#### **PROTECT - INSPECTION**



# Leeds City College

**Inspection report** 

**Unique reference number:** 135771

Name of lead inspector: Sue Harrison HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 18 May 2012

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

College House

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Leeds

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# Information about the provider

- 1. Leeds City College is a very large general further education college, which was formed in April 2009 from the merger of Thomas Danby College, Leeds College of Technology and Park Lane College. In August 2011, further mergers took place with the former Joseph Priestley College and Leeds College of Music, a higher education institution. The college offers courses in all 15 sector subject areas to approximately 7,000 learners aged 16 to 18, and over 10,000 adults. It also delivers, either directly or via subcontractors, a significant amount of workbased learning, including training for around 4,000 apprentices. Courses range from foundation level to higher education.
- 2. The college operates from five main campuses in Leeds, a campus in Keighley and a network of community centres. Almost 30% of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds compared to 11% within the city of Leeds. Unemployment in Leeds is above the national average, as is the number of young people not in employment, education or training. The number of school leavers gaining five or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics, at grades A\* to C is below the national average. Data indicate a significant proportion of the college's learners are recruited from areas of socio-economic disadvantage. A number of other colleges are within travelling distance, and most of the schools in the Leeds area have sixth forms. This is the first inspection of Leeds City College.
- 3. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Kirkdale Industrial Training Services
  - Polestar
- 4. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
  - Peach Operator Limited
  - Norton Webb Limited
  - Developing Performance Partnership Limited
  - Step Up Training Associates
  - Rhino Training Limited
  - Back-Up Training and Recruitment Limited
  - The Security Training School
  - The Development Fund Limited
  - The College of Chinese Physical Culture
  - Fire Brigades Union
  - Kirkdale Industrial Training Services
  - Leeds City Council
  - Tribal Education Limited

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11					
Provision for young learners:	11 full-time learners					
14 to16	1250 part-time learners					
Further education (16 to18)	5323 full-time learners					
,	2182 part-time learners					
Foundation learning	1773 learners					
Provision for adult learners:						
Further education (19+)	3244 full-time learners					
	7182 part-time learners					
Employer provision:						
Train to Gain	6540 learners					
Apprenticeships	4603 apprentices					
Adult and community learning	1609 learners					

# **Summary report**

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

erall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2		
Capacity to improve	Grade 2		
	Grade		
Outcomes for learners	3		
Quality of provision	2		
Leadership and management Safeguarding	2 1		
Equality and diversity	2		
Subject Areas			
Health and social care	2		
Engineering	1		
Hospitality and catering	2		
Sport, leisure and recreation	3		
Humanities and social sciences	4		
Adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL	2		
Business, retail and finance	3		

# **Overall effectiveness**

5. Leeds City College is a good college with a good capacity to improve. The college inherited as part of the mergers considerable disparities in the quality of provision. In a relatively short period of time it has managed to maintain and build on the strengths it inherited, and at the same time start to successfully address weaknesses. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory and improving. The main areas to address were retention on some full-time courses and completion rates for apprentices, both of which show significant improvement in the current year. Outcomes are outstanding for some groups of learners. They continue to

- be poor on some AS- and A-level courses and this is a priority for the college to address.
- 6. The quality of provision in the college and the workplace is good. This has been achieved despite significant restructuring following the mergers. The college offers a wide range of courses, its partnership work is excellent and it provides outstanding safeguarding arrangements for learners. Governors, senior post holders and managers lead the college well. They have been very effective in creating a single culture for the organisation, with the learner experience a central priority.

# **Main findings**

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Overall success rates in 2010/11 were around the national average. Pass rates are high but too many students left the college without completing their qualification, especially learners aged 16 to 18 on advanced level courses. However, in-year retention data show substantial improvement across all levels and on most courses. The achievement of adults who study family learning and personal development courses in the community is outstanding. Provision for learners not in education or employment is very successful.
- In 2010/11, the success rates for apprentices and the proportion completing successfully in the agreed time declined and were low. However, college data clearly demonstrate that current apprentices are making good progress and inyear retention has improved significantly and is now high across most programmes.
- Students enjoy college. They feel very safe, their personal and social skills develop well and their behaviour is good. Most learners make satisfactory or better progress. In some areas their progress is very good. However, the proportion of students achieving their target grades on AS- and A-level courses is low. The vast majority of pupils aged 14 to 16 who attend college successfully achieve their qualification and progress further.
- Teaching, training and assessment are good. In the majority of lessons and work-based training, teaching provides a variety of activities that reflect the varying abilities of learners and the different ways they learn. The pace of sessions is brisk. In less effective lessons, where progress is slower, objectives are unclear and opportunities are missed to increase learners' motivation and to engage them in challenging activities.
- Teachers and work-based assessors provide learners with assessment feedback which helps them to understand what they need to do to improve. In many sessions, teachers and trainers use questions well to promote learners' understanding. Some lessons provide good opportunities for learners to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, through discussions and the use of well-constructed learning resources, but this is not always the case.

- Over the last two years, the college has taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Staff experts in a range of teaching techniques share their skills with colleagues, ensuring teachers receive good support from advanced practitioners and technology specialists. However, the pace of improvement needs to increase in underperforming areas identified during this inspection.
- A broad, well-balanced and flexible curriculum ensures that the college meets the needs and interests of learners and employers well. Clear progression routes are available across all the curriculum areas. Programmes promote good development of learners' employability skills. Learners have access to, and participate well in, a wide variety of enrichment activities.
- Outstanding partnerships improve learners' opportunities and demonstrate the college's commitment to social inclusion. Productive links exist with the local authorities, businesses, schools, community and voluntary groups, and other organisations such as Jobcentre Plus. Excellent partnership working enables the college to play a significant role in addressing the skills and work agenda.
- Students benefit from good care, guidance and support. An extensive range of information and guidance from well-qualified staff is available on matters such as health, housing and finance. Support for the most vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exceptional. Potential students now receive appropriate information and guidance about courses available; until recently a minority have not been placed on the most suitable programme.
- Leadership and management are good with some excellent features. Senior leaders are highly effective in raising expectations and promoting ambition throughout the college. Managers have a clear strategic direction and, with governors, monitor performance well.
- The management of the mergers to establish a new and effective college has been extremely successful. A cohesive team has been created that is committed to bringing about further improvements in the learners' experience. Outcomes are improving and gaps in the achievement of different groups have closed. Arrangements to secure the safeguarding of learners are outstanding.
- Equality and diversity are promoted very effectively and are at the heart of the college's mission. Learners from very disparate groups work together harmoniously. Users play a key role in driving forward the quality of provision. Their views are collected and responded to, although the response rate is lower from some groups of learners than others and the college is working to address this.
- The self-assessment process is effective and results in a broadly accurate evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement. The impact of quality systems is demonstrated clearly through improvement in retention rates. However, on a few courses the rate of improvement is too slow. The college is aware that its system for observing teaching and learning does not always identify underperformance and plans are in place to strengthen it further.

## What does Leeds City College need to do to improve further?

Leeds City College, 18 May 2012

- Ensure that success rates improve for learners aged 16 to 18 on advanced courses by checking they are on the right course and that their progress is closely monitored.
- Ensure that new and improved monitoring arrangements on employer-based provision are effective at increasing overall and timely success rates for apprentices across all programmes.
- Focus professional development on those teachers and assessors who either are not yet planning learning activities that challenge and motivate all learners to reach their full potential, or are not promoting learners' development of literacy and numeracy skills sufficiently.
- Develop the quality assurance of teaching and learning to ensure it effectively informs improvement plans for those courses that are underperforming.
- Investigate the reasons for poor outcomes on some AS- and A-level courses, and put in place measures to bring about speedy improvement.

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# Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors What learners like:

- learning facilities and opportunities for work experience that prepare them well for progression to employment
- lessons that have a variety of activities that are interesting and enjoyable
- up-to-date teachers and assessors who are enthusiastic, care about them and want them to do well
- the really good personal learning and other support services that help them to stay at college and to succeed
- opportunities to socialise and make new friends in an adult environment
- trips, visits and external speakers that make courses interesting
- that their views are valued and acted upon
- that the college is an inclusive and diverse community.

## What learners would like to see improved:

- the price of food in some of the college cafes
- the time it takes for some teachers to return work, lessons based too much on theory, and too many changes in their teachers on some courses
- access to computers at very busy times, and some computers that are too slow.

# Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors What employers like:

- regular visits to the workplace to assess learners' knowledge and skills, and to review their progress
- very professional, supportive and efficient assessors
- good recruitment service that matches learners well to employers' needs
- improved understanding of health and safety in the workplace
- good opportunities and excellent support that is enabling their staff to make good progress and achieve
- very effective training that is having a significant impact on the skills and working practices of staff
- planning and delivery of training that is designed to meet the specific needs of the business.

## What employers would like to see improved:

no improvements were identified.

# Main inspection report

# **Capacity to make and sustain improvement**

**Grade 2** 

- 7. The expertise with which the mergers have been handled, and the improvements in key weaknesses in employer responsive provision and retention, demonstrate the college's good capacity for further improvement. The college's financial position is secure and strong controls are in place. Despite the inevitable structural changes following the mergers, staff remain committed and positive. Inspirational leadership from the Principal, together with senior leaders, has led to a shared commitment across the college to drive up standards for the learners. Leaders have successfully maintained strengths in the quality of provision, while at the same time addressing weaknesses, in the constituent colleges that have been merged.
- 8. The views of learners are used well, and partnerships at strategic, employer and community level are very effective. It is too early to see improvement to all outcomes, but retention rates are higher this year, and the achievement gaps between different groups of learners have closed. The quality of provision for apprentices has improved significantly. Self-assessment is accurate. Recent improvements to the quality system are accelerating the rate of improvement. Data are used very well. Leaders are aware of the need for a sharper focus on the quality of teaching and learning in underperforming areas, especially on some A-level provision.

# **Outcomes for learners**

Grade 3

- 9. Overall success rates on long courses were around the national average in 2010/11. Success rates for adult students are above the national average from entry to advanced level. For students aged 16 to 18, they are satisfactory at foundation and intermediate level, but below the national rates at advanced level. The main area for improvement is retention as pass rates are generally high. In-year retention data for 20011/12 indicate a good improvement across all levels and on most courses. Success rates on short courses are satisfactory.
- 10. Students enjoy college and the variety of opportunities within and outside their main course that support their skills development and raise their aspirations. They feel very safe in the college. Most students make satisfactory or better progress. However, the proportion of learners achieving their target grades on AS- and A-level courses is too low. On GCSE courses the proportion of learners achieving grades A\* to C was below the national average in 2010/11. Success rates on functional skills in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory.
- 11. Internal progression rates to either a higher level or alternative college course are satisfactory but too few students progress from AS to A level. The college has worked hard to monitor students' destinations when they complete the course or leave the college early. Most students progress into appropriate

education, training or employment. The vast majority of pupils aged 14 to 16 who attend college successfully achieve their qualification and a large proportion progress to a full-time vocational programme when they leave school.

- 12. The achievement of adults who study family learning and a range of other programmes in the community is outstanding. Learners' self-confidence is enhanced and they are able to provide more support to their children with their school work. Adults and younger learners make a valuable contribution to the local community as a result of skills developed, for example by participating in volunteering projects and charitable events. Students talk very positively about these opportunities and the impact they have on their lives and future aspirations. Students increase their understanding of healthy living and many make well-informed choices as a result of this.
- 13. In 2010/11 success rates for apprentices and the proportion completing in the agreed time declined to below the national average. However, college data clearly demonstrate that current apprentices are making good progress and inyear retention has improved significantly and is now high across most programmes. On other work-based programmes, the proportion of trainees completing National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) within the agreed time is at the high national average.
- 14. The college's innovative project work to support young people not in education or training is very successful. Around 500 young people attended bespoke courses in 2010/11; success rates are high and many progressed to full-time courses or employment. A large number of young people who are looked after by the local authority attend the college and their success rates are high. Behaviour in the college is generally good and an ethos of respect for others pervades this very large and diverse community. Attendance is satisfactory.
- 15. In 2011, students with a declared learning difficulty and/or disability achieved better than their peers. The college correctly identified lower retention rates for male learners, and among younger learners from Bangladeshi, Pakistani, mixed Asian and Caribbean heritage. In-year retention data show improvement across all these groups.
- 16. In most lessons learners make good progress. The quality of most practical work is good with examples of exceptionally high standards in engineering and catering. Coursework is presented well in most vocational areas and students take a pride in the quality of their work. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to improve their spelling and grammar. A significant emphasis is placed, and successfully achieved, in developing students' general employability skills. Participation in extra-curricular activities, including prestigious competitions, enables students to develop specific skills to enhance their job prospects.

# The quality of provision

Grade 2

- 17. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and trainers are appropriately qualified and benefit from extensive professional development, for example to improve their skills in the use of information and learning technology. Staff development for work-based trainers has been highly effective in improving the quality of training and assessment of apprentices this year.
- 18. In many lessons, teachers and trainers make good use of the outcome of initial assessments to plan lessons that meet the needs of individuals in their group. These teachers have high aspirations for the learners and set ambitious targets for their progress. They set tasks that are linked well to the objectives of the session, to employers' needs and the qualification criteria. Tasks are well designed to assess learners' progress. The most effective teachers and assessors build opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills into sessions, but this is not universal across the college.
- 19. Staff use discussion techniques skilfully to check learners' progress through probing questions that develop knowledge and understanding. They support learners who are struggling with effective coaching and by role modelling high professional standards, for example helping learners to develop the personal and social skills needed to secure employment in the service industries. Workbased assessors keep in touch regularly with their apprentices, via emails as well as visits, to track their progress. Most teachers and trainers are adept at exploring opportunities to promote learners' understanding of equality and diversity within sessions.
- 20. Learning resources are mostly good or better. Teachers in areas such as travel and tourism, engineering, hospitality, and hairdressing and beauty therapy have access to high quality resources that they use well in developing learners' skills. In a few areas, learning materials are not well designed to promote learners' progress and there is limited display of learners' work. In a very small minority of lessons, materials contain spelling or grammatical errors. Learners are encouraged effectively in many curriculum areas to develop independent learning and research skills.
- 21. In weaker lessons teachers do not set ambitious activities that are tailored to meet learners' varying needs. The pace of learning is slow. Teachers set the same tasks for all learners, some complete these quickly and suitable additional work is not provided to stretch and challenge them.
- 22. Assessment practices for college and work-based learners are generally effective in helping learners to improve. Robust standardisation ensures assessment meets awarding body criteria. Vocational and key skills assessors' visits to trainees at work track progress carefully against their targets. Most teachers and trainers provide learners with written assessment feedback which helps them to understand what they need to do to improve. In a few classes, the use of questioning to assess learners' understanding is too superficial.

- 23. The college meets the needs of learners and employers well. The range of provision is good and provides clear progression routes. The college works well with other providers in the development of its course portfolio. Provision to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. A study skills course that was introduced this year is not at the right level for some learners. Innovative and highly successful programmes, for example for young people not in education or training, contribute well to the area's economic regeneration strategy. The wide and varied adult and community learning provision is particularly effective at engaging disadvantaged learners.
- 24. Students benefit from the college's six skills academies delivering specialist programmes in a range of areas such as sports and retail. In addition, innovative enterprise projects help learners to develop the skills necessary to establish and run a business. The college makes extensive provision for pupils aged 14 to 16. It meets the needs of employers very well, with an extensive programme of work-based delivery and a highly effective service that matches learners to employers' recruitment requirements. Learners participate well in a wide range of enrichment activities. Funding is available to help learners' benefit from excellent opportunities to enhance their learning and experience, for example through transnational visits and projects and working at the Olympic Games.
- 25. Partnership work is outstanding at all levels. Strategic links with local authorities, schools, businesses, voluntary and community groups, and a wide range of other organisations are highly effective at contributing to economic regeneration and meeting local needs. Partners speak highly of the college's flexibility and response to needs. Examples of the impact of partnership working are numerous. Work with Jobcentre Plus and an international food service company provides a sector-based work academy for unemployed people. This involves initial college training, work placement and a guaranteed interview with the company. The college worked very effectively with the local authority to ensure the continuation of specialised provision for adults with complex learning needs when it was in danger of closing down. A strong partnership with social services ensures the college is a significant provider for looked after young people. Excellent transition partnerships exist with schools. Learners in many curriculum areas benefit from collaborative partnerships with regional and national organisations.
- 26. Learners benefit from good care, guidance and support. An extensive range of services within the college, and well-developed links with external agencies, ensure excellent pastoral support, including additional support for vulnerable learners or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college goes to exceptional lengths to ensure their transition is carefully managed. Students receiving additional specialist support achieve well. Students benefit from access to staff with expertise in finance, health, housing and a range of other good quality welfare services. Tutorial support is generally effective and students benefit from academic support from progression officers and progress coaches as well as personal tutors. However, the effectiveness of target-setting in tutorials varies too much. Group tutorials cover a range of themes that many

students find useful. Initial advice and guidance to ensure students are on the right course has improved and is now satisfactory. Careers advice and guidance is satisfactory.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

- 27. The Principal provides excellent leadership and, with senior managers, has been instrumental in securing a strong strategic position for the college. The multiple mergers have been managed very effectively and the Principal and senior team have been extremely successful in creating a single culture with ambitious targets that are supported well by the overwhelming majority of staff. Improving the learner experience is at the heart of all the college does and strategy is translated well into effective action in almost all areas of this large and complex organisation. Improving standards in the A-level provision is the next major goal.
- 28. Governance is good. The governing body has been instrumental in identifying a very clear strategic direction for the college. The mission is closely linked to the wider vision for the city, and the college is perceived by its strategic partners to be a key driver of social and economic development. Governors use their wide range of skills and expertise well to monitor financial and educational performance. They provide an effective balance between support and challenge. Efforts to broaden board membership to reflect the learner community have been partially successful. Governors have a good understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. Policies and procedures meet all statutory requirements. Governors receive appropriate training. They are keen to develop further measures to assess the impact of governance.
- 29. The arrangements for safeguarding of learners are outstanding. The college has excellent procedures and practices in place, for example, it has extensive and highly effective links with external agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of learners. It makes extensive arrangements for vulnerable learners, such as the provision of transport and timetabling changes to suit specific needs, and buddying schemes. Safeguarding teams meet regularly on each site to monitor the implementation of policies and procedures. Senior managers and governors receive regular reports on safeguarding. Staff training is very good and both staff and students are clear about who to contact if they have any concerns. Site security is very well managed to ensure students feel welcome, while at the same time ensuring their safety. Risk assessments are comprehensive and well audited. Staff recruitment and checking procedures comply with legal requirements.
- 30. Arrangements to promote equality and diversity are good. The college welcomes learners from many diverse backgrounds. There is a culture of respect and tolerance and differences are celebrated. An appropriate equality scheme is in place and rigorous assessments take place to monitor its effectiveness. Equality and diversity are promoted well in lessons. Data are used

- effectively to identify gaps in outcomes for learners and action to address these is proving successful.
- 31. The views of learners and employers are used effectively to improve the quality of provision. Learner governors and course representatives receive useful training to help them carry out their roles. Despite a significant amount of resource being devoted to collecting learners' views, the college recognises the need to increase the response from some groups. Employers are extremely positive about how well the college listens to their views.
- 32. Self-assessment is satisfactory. Mechanisms to monitor performance and tackle weaknesses are generally effective. The size and complexity of the college, and the recent mergers, present significant challenges to ensure processes are applied consistently. In most cases of underperformance in 2010/11, there is evidence of improvement. Data are used well to identify issues; the self-assessment process is thorough and generally accurate in its findings. However, the observation of teaching and learning shows some over-grading and has not always identified areas for improvement in teaching and learning, notably in the AS- and A-level provision. Arrangements to ensure the quality of provision in the workplace are now secure, and subcontracted provision is monitored well.
- 33. The college provides good value for money. Substantial efficiency savings have been introduced since the mergers. Outcomes for learners are improving. Resources for learning are generally good. Financial planning and controls are good and ensure financial stability.

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# **Subject areas**

# **Health and social care**

Grade 2

#### Context

34. Courses are available from foundation to level 4. Apprenticeships and other workplace training qualifications are delivered by the college in partnership with the NHS and through subcontracting arrangements. Several hundred trainees took NVQs in the workplace in 2010/11 and there were 60 apprentices. The majority of learner responsive provision is full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18. A small number of learners are on school link programmes.

- Outcomes for learners on full-time college-based programmes are good. Success rates on foundation and intermediate level courses are above the national average. On advanced level courses, pass rates are high, retention was average in 2010/11 and college data show improved retention in the current year. Outcomes for work-based trainees taking NVQ qualifications in the workplace are good. Overall success rates for apprentices are satisfactory, although too many did not complete in the planned timescale in 2010/11.
- In the current year, apprentices are making good progress. The standard of work in portfolios on employer-based provision is at least satisfactory and often good. Learners in college and in the workplace enjoy their studies. They are keen to learn and take pride in their work. Full-time learners produce good work which is detailed and relates theory to practice well.
- Learners feel safe in college and in the workplace. They are confident in knowing where to go to report any concerns and that they will receive support. Learners make well-informed choices about their health and well-being. They receive helpful guidance on healthy lifestyles through their coursework and practical assignments. Learners make a good contribution to the community through involvement in fund-raising activities and placements, for example in care homes.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good aspects. The best lessons provide a diverse range of learning activities that carefully link theory to practice. Workshop-style sessions are particularly useful in giving learners effective guidance and support. Less effective lessons do not robustly challenge the most able learners. In a few lessons, questioning is not used sufficiently well to check and extend all learners' understanding. Teachers do not always use opportunities to reinforce learners' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Resources to support learning, including the use of workbooks and information technology, are good. The assessment of learners' work is frequent and accurate. Feedback for full-time learners on written and practical work is generally helpful but occasionally lacks sufficient guidance on how to improve. Feedback to work-based trainees is constructive and helps them make

- improvements. Individual progress reviews are supportive and realistic targets are agreed with trainees at each review which are then followed through to ensure they make good progress.
- The range of provision is good and provides clear progression routes to further learning and employment. Strong partnerships with a wide range of external organisations enhance the learner experience. Visiting professional speakers from health and care organisations benefit learners. Work placements in care settings in Europe provide invaluable learning opportunities for many advanced learners.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners value highly the flexible and approachable manner of teachers. Work-based learners are well supported. The regular visits focus on tutorial topics, progress reviews, portfolio building and advice and guidance. Assessors develop positive relationships with trainees and provide meaningful support. Some employers allow trainees time to access additional support for their literacy or numeracy needs, but this is not always the case.
- Leadership and management are good. Regular team meetings ensure effective communication and sharing of best practice. Professional development for assessors has been particularly beneficial in helping to manage the transition of trainees from work-based NVQs to apprenticeships. Learners' progress is monitored well. Tracking information is updated daily and captures a range of activities relating to the progress made for college, partner-led and subcontractor provision. Arrangements for internal verification are robust.
- Staff contribute fully to the self-assessment report which is broadly accurate. Areas for improvement are clearly identified and actioned. Managers use data well to monitor retention and success rates. In previous years, insufficient observations of assessors were completed to inform improvements in teaching and learning. Observations are more comprehensive in the current year.

- Monitor closely the impact of improvements made this year in the tracking of trainees' progress to ensure that this leads to apprentices completing their programmes within planned timescales.
- Ensure that learners' understanding is checked effectively in all lessons by spreading the good practice that exists in the use of questioning techniques.
- Ensure that regular observations of all assessors take place and that the outcomes are used to inform professional development.

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#### Grade 1 **Engineering**

#### Context

Inspection report:

35. The college offers courses at foundation, intermediate, advanced and higher level in engineering, fabrication and welding, automotive and vehicle body. Currently, there are 355 full-time and 141 part time students. In addition, provision is made for a substantial number of young people aged 14 to 16.

- Success rates are significantly above the national average and have improved markedly in the last three years. On the majority of courses success rates exceed national averages. Pass rates are very high. Retention has been above average on many courses and shows further improvement in the current year. There are no significant variations in the success rates of different groups of learners. Attendance is good.
- Students acquire an excellent range of relevant skills that increase their job prospects. In lessons, learners make very good progress and perform engineering tasks that often go beyond that expected for their level of qualification.
- Students feel safe and demonstrate outstanding practice in relation to safe working. They use equipment and materials confidently. Risk assessments are completed systematically and involve learners well, contributing well to their understanding of health and safety.
- Students' skills development benefits from international links with Estonia and demonstrations by the Institute of the Motor Industry. Students have won a number of competitions and have gained a bronze medal in the Skills Olympics. Students are actively involved in the community, for example through fundraising activities to support charities and voluntary work on a steamroller restoration project.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Teachers set high expectations which match the best industrial practice. A broad range of wellplanned learning activities ensures all students make very good progress. As a result, learners are highly motivated. They show a keen and purposeful attitude in lessons, and focus on completing tasks to a very high standard. Teacher feedback on practical and written work is detailed and contributes well to helping students achieve at the highest level.
- A wide range of well-equipped specialist provision meets the needs of students and employers very well. The workshops provide realistic working environments that prepare students well for future employment. Effective school links provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and gain an understanding of the nature and demands of engineering courses.
- Partnerships with employers and external organisations are exceptionally good and innovative. Partnerships with industry contribute to the wide range of resources available, for example discounted equipment, paint and cars.

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- Employers frequently contact the college to fill their vacancies from the student cohort. However, limited opportunities exist for students to participate in a work placement during their time at college.
- Care, guidance and support for students are outstanding. Staff quickly identify those at risk of not completing their course and provide individualised support to help them achieve. Students speak highly of the regular academic and pastoral support they receive. Students benefit from a range of cross-college and subject activities to extend their knowledge about health and well-being.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Resources and staffing are managed very well. Staff are well qualified and their industrial experience is used very effectively in planning the provision. Managers have a good understanding of data, and performance is monitored very closely. The selfassessment report identifies key strengths and areas for improvement accurately. Targets identify how planned improvements will be executed and monitored. Staff contribute fully to the self-assessment report and quality improvement plan.
- The promotion of safeguarding is outstanding. Health and safety are emphasised highly in both practical and underpinning knowledge sessions. Equality and diversity issues are considered well in lesson plans and prominently displayed around the campus. Feedback from students confirms they feel respected by their peers and by staff. Effective action has been taken to increase the number of female students.

## What does Leeds City College need to do to improve further?

Work with partners to develop more opportunities for students to benefit from work experience placements.

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# Hospitality and catering

Grade 2

#### Context

Inspection report:

36. About 231 learners follow courses in professional cookery and a further 19 study an extended diploma in hospitality and catering. Most of these learners are full time. Forty eight school pupils follow part-time courses. Courses range from foundation to advanced level. In 2010/11 there were a small number of apprentices in this area and around 150 trainees were taking NVOs in the workplace. The number of apprentices has increased to 52 in the current year.

- Success rates are high on intermediate and advanced courses. Success rates on the foundation level introductory diploma fell to below the national average in 2010/11 because too many students left the course early. The retention rate on this course has increased in the current year. Success rates on NVQ courses in the workplace are high and the large majority of trainees complete their courses in the time allocated. Overall success rates and timely completions on apprenticeships are satisfactory.
- Learners acquire outstanding vocational skills and also develop a good range of personal skills which strongly support their employment potential. In collegebased lessons, and in the workplace, learners demonstrate high levels of knowledge and skills which underpin their written and practical work. Learners produce work of a particularly high standard on the diploma course. Learners feel safe; they develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, and contribute well to the community, for example by providing soup for the homeless.
- Most lessons are well planned and delivered effectively. Learning activities are varied and adapted well to meet individual learner's needs in both theory and practical lessons. In practical sessions, learners work independently to cook food to a very high standard, supported well by their teachers. Assessment is carried out effectively on college and work-based courses.
- The college offers a wide range of courses in hospitality and catering, and good opportunities for progression onto specialist courses in bakery and butchery. However, all learners commence on a foundation level course irrespective of their prior qualifications and experience and this does not provide sufficient challenge for all. The college works well with a well-known international food outlet on an entry to employment programme which targets young people not in education or training, and this has led to positive job outcomes for learners.
- Enrichment activities are very good at promoting learners' understanding of the hospitality industry. Learners benefit from participating in local, regional and national competitions, visits to employers and food producers, work experience and placements including special events that are serviced by the college.

- Very good links with employers inform curriculum planning and benefit students. They include the delivery of master classes on specialist topics. The college was awarded the Craft Guild of Chefs 'Best UK Hospitality College' in April 2012. An innovative partnership restaurant within a prestigious retail store in Leeds is run by college students. Employers speak highly of the college's flexibility in meeting their needs. The high calibre of students' work was also highlighted by employers.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Individual support and guidance sessions are particularly effective. Teachers are skilled at supporting vulnerable learners who often have low levels of prior attainment and lack confidence. Group tutorials are satisfactory.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers focus successfully on promoting high standards and developing learners' employability skills. Self-assessment is mostly accurate. The process is inclusive and based on effective course reviews. Measurable targets for improvement are put in place and progress monitored.
- Arrangements to safeguard learners are excellent. Training is thorough. Staff complete rigorous health and safety checks for all employers prior to the enrolling of work-based learners. Learners have a good awareness of safety issues. Teachers reinforce safe and hygienic practices most effectively throughout lessons. Good promotion of equality and diversity takes place throughout the curriculum and learners from a wide range of backgrounds work well together. The college is a centre of excellence for the Asian and Oriental sector.

- Use initial advice and guidance, and information on learners' prior qualifications and experience more effectively to ensure they commence their studies on the most appropriate course.
- Monitor learners' progress on foundation level courses closely and take prompt action to intervene when learners are felt to be at risk of withdrawing or underperforming.

# Sport, leisure and recreation

**Grade 3** 

#### Context

37. The college offers a range of courses in sport and leisure with progression routes from foundation to advanced level. Delivery is across four sites. The vast majority of learners are aged 16 to 18 and are on full-time programmes.

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates on long courses declined in 2010/11 after a period of improvement and are now at or around the national average. Foundation and intermediate courses are in line with national averages. At advanced level, success rates declined to below average in 2010/11, primarily due to students leaving their courses early. However, in-year retention is significantly improved this year. Those students who complete their courses make good progress.
- Learners display good levels of ability in the development of their coaching skills. They are prepared well for progression to employment or other learning programmes. Learners feel safe and are challenged effectively during sessions to consider safe practices. Learners value the contribution their tutorials make to the development of their understanding of healthy lifestyles. In lessons they are able to analyse behaviour and personality traits and relate them to the causes of stress. They are aware of the barriers to participation in sport and have learned to devise strategies to overcome them.
- Learners make a good contribution to the community, organising and taking part in a variety of charity events. In one instance learners cycled the equivalent distance of Leeds to Paris to raise money for a children's charity.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are good in practical lessons. In the better theory lessons learners are fully engaged in a variety of activities that allow them to link new concepts and theories to sporting activities. However, in some theory lessons students are not sufficiently engaged and they lose concentration. The assessment of learning is good and students receive helpful feedback on their work.
- The range of provision is good and is well suited to meet the needs of learners and local employers. The teaching of business topics has been incorporated into some sports programmes to better prepare learners for local employment opportunities. A significant proportion of students benefit from the sports academy, which enables them to work with professional clubs and participate in football, rugby and golf at a high level.
- Partnerships are productive. Learners have access to high quality sports facilities on the nearby university campus. Local partners value working with the college and contribute to curriculum development, and one partner assisted in the implementation of new coaching qualifications. Learners value the work

- experience placements generated from partnerships and some gain employment following their placement.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Pastoral support is good. New systems are in place to monitor the progress made by students in their assignment work against their target grades but it is too soon to measure their impact on success rates. Learning support is used effectively in lessons to support individual learners to make progress.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers engage with staff effectively to ensure that appropriate targets are set and progress towards them monitored throughout the year. New arrangements are in place to increase consistency of delivery across the campuses and to spread good practice, for example in the implementation of the retention strategy.
- Equality and diversity are embedded well within the curriculum. Learners are able to engage in productive discussions in lessons exploring issues such as participation in sport by different gender and ethnic groups. Learners also show a good ability, during the lessons they lead, to modify sports sessions to cater for learners from different age groups and of different abilities.
- Learners understand the role of student representatives and value the contribution they make. Staff respond to the views expressed by learners via feedback discussions in tutorials and useful posters displayed on sports noticeboards.
- Self-assessment is satisfactory. The self-assessment process is inclusive and there is regular monitoring of progress towards meeting the ambitious targets for quality improvement which are set. However, the self-assessment report does not analyse teaching and learning in sufficient detail and the quality improvement plan does not explain how improvements in teaching and learning will be made.

- Develop the quality of teaching in classroom-based sessions by providing tasks that are interesting and that allow learners to be sufficiently challenged. Make effective use of staff training to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of the constituents of good teaching of theory.
- Ensure the effectiveness of the retention improvement strategy, particularly by checking that it is implemented consistently across the provision on all sites.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the new systems put in place to measure students' progress against their target grades.

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# **Humanities, social sciences and English**

**Grade 4** 

#### Context

38. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in government and politics, psychology, sociology, geography, history and English language and literature. This is approximately one third of the college's AS- and A-level provision. Most students are full-time 16- to 18-year-olds. English, psychology and sociology have the largest numbers of students, accounting for approximately three quarters of the provision in total within the areas inspected.

- The success rate in this area is below the national average. Success rates in history at both AS and A2 and geography AS are close to the national average but others are significantly below. Data for the current year show improvement in retention and in January examination results, but it is too early to judge the accuracy of predicted improvements to success rates for students completing in 2011/12.
- There is significant variability in the progress students make in relation to their prior attainment. Too many students in English, sociology and politics do not achieve their target grades. However, students in AS geography make excellent progress. New and more robust procedures are in place to tackle poor attendance, but it remains unacceptably low in some classes.
- The quality of lessons varies significantly both within and between subjects. In a few lessons students participate enthusiastically in lively and interesting peer discussions. For example, in a history lesson student-led presentations displayed impressive levels of enthusiasm and insight into a range of historical topics about 20th century laws and reforms and their impact on society in times of war.
- In too many lessons the pace of learning is slow and teachers set unambitious learning activities. Students sometimes lose focus and concentration. This is not always challenged by teachers, resulting in unfinished work. In other lessons, students complete work early and wait for others to catch up because insufficient extension tasks are set.
- Although there are examples of good peer- and self-assessment in some sociology and psychology lessons, teachers generally do not check students' learning sufficiently in lessons. Opportunities are missed to check progress during group activities, and questioning is not used effectively to develop students' answers more fully. During open questions, a few students are allowed to dominate the discussion.
- The frequency with which homework is set and marked varies. Students value the detailed and constructive advice from some teachers on coursework tasks, but there are too many examples where feedback on classwork and homework is too brief to help them improve. Student files are often poorly organised.

- Learning resources are satisfactory. Some teachers have developed good learning materials, work booklets and revision packs which are accessible outside lessons.
- The range of AS- and A-level options is appropriate but student progression rates from AS to A level are low. The curriculum area has introduced more robust procedures this year to ensure students have made an appropriate choice of subjects. Enrichment activities are satisfactory; many subjects organise trips and visiting lecturers.
- Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Students feel well supported by teachers when they require subject support on an informal basis and they appreciate the 'open door' access to staff. Progress monitoring systems have been reviewed recently and are beginning to identify students at risk of underachieving more effectively. However, there is inconsistency in the frequency and quality of individual progress reviews for students. Pastoral and welfare support are good. Staff know students well and there is a positive atmosphere and sense of community between staff and students.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly established curriculum management team clearly recognises the weaknesses in the provision and there are early indications of improvements in outcomes for learners as a result of actions put in place this year. Students' views are sought and responded to well, for example learner feedback led to revised coursework arrangements in English.
- Self-assessment processes and action plans have resulted in improved retention rates this year. However, self-assessment does not focus sufficiently on teaching and learning. Lesson observations have not led to a clear identification of strengths and weaknesses in classroom practice which can then be linked to precise targets for improvement.
- Equality and diversity are taken seriously and students feel respected and treated equally. Teachers use lesson topics well to embrace the differences between individuals and to reinforce principles of equality and tolerance. Procedures for safeguarding are good.

- Address the low success rates on many courses and the low rates of progression from AS to A level by:
  - ensuring that the outcomes of the observations of teaching and learning inform teachers clearly of where they can improve, establishing clear targets for improvement and supporting teachers effectively to enable them to meet these targets
  - monitoring the effectiveness of the improved procedures for checking student absence and progress introduced this year, and ensuring greater consistency in the quality of academic support provided during progress reviews

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 ensuring that the written feedback on classwork and homework gives sufficient guidance so that students know clearly how they can improve the standard of their work.

## Adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Grade 2

#### Context

39. The college offers long and short courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and adult literacy and numeracy at entry level, level one and level two. These are delivered from five main college campuses, 13 community centres and over 50 other venues. Over a thousand learners follow literacy and numeracy programmes and over two thousand take ESOL courses. The college also offers family learning courses in primary schools and children's centres.

- Success rates are generally above the national average, particularly on entry and level one provision. Success rates on ESOL level two courses are also above average. They were below average on some level two literacy and numeracy courses in 2010/11. Learners on non-accredited courses achieve well.
- Learners make good progress. They develop a wide range of skills to increase their employability and improve their confidence and personal and social skills. A significant number of learners progress to vocational programmes or employment. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners feel very safe. They have a good understanding of health and safety, including e-safety.
- Learners' contribution to the community is good. They are regularly involved in community events and charity fund-raising. Some learners participate in volunteering activities, which often enable them to gain work-related skills. Family learning sessions offer parents and carers return-to-learn opportunities at local schools; many progress to further learning or become volunteers in the schools.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of students from a range of diverse backgrounds. Learners participate enthusiastically in lessons as a result of the use of a wide range of practical activities which interest and motivate them. A minority of lessons are too tutor led or do not cater sufficiently for the different levels students are working at, particularly to stretch the level two learners. Equality and diversity are promoted well in lessons. Teachers are skilful at encouraging learners to share and appreciate the wide variety of cultural heritage within groups.
- Assessment is satisfactory. An extended period of initial assessment is effective at identifying learners' needs. This information is used to draw up individual learning plans, with most teachers recording learners' interim targets and planned outcomes related to their qualification. However, these plans do not focus sufficiently on long term goals and some targets set are too broad.
- The college meets the needs and interests of learners well. The range of courses is good and programmes are accessible to learners within their local communities. Learners have good opportunities to progress from entry to higher level programmes, vocational qualifications and employment. Learners

- appreciate the range of enrichment opportunities offered within their learning programmes or the wider college.
- Partnerships and collaborative working within communities are outstanding. The college delivers family learning programmes in a large number of primary schools. Effective partnerships have been developed with a wide range of community organisations, and with local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, probation services, and a host of other partners to ensure that provision is well targeted, in particular to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups.
- Support for learners is good. A wide range of support services provides on-programme and pastoral support for learners. This includes the effective use of one-to-one tutor support, group tutorials, and specialist support. Staff know their learners very well and, in addition to formal support mechanisms, provide extensive informal support and regular contact outside lessons.
- Leadership and management are good. Heads of faculty manage their teams well. They develop provision very effectively to meet local priorities. Despite changes in the college structure following mergers, the area has maintained a good quality of provision. Plans to improve attendance and retention on courses where this was an issue are having a positive impact in the current year. Teaching staff have appropriate experience and specialist qualifications.
- Safeguarding is outstanding. Staff are well trained and are very knowledgeable about health and safety and safeguarding practices. This includes providing a regular focus on learners' personal safety and encouraging the learners to develop strategies for keeping safe.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college recruits well from some of the most disadvantaged communities in the city. College staff reflect well the profiles of the community it serves. Staff understand the needs and aspirations of their learners, and promote a culture of tolerance and respect. Programmes and timetables are designed well to attract and retain hard to reach learners.
- Engagement with users to support and promote improvements is good. Staff gain extensive verbal feedback from learners in addition to the regular surveys carried out by the college. Actions following feedback are widely reported to learners in formats which are accessible to all. Learners appreciate that their views are valued and acted upon.
- Self-assessment processes are satisfactory. The provision is covered by a number of faculty self-assessment reports, some of which are more analytical than others. Inspectors' findings broadly agreed with the college judgements; however, they found less outstanding teaching than reported by the college.

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- Ensure success rates for learners on level two literacy and numeracy courses improve by providing teaching, in classes with mixed levels of ability, which provides suitable challenge for all the learners.
- Improve tutors' ability to develop individual learning plans which focus on learners longer term aims, as well as their more immediate, goals.
- Share best practice in self-assessment across the faculties to ensure all reports are equally analytical, and ensure that lesson observations accurately identify the quality of teaching.

## **Business, retail and finance – Employer provision**

**Grade 3** 

#### Context

40. The college provides apprenticeships in business administration, retail, financial services, customer service and management. There were 226 apprentices in 2010/11 and numbers have increased significantly in 2011/12. Currently, 88% of apprentices participate at intermediate level and 12% at advanced level. All training and assessment takes place in the workplace. A further 365 trainees participated in stand-alone NVQs delivered in the workplace in 2010/11. Three quarters of employer responsive delivery is subcontracted to six secondary providers.

- Success rates for NVQ work-based training programmes are good in administration and outstanding in business management, with a high proportion gaining the qualification within the planned timescale. Success rates for apprentices were below the national average in 2010/11 and too few completed on time. However, in the current year apprentices are making satisfactory progress. In-year retention and success rates indicate significant improvement following changes to initial assessment and delivery. Progression rates from level 2 to level 3 by trainees completing stand-alone NVQs are good. There is limited progression from intermediate to advanced level apprenticeships.
- Trainees develop a good range of key skills, as a result of assessors' skilful embedding of this work within the apprenticeship occupation. For example, a group of intermediate team leading apprentices demonstrated their information technology skills through the production of leaflets and posters for display in the workplace.
- Work-based trainees feel safe. They have a good understanding of health and safety in the workplace and demonstrate safe working practices. Learners know who to report any concerns to.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Assessors use a good range of teaching and learning methods which are adapted to meet the needs of the business and the learner. A retail assessor made effective links to the store manager's own staff training plans on product shrinkage to assist the learners' understanding. In the better sessions assessors use open and follow-up questioning techniques effectively to test understanding and prompt trainees to justify their answers with relevant examples. In a few sessions there is insufficient stretch and challenge. College-based materials are not systematically available online to support those wishing to catch up or extend their learning.
- Staff are suitably qualified and demonstrate appropriate vocational expertise. Trainees confirm that assessors' visits are frequent. They use email as an effective means of communication with their assessors between visits. Short and medium term targets are agreed and most learners achieve them. Some

staff use digital recorders to capture professional discussions and witness testimonies. Review documentation provides the learner with a clear and regular indication of completion of each component of their programme, though this is not used consistently by all staff. Internal verification is robust and reports from awarding bodies acknowledge the quality of assessment.

- The broad range of programmes meets the needs of learners and employers well. Improved initial assessment and induction procedures are now helping to ensure that trainees are enrolled on appropriate programmes, a major factor in the low timely apprenticeship success rates in the previous year.
- Partnerships with employers are outstanding. Programme delivery and content are tailored to suit the needs of the business as well as the needs of the employee. A number of employers actively participate in aspects of curriculum design. A large building society chose intermediate and advanced level units to match specific job roles and responsibilities. Employers are positive about the quality of training provided.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Regular and frequent visits by assessors to learners are supplemented by visits from the college's employability team when learners require additional or specialist learning support or key skills assessments. Assessors discuss career progression with trainees during reviews and employers are aware of the progression opportunities available to their staff. Trainees value the commitment and support from their assessors.
- Curriculum management is effective. Strategies to improve outcomes for apprentices are leading to marked improvements this year. Monitoring of staff performance against targets is systematic and robustly followed up by managers. Workplace assessors now participate in professional development to achieve appropriate qualifications in literacy and numeracy, an area for development identified in the quality improvement plan. Self-assessment is broadly accurate though it would benefit from specific grade judgements about performance within separate subject areas.
- The promotion of safeguarding is good. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. It is reviewed during the 12 weekly reviews, but there is limited promotion by assessors during routine workplace visits.

- Carefully monitor the effectiveness of improvement strategies aimed at increasing overall and timely success rates on apprenticeships.
- Ensure that college-based online resources to support learning and assessment are readily available to work-based trainees.
- Develop the self-assessment processes to enable judgements to be made more effectively at subject area level.

# Information about the inspection

- 41. Six of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and eight additional inspectors, assisted by the college's senior deputy principal as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding bodies, the report from the inspectorate's monitoring visit, and data on learners and their achievement.
- 42. 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.

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## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

## **Leeds City 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

	1	1			1	
Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive	Social and personal development
Approximate number of enrolled learners						
Full-time learners	8229	25	5509	2695	0	0
Part-time learners	19212	1111	1195	7732	7735	1439
Overall effectiveness	2	1	2	2	2	1
Capacity to improve	2					
Outcomes for learners	3	1	3	3	3	1
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3					
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3					
How well do learners progress?						
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3					
How safe do learners feel?	1					
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2					
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2					
Quality of provision	2		2	2	2	
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2					
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2					
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1					
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2					
Leadership and management	2		2	2	2	
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1					
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	2					
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	1					
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2					
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2					
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3					
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2					

<sup>\*</sup>where applicable to the type of provision

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