood by staff and contributes to an accurate assessment of the subject area's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Teachers are very well qualified and use their knowledge and experience ably to inspire and involve learners. Staff development activities are generally well matched to need but with more emphasis on internal training rather than industry up-dating. Appraisal is thorough but for work-based learning staff there is no review of the progress they have made towards achieving their agreed targets.
- The college makes good use of the views of learners. Employers are kept well-informed of how their employees are progressing, provide some work experience activities and frequently act as guest speakers at college events. However, they are insufficiently involved in planning and monitoring improvements to the curriculum.

What does Lincoln College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates still further by ensuring that lessons provide sufficient challenge for all learners, but in particular the most able.
- Encourage the use of ILT in lessons and make better use of the college's virtual learning environment to support learning.
- Involve employers more in curriculum development, the provision of work experience and the industrial updating of staff.

Information about the inspection

37. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and nine additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's vice-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 inspections, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.

38. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the college. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Lincoln College

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

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	4,450	0	3,263	1,187	0
Part-time learners	8,868	266	347	3,219	5,036
Overall effectiveness	1	n/a	1	1	2
Capacity to improve	1				
Outcomes for learners	1	2	1	1	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	1				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	1				
Quality of provision	2	n/a	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	1				
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	1				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	1				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	1				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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