

Hopwood Hall College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130507

Name of lead inspector: Patrick Geraghty HMI

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Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Hopwood Hall College is set on two sites situated five miles apart: the Rochdale campus, in the centre of Rochdale and the Middleton campus, in the green belt eight miles from Manchester. The curriculum offer is mostly vocational, with provision in all 15 subject areas. The college caters principally for learners aged 16 to 18, and over three quarters of full-time learners are in this age category. Provision at entry and foundation level accounts for around 40% of all long course enrolments, 37% of all starts are at intermediate level and 22% at advanced level. Train to Gain learners represent around 20% of enrolments. Numbers on work-based learning have grown considerably over the last 18 months from 70 to 391 apprentices. The college also has small volumes of higher education (HE) and enrolments of learners aged 14 to 16.
2. Rochdale is situated 10 miles to the north-east of Manchester. The borough is the tenth most deprived nationally. The rate of young people who are not in education, employment or training is higher than regional and national levels, increasing to over 10% in 2009. Educational Maintenance Allowance take up is 7% higher in Rochdale than the regional average. The college recruits a higher percentage of learners from minority ethnic groups than that found in the local population. Around 55% of learners are female. The proportion of school leavers in Rochdale achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is 54%, although this figure drops to only 25% for those with free school meals. The college traditionally recruits strongly from the free school meals cohort.
3. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the college. Health, public services and care, engineering, preparation for life and work and business were inspected in depth.
4. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - SHL Training Solutions
 - The Skills Network
 - Groundwork Oldham & Rochdale

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2009/10 (Previous year)
Young learner provision: 14-16 Further education (16-18) Foundation learning tier	307 learners 2,520 full-time learners 382 part-time learners 468 full-time learners 144 part-time learners
Adult learner provision: Further education (19+)	803 full-time learners; 1,695 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	2,287 learners 391 apprentices
Informal adult learning	1,692 learners

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject areas	Grade
Health, Early Years and Public Services	3
Engineering	2
Preparation for Life and Work	3
Business	3

Overall effectiveness

5. This is a good college. Outcomes for learners have demonstrated year-on-year improvement over the last three years, sometimes from a low base. Achievements for trainees on apprenticeship courses are good, as are those for learners on Train to Gain programmes. Key skills outcomes are also good. Most recent evidence and data indicate that increases in retention and achievement rates are accelerating in response to focused improvement strategies. Standards observed by inspectors in lessons were good. Learners make good progress across all levels and some make exceptional progress. A significant number of learners progress from entry level to intermediate and advanced level. Increasing numbers are continuing on to HE against a background of low local participation. In the four subject areas inspected, teaching and the progress of learners were judged to be good in three.
6. Inspectors observed much good teaching. In these lessons, challenging targets are set and learners are engaged in active learning. Information and learning technology (ILT) is used very well. Many lessons were characterised by good opportunities for the development of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is broad and meets the needs of learners. Partnerships are good and are having

an increasing impact on improving outcomes. Care, support and guidance are good. Learners speak highly of courses and of how these have transformed their lives and increased their confidence.

7. Leaderships and management are good. The principal and senior leaders provide strong strategic direction and promote a sense of ambition for the college and its learners. Governors are rigorous in holding the college to account and in providing good support to senior leaders. Learners make an exceptional contribution to the college through their leadership team and other representative groups. The promotion of equality and diversity is strong and safeguarding is good. Finances are sound.

Main findings

- Success rates have steadily improved over a three-year period. Strategies to accelerate improvements are beginning to have an impact. Trainees' achievements on apprenticeships are good and improving. Train to Gain success rates are high. Key skills achievements are good. Success and progression rates for learners aged 14 to 16 are high. There remains too much variability in retention and achievement rates across some curriculum areas.
- From very low attainment on entry, learners make good, and some make exceptional, progress. A significant number of learners progress to higher levels. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups. Learners' progression to HE is good. Learners receiving additional learning support achieve well. A few curriculum areas do not use data effectively to evaluate learners' progress.
- Learners use safe working practices and feel secure and confident within the college's supportive environment. Learners make a good contribution to both the college and local communities. Arrangements to promote learners' economic and social well-being are good and enhanced through improved partnerships and community links. The college's excellent sports facilities are used well. Learners show good standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to work. Attendance on some courses is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are good. In better lessons, a range of challenging activities is effective in engaging learners and developing their independent learning skills. E-learning is promoted very effectively in many subjects. Good systems are in place to improve teaching and learning and to share good practice. Teaching and learning coaches support staff very well to develop their classroom skills.
- Assessment practices are effective. Learners receive constructive feedback that includes guidance on how to improve the quality of their work. On work-based learning programmes the monitoring of learners' progress and the planning of future assessment opportunities are managed well.
- A wide curriculum offer ensures that the college meets the needs and interests of all learners well. Programmes are responsive, enabling learners to acquire employability skills and ensuring that they make good progress towards their learning goals. Good key skills provision tackles low levels of attainment in

literacy and numeracy. Learners have access to and participate in, a wide range of enrichment activities.

- The college works well across the borough and in the local community and with its partners for the benefit of learners. Effective partnerships have been developed with schools and other community organisations. The college is a valued partner in many local partnerships to promote economic and social well-being. The college could do more to ensure that curriculum areas are fully engaged with employers.
- The care, guidance and support that learners receive are good. Excellent pastoral support arrangements ensure that some of the most vulnerable learners and those at risk of leaving early stay on their programmes and achieve. The college provides effective additional learning support for learners. However, the monitoring of learners' targets and the recording of progress are not systematic and lack rigour.
- Leadership and management are good. Governors, managers, staff and learners share a sense of ambition and purpose. Leaders have established a clear strategic agenda to raise standards and support learners to achieve their full potential. Quality assurances systems are applied consistently. Self-assessment is robust. Data are used by leaders to inform and aid improvement.
- Governance is effective in both challenging and supporting the college's drive for improvement and its aim to fully meet the skills needs of its local community. The governing body recognises the need to improve the gender and ethnic balance of its membership.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. The college strongly embraces a culture of safeguarding and health and safety. Comprehensive awareness raising programmes for staff and learners help to support those at risk of not achieving. Learners feel very safe in college.
- Equality and diversity are promoted and celebrated effectively within the college and are given a high priority. The college is a harmonious community where an ethos of understanding, tolerance and mutual respect is fostered. Equality and diversity are celebrated within the curriculum and throughout all aspects of the college work. The college recognises the need to improve further the ethnic balance of staff so as to better match the local community and learner profile.
- Engagement with learners is outstanding. An innovative feature is the Student Leadership Team which plays a significant part in the life of the college. Learners are fully involved in the strategic and operational processes of the college. Engagement with employers is less well developed.

What does Hopwood Hall College need to do to improve further?

- Embed and accelerate year-on-year improvement in success rates so that variability in achievement and retention on some courses is tackled. In particular, improve the use of data by some curriculum managers so that they are used more sharply and precisely to evaluate learners' progress. Improve attendance to lessons across all courses.

- Review and develop target setting and the recording of progress across all curriculum areas and in tutorial provision. Ensure that targets are sufficiently clear, time referenced and achievable so as to meet individual needs. Ensure that the recording of progress clearly states the advances made.
- Develop links between curriculum areas and employers so as to improve opportunities for learners and to develop curriculum options further.
- Improve the gender and ethnic balance of staff and governors to reflect more closely that of the community and learner profiles.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the well delivered and organised practical work
- the friendly and cooperative atmosphere
- the wide choice of courses
- the good teaching with very motivating tutors
- the strong support with high quality support staff
- the excellent sports facilities
- the opportunities for independent learning
- that students are listened to at the college and treated with respect
- the enjoyment of learning English
- the staff that keep them to their goals
- the equal treatment of adult learners.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the availability of help with set work, which is sometimes insufficient
- the facilities at the Rochdale campus, in particular more and newer computers
- the price of food at the Rochdale campus, which is too expensive
- the availability of childcare for adult learners
- the transport links to and from the college, and parking facilities.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good communications with the college
- the very good support
- the helpful tutors
- the good quality training
- the good feedback on learners' progress
- that the college is always willing to listen and respond.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the timeliness of information on changes to college courses.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

8. The college has a good capacity to make and sustain improvements. Strengths identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and action has been taken to tackle the areas for improvement. Outcomes for learners have improved gradually and there is evidence of further and accelerated improvement in retention rates this year. The progress that learners make is good and sometimes exceptional. Teaching and learning have improved and there is now much good teaching. Quality assurance arrangements are more rigorous and engagement with learners, an area for improvement in 2007, has become a key strength of the college. Partnerships are used effectively to enhance the provision and opportunities for learners. Leaders and managers set challenging and aspirational targets. The college has a well-thought-out framework for future development. Quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive and the 'Special Measures Panels' provide a good level of rigour and increased monitoring. Self-assessment is evidence based, rigorous and accurate. The views of learners are used well to bring about improvements but the use of employers' views is less well developed. The college is developing a strong culture of improvement.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

9. Success rates over a three-year period have demonstrated steady increases across all levels to be at or above the national average. For example, for learners aged 16 to 18 on intermediate courses between 2008/09 and 2009/10, success rates rose from 73% to 81%. Historically, retention rates have been low on many courses. Well focused strategies to accelerate improvements in success and retention rates are beginning to have an impact. Retention rates for long courses improved by seven percentage points from 2008 to 2010 and are now above the national average. Current data indicate a three percentage point increase in retention between May 2010 and May 2011. Lesson observations carried out by inspectors, scrutiny of learners' work, coursework, marked assignment work and comments from external verifiers all indicate a further improvement in achievement rates and progress within the current year. Success rates for learners aged 14 to 16 are high and progression to further education for these pupils is good. For trainees on apprenticeship programmes, overall achievements are good and improving. Train to Gain success rates are high. Key skills success rates are also high. Variation in performance across different groups of learners has been significantly reduced. Attendance rates are too variable across courses. There remains too much variability in success rates across a few curriculum areas.
10. Low literacy and numeracy levels for many commencing their courses remain a significant barrier to learning. Against this low attainment on entry, learners make good and some make exceptional progress. Progression rates between entry and advanced courses are good and are having an impact on improved life chances for many learners. The college is making good inroads in promoting successful applications to HE in an area with traditionally very low progression

rates. In particular, learners aged 16 to 18 make good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. Adult learners are now making satisfactory progress in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. At a senior level, data are used well to evaluate achievement and progress. There is some variability across a few curriculum areas in the sharp and precise use of data to evaluate learners' progress.

11. The college offers a harmonious and supportive environment for its learners. Learners use safe working practices. Learners make a good contribution to both the college and local community. Arrangements to promote learners' economic and social well-being are good and enhanced through good partnership and community links. Healthy eating is promoted well through the tutorial system and within the college canteens and restaurant. Participation rates in sport are high and reflect the college's excellent sports facilities. Teachers and other staff provide learners with consistent and high quality support that is effective in helping them to develop good standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to work. Work-based learners acquire skills that improve their effectiveness in the workplace.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

12. Teaching and learning are good and take place in well-resourced environments. In better lessons, a range of challenging activities is effective in engaging learners and in developing their thinking skills. Learners make good progress. The college promotes ILT and e-learning very effectively with examples of highly imaginative use in many subjects. Inspectors observed very good development of presentational skills and the use of ILT in public services. Many lessons have well planned opportunities for learners to develop their literacy, communication and numeracy skills. Less strong lessons are too teacher centred, the pace is slow and learners are not actively engaged or challenged.
13. Initial assessment is effective in identifying learners' literacy and numeracy needs. Most individual learning plans (ILPs) are appropriately detailed. However, many targets are too broad and not sufficiently individualised to learners' needs. The recording of progress against targets is not consistently effective. Early identification of additional learning needs enables timely and appropriate support to be developed. Detailed support plans are shared with teachers and implemented very well in lessons. Assessment practices are effective. Learners receive constructive feedback that includes guidance on how to improve the quality of their work and their grades. On work-based learning programmes, staff are very effective in monitoring learners' progress and planning future assessment opportunities.
14. The college has a good focus on continuously improving teaching and learning. The systematic and extensive lesson observation process is effective in identifying areas for improvement. The curriculum-based teaching and learning coaches are highly effective in providing targeted support and a range of individual and group training to improve teachers' skills and expertise. A system of peer mentoring and support successfully promotes open discussion and the sharing of good practice.

15. The college offers a broad, well balanced and flexible curriculum that meets the needs and interests of learners well. Programmes are responsive in helping learners to develop employability skills in their chosen field. Good opportunities exist for school pupils to access vocational learning, from taster programmes to accredited learning. Key skills provision for learners aged 16 to 18 successfully tackles low attainment in literacy and numeracy on entry. Partner agencies speak highly of the responsive curriculum offer and how effective the college is at meeting the local skills shortages. Learners have good access to a wide range of enrichment activities to support and add to the curriculum. The take-up of, and outcomes from, enrichment activities are very good.
16. The college works well across the borough and in the local community with a variety of partners. The college maintains purposeful partnerships at strategic and operational levels. Good relationships exist with a large number of local schools, supporting effective transition arrangements for the most vulnerable learners and other young people. Partners describe local arrangements with the college as crucial in supporting local economic development. Effective partnerships exist to safeguard learners through links with a wide range of community and voluntary groups. Employer engagement is effectively managed through Orchard Training Solutions. However, curriculum area links and engagement with employers are underdeveloped.
17. The care, guidance and support that learners receive are good. Excellent pastoral support arrangements ensure that some of the most vulnerable learners and those at risk of leaving early stay on their programmes and achieve. Good transition arrangements are in place to identify and support the most vulnerable learners. The college is good at supporting learners with a wide range of identified medical, social, sensory, learning and behavioural difficulties. For example, a team of communicators and signers work across the college with sensory-impaired learners. The college provides effective additional learning support for learners with dyslexia and a range of other learning difficulties discreetly and sensitively in one-to-one sessions and in the classroom. The impact of additional support is measured and the success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 with additional learning support needs are better than for learners who are not receiving support. Learners speak highly of the support they receive. The college counselling service is well used and appreciated by the learners and staff who access it.
18. Learners receive good advice and information regarding course options and progression opportunities. The college has achieved externally accredited standards for the delivery of information, advice and guidance. Advisors work well in curriculum areas when specific support is needed. Satisfactory tutorial arrangements are carefully coordinated across the college to ensure greater consistency. An appropriate curriculum is in place, which includes study skills, a review of Every Learner Matters themes and support for progression. Reviews are structured well in work-based learning programmes. However, the quality of target setting is not effective. Targets are not being used consistently or well enough to help learners to improve. Attendance is monitored but the rate is still too low on some courses.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

19. Leadership and management are good. A strong strategic direction is set by the principal and his senior team. They show strong and effective management to promote a culture of change and continuous improvement. The college has set ambitious and challenging targets. The pace of change and improvement is now increasing, supported by a sense of ambition and purpose which is widely shared. The college has established strong partnerships and links within the local community.
20. Governors have good local knowledge and a range of experience and expertise which they use effectively to support the college. Governors carry out their statutory duties well and provide appropriate constructive challenge on a wide range of issues. Governors have developed good links with curriculum areas and assist in validating the self-assessment report, which enables them to further their knowledge and understanding of the learners' experience. The governing body recognises the need to improve the gender and ethnic balance of its membership.
21. The college strongly embraces a culture of safeguarding and health and safety; sound procedures and systems are in place. It has effective arrangements for Criminal Records Bureau checks augmented by appropriate and comprehensive staff and governor training. Comprehensive awareness raising programmes for staff and learners support highly effective policies for vulnerable children and adults. Good and effective links with external agencies promote learners' welfare. Tutorials are effective in raising awareness of safeguarding issues. Surveys and discussions with learners confirm that they feel very safe within college. The Student Leadership Team makes an excellent contribution to promoting learners' understanding of safeguarding. Staff and learners have engaged in some innovative work on the risks associated with social, religious and political extremism. The college provides a wide range of opportunities and supports many vulnerable learners to participate, to develop their skills and to feel valued.
22. The college is fully committed to being an inclusive community. It fosters an ethos of understanding, tolerance and mutual respect of different cultures and beliefs and learners report that they are treated fairly. The Equality and Diversity Steering Group is chaired by the principal and the appointment of a new equality and diversity manager in February 2010 is driving forward this aspect at a fast pace. The single equality scheme is embedded in much of the college's work. Equality and diversity are promoted and celebrated through the everyday work of the college and also through special events. Staff, governors and members of the Student Leadership Team have all received training. The analysis of participation and achievement by gender, ethnicity and disability informs self-assessment and action planning at curriculum and whole college level. The college has appropriate and effective actions in place to narrow achievement gaps where these are identified and recognises the need to improve further the ethnic balance of staff so as to better match the local community and learner profile.

23. The learner voice is exceptionally well developed. The college engages extremely effectively with its learners to bring about improvements. Learners express their views through a variety of mechanisms including surveys, class and course representatives, on-line forums and Principal's Question Time. An innovative and notable feature is the highly effective Student Leadership Team led by the two learner governors and supported by learner participation officers. They are elected from across the college, and the membership includes one representative aged 14 to 16. They have been trained, have role descriptions and are appraised. They have direct links to key college managers, including those with responsibility for equality and diversity and safeguarding. They play a significant part in the life of the college, including at a strategic level, sitting on learner disciplinary and self-assessment panels and contributing to policy discussions. They and other learners have been involved in significant developments. Engagement with employers is less well developed.
24. Arrangements for quality improvement have been strengthened and are good overall. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and evidence based. Self-assessment evaluation makes good use of achievement data, trends, national averages, lesson observation grades and feedback from learners and employers. Self-assessment reports are validated by panels which include governors and external representation. Curriculum areas are further reviewed through a cycle of internal inspections and their performance is monitored through 'Special Measures Panels'. Lesson observations are rigorous and go through a moderation process to improve consistency. Effective leadership has been provided to re-establish the quality and the reputation of the college's work-based learning provision and outcomes have improved significantly. Self-assessment is broadly accurate. The self-assessment report for Orchard Training Solutions, for example, provides a clear and thorough account of the performance of work-based learning.
25. The college plans, manages and monitors its finances well. Its accommodation and investment strategies are well considered. Through the recent Business Transformation Plan the college has a well thought out framework for future development. The college is committed to sustainability. Projects on recycling and environmental clean-up illustrate this approach. Finances are sound. Given the good progress of learners, value for money is good.

Health, public services and care

Grade 3

Context

26. Courses offered across the area range from entry to graduate level. Enrolments include 543 learners aged 16 to 18 and 165 adults. Some 561 learners are on full-time courses and 147 learners are on part-time courses. The area offers courses for learners aged 14 to 16 and in work-based provision. Currently there are 18 apprentices, 25 advanced apprentices and 42 learners on Train to Gain programmes.

Key findings

- While overall success rates are satisfactory, there is too much variability across the provision. For example, in health and care, success rates on the BTEC introductory diploma are low and they are high on the certificate in health and social care and advanced courses. In uniformed public services, success rates on the BTEC diploma in public services are low but high on the advanced BTEC national certificate in uniformed public services.
- Retention rates historically have been low. Well-focused strategies are having an impact on improving retention. Current data indicate a nine percentage point increase in retention between May 2010 and May 2011.
- Learners make good progress given the large numbers with low prior attainment on entry. Good progress and achievement were observed in lesson observations, in the examination of assessed and validated work and by reviewing the learners' electronic monitoring system. Learners with additional learning support make good progress. Learners improve their employability through the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills.
- Learners state that the college has added value to their life chances, noting that by the end of their course they feel like professionals. Learners feel part of a safe and diverse community and show due regard to the well-being of themselves and others. The area works effectively with external agencies to promote learners' understanding of health and well-being. The area has recently won the regional Enrichment Award which acknowledged learners' impressive contribution to charity and the local community.
- The majority of teaching is good. In the better lessons learners are on target to achieve and are enthused. The use of directed questions and a brisk pace leads to productive learning. Differentiated learning objectives are shared but do not always lead to sufficient challenge for the more able learners. In the weaker lessons, data on the group's profile are not used to inform teaching or assessment. Improved quality assurance of teaching and learning is beginning to improve retention and achievement.
- The area offers a wide range of provision from entry level to higher education, including additional courses to improve progression opportunities and work-related skills. Partnerships are used particularly well to extend and improve opportunities for learners. The area is responsive to the views of learners and

employers. Learners' views are sought and acted upon and the learners state that they are listened to.

- Through the effective support of tutors, additional support workers and pastoral support workers, many learners are realising their potential. Learners receive good support to overcome barriers to learning. Effective diagnostic testing ensures that learners are on the right level and course. The use and setting of targets through the electronic ILPs lacks rigour.
- Communications across the area are good. Staff are both accountable and empowered and, along with managers, have a strong focus on improvement. The self-assessment report makes insufficient use of data to support judgements. However, the quality improvement plan is effective in identifying the actions needed to raise standards, in particular in retention and success rates.
- Staff have appropriate and regular training opportunities. The introduction of teaching triangles has improved the sharing of good practice. The investment in ILT training and resources has had a demonstrable impact on the learners' experience in uniformed public services but is not reflected in health and care.

What does Hopwood Hall College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success and retention rates so that they are less variable across the provision. Ensure that progress targets for learners are clear and encapsulated in specific and measurable small steps. Improve the rigour and clarity of target setting within ILPs. Use data on group profiles to inform teaching and assessment strategies better and to enable sufficient challenge for the more able learners.
- Improve the rigour and accuracy of the self-assessment process to ensure that the data are used more effectively.
- Share the good practice observed in uniformed public services, in e-learning and the development of presentational skills, to improve the delivery of health and care provision.

Engineering

Grade 2

Context

27. Courses offered across the area range from entry level to graduate level. Motor-vehicle courses leading to recognised qualifications are offered to learners aged 14 to 16. Of the 397 learners, 268 are full-time, 147 are adults and eight are aged 14 to 16. A further 55 learners are on apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Long course success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are now in line with the national averages. For adult learners, success rates are above the national averages and significantly so on intermediate and advanced courses. Success rates on many long courses are good to outstanding. On the introductory diploma in engineering, success and retention rates are below the national averages. The success rates and the proportion of apprentices completing in the planned time are both significantly above the national averages.
- The standard of learners' written work is satisfactory and some is good. Learners' better assignments are presented well and supported by good technical contents, accurate calculations and high quality graphical presentations. Learners' practical work is good. Learners develop good vocational skills in college workshops and in the workplace.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a range of challenging activities to engage learners and use ILT well in theory lessons. Specialist engineering computer software and computer-aided drawing are used to support learning and enrich learners' experience. Teachers use directed and probing questions to check learners' understanding and progress. In the better lessons, teachers use their experience and knowledge of the sector to link theory to practice.
- Partnerships with employers and schools are developing and are satisfactory. The area recognises the need to develop more extensive links with schools and with employers to ensure that the curriculum is current and relevant.
- Assessment of learners' work and internal verification are good. Assessment is consistent, accurate and supported by teachers' constructive feedback. Teachers use good records to monitor learners' progress. On BTEC courses, assessment tasks are linked well to assessment criteria. In vocational areas, assessment allows learners to make use of the skills developed in the workplace. Internal verification is comprehensive and well documented.
- Support for learners is good. Learners receive good support from their teachers to help them achieve their potentials. Support workers work effectively with teachers and significantly aid the progress of learners with additional learning needs. Targets that are set in tutorials are not sufficiently focused.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers and teachers form a cohesive team and take pride in what they do. There is a sense of ambition among

teachers. Most of the curriculum strategies to improve success rates and the quality of teaching and learning are having an impact.

- Curriculum managers are embracing the changes that are currently taking place nationally. For example, as a result of phasing out funding for the 16 to 19 diploma in engineering, new courses have been initiated, developed and scheduled to start in the next academic year.
- Communication within engineering is good. Team meetings are productive, and detailed analyses of learners' achievement by level of course, age group and ethnicity are considered. The subject area self-assessment report is sufficiently evaluative and identified many strengths and areas for development. However, both the self-assessment and quality improvement plan do not address the areas for improvement that are identified following teaching and learning observations.
- Safeguarding is good. Learners are safeguarded and protected. Teachers have had training in safeguarding. Teachers emphasise health and safety in lessons and particularly in practical lessons. Learners use safe working practices and say they feel safe in the college environment. They carry out risk assessment prior to undertaking practical tasks. Most lesson plans, schemes of work and progress reviews give sufficient attention to issues relating to health and safety.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Equality and diversity are understood well by teachers and learners. The ethnic diversity of teachers and learners in engineering mirrors the local community. Teachers embed equality and diversity in their lessons.

What does Hopwood Hall College need to do to improve further?

- Plan more rigorous improvement strategies to address the low retention and success rates on the introductory diploma in engineering.
- Develop more opportunities with local schools to increase the number of learners aged 14 to 16 on college courses. Expand links with employers to ensure that the curriculum is current and relevant.
- Incorporate in self-assessment the areas for development that are identified following teaching and learning observations and include these areas for improvement in the quality-improvement plan.

Preparation for Life and Work

Grade 3

Context

28. The area has 45 learners on literacy courses, 97 on numeracy and 438 on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. Literacy and numeracy courses range from entry level to intermediate while ESOL ranges from pre-entry to intermediate, with 50 learners on pre-entry provision. Around 69% of learners are from minority ethnic groups, and 40% are male. Learn Local provision currently has 71 learners on literacy courses, 173 on numeracy and 197 on ESOL courses. Within this provision, 43 learners are on pre-entry provision; around 43% are from minority ethnic groups, and 17% are male.

Key findings

- Achievement at entry level for most subjects is satisfactory. Adult numeracy success rates at entry level and foundation are at, or just above, national rates. Success and pass rates on adult literacy at entry level increased in 2009/10 to just above national rates. Entry level success rates on ESOL speaking and listening are above national rates. Adult literacy success rates at intermediate level are satisfactory.
- Achievement at foundation and intermediate levels in some subjects is unsatisfactory. For example, success rates on ESOL at entry, foundation and intermediate levels, and ESOL speaking and listening at intermediate level are significantly below national rates.
- Learners feel safe in the prevailing culture of mutual care and respect. All staff have attended safeguarding training and are fully aware of procedures in the college. Learners make a good contribution to the community. At the recent ESOL action day at the college, learners appeared in national costume and produced food to raise money for charity.
- Teaching and learning are good. In ESOL provision, innovative approaches to delivery include using reading circles, cookery classes, performing plays and film production to enhance learners' English skills. In the classroom, effective questioning extends and builds on learners' responses, maximising opportunities to practise spoken English. In numeracy sessions, teaching is challenging and encourages learners to use ILT, problem-solve and share different strategies for reaching solutions.
- Target setting for learners is inconsistent. Staff have insufficient tutorial time to work effectively with part-time learners. Language barriers for some ESOL learners hinder effective use of the electronic progress monitoring system. Target setting is inconsistent in paper-based ILPs. Some ILPs have no space for learners' reflection on their progress. Some individual targets are vague.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Support for sensory-impaired learners is very good, with sensitive deployment of support workers and very good integration and engagement of the learners in class activities. Full-time learners have good tutorial support in regular tutorial slots to set and revisit targets. An

electronic system has been established which allows learners to communicate with peers and tutors, and to access resources.

- Curriculum leaders promote high standards and raise expectations through a clear strategy for planning and developing approaches to teaching and learning. Since a major restructure of the provision, curriculum managers have promoted effective cultural and quality assurance changes across the curriculum area. Structures are developing well but the full impact is too early to judge at this stage.
- Tracking and monitoring of learners by curriculum leaders and staff over the last academic year have been robust. A colour coded target setting and tracking system is used across the provision to monitor retention and track learners' progress. Early indicators are that retention and achievement are improving steadily.
- Strategies to involve learners and employers in partnership working are good. Effective partnerships have been developed with schools, employers and community groups. External partnerships are promoted to ensure that the needs of learners are met. Provision is relevant to the needs of local communities and promotes social inclusion.
- Equality and diversity are actively promoted to tackle discrimination and narrow achievement gaps. A weekly reading circle enrichment session initially piloted in college was rolled out to a community venue to try to narrow the achievement gap in ESOL reading for Asian women. Recent indicators show 100% pass rates in the ESOL reading module for the learners involved. The college has plans to roll this out across the borough.
- Self-assessment is broadly reliable in terms of areas identified for improvement and the awarding of a satisfactory grade for performance in the last academic year. Inspectors noted evidence that measures put in place in the last year are beginning to have an impact.

What does Hopwood Hall College need to do to improve further?

- Increase success rates by reviewing initial target setting on ILPs. Ensure that targets are worded in clear, specific and measurable small steps in order that learners can monitor and exercise greater control over their own learning and progress.
- Review the effectiveness of electronic systems for target setting for part-time learners and for those for whom the technology and/or language is a barrier. Select and fine tune the best ILP tool for the learners' needs.
- Roll out successful reading enrichment measures, such as the Asian women's reading group, so as to continue to narrow the achievement gap in ESOL reading, and to reverse falling ESOL pass rates.

Business

Grade 3

Context

29. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in business, administration, accountancy and management from foundation to graduate level. At the time of the inspection, 136 learners were working on full-time programmes and 55 on part-time programmes. Of these, 122 were aged 16 to 18 and 69 were adults. Some 95 learners were women and just over half of the learners were of minority ethnic heritage.

Key findings

- Outcomes vary considerably between courses but are satisfactory overall. Most administration courses have improved significantly and are now outstanding. However, achievements on accounting courses declined and are now below the national average. The college has identified appropriate strategies and data shows that in the current year, retention is improving and is now good. Attendance is significantly below the college target and too many learners disrupt the start of lessons by arriving late.
- Learners enjoy their learning, make satisfactory progress and make good progress in administration and accounts. In business lessons they confidently discuss ethical business issues, for example, child labour. They are well prepared for the workplace by developing their literacy skills and gaining additional qualifications, for example, in computerised accounts and the diploma in text processing. Most learners progress successfully to HE, other college courses or employment.
- Learners feel very safe, treat each other with respect and work well together. Some learners make a positive contribution to raising funds, for example, for the local hospice. Learners' aspirations are raised significantly by effectively using ex-learners as role models and by celebrating the success of learners.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers use targeted, open questions well to check learning, to stretch the more able learners and to develop their critical thinking skills. Teachers make clear links to employment practices. Learners work productively and independently. In less effective lessons, initial assessment is not used sufficiently to meet individual needs and some learners are not engaged. Although there are some good examples of teachers using ILT to support learning, its use is generally underdeveloped.
- The assessment of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners value the developmental feedback which helps them to improve their grade. Spelling and punctuation errors are corrected on learners' work which develops their literacy skills and supports the achievement of their vocational qualification. Internal verification provides constructive feedback to teachers but good practice is not always shared between teams.
- The college offers a broad range of vocational provision. All administration learners go on work experience, which helps them to apply working practice to

theory and to produce work of a high standard. However, there is insufficient work experience for business and accounts learners. Links with schools and employers are underdeveloped although guest speakers and visits make a valuable contribution to the curriculum.

- Learners receive good individual support in lessons and learners with additional learning needs are very well supported. Initial assessment and induction include a variety of activities which ensure that learners join the appropriate course. Specific learners' targets are recorded electronically and are monitored effectively by both tutors and learners.
- Managers set high standards and expectations. Communication across the college is improving. Course team meetings include regular reviews of learners' performance against targets and feedback from learners leads to improvements. Diversity data are analysed well and the achievements of different groups of learners show significant improvement.
- Teachers work well as a team and they receive very effective support from their teaching and learning coach. Staff are appropriately qualified and there is a strong culture of professional development which is focused on teaching and learning and raising achievement. Staff are trained in safeguarding and are supported well by the safeguarding team.
- All staff are involved in the development of the self-assessment report which identifies accurately the areas for development. The resulting quality improvement plan identifies a range of strategies which are leading to improvements. However, monitoring the progress and the impact of actions is not sufficiently systematic and regular.

What does Hopwood Hall College need to do to improve further?

- Implement attendance and punctuality expectations rigorously in order to limit disruption in lessons and maximise the opportunities to promote learners' success.
- Improve the use of initial assessment outcomes to plan teaching and learning to meet the needs of all learners and to develop further the use of interactive learning to engage learners.
- Develop stronger external links with businesses to enable more opportunities to develop learners' employability skills and broaden curriculum provision.
- Monitor the impact of quality improvement plans at team level more frequently to improve the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for learners.

Information about the inspection

30. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the college's Assistant Principal, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the Skills Funding Agency and other funding bodies, Framework for Excellence indicators, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visit and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
31. Inspectors used group, individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had completed on behalf of the college. They also visited learning sessions, assessments or progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subjects the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Hopwood Hall 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. **Social and personal development:** all adult safeguarded provision

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	3,190	21	2,289	611	269
Part-time learners	3,552	233	366	2,419	534
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
A. Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2	2
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	2				
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
A3. Do learners feel safe?	2				
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
B. Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
B3. How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
C. Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2				
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1				
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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