

Brooksby Melton College

Specialist college

Inspection dates	13-16 November 2012		
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2	
Overall enectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3	
Outcomes for learners	Good-2		
Quality of teaching, learning and as	Good-2		
Effectiveness of leadership and ma	Good-2		

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Most students make good progress when compared with their starting points.
- Students' achievement of qualifications is above average for similar colleges, as are the high grades they achieve on advanced-level courses.
- The large majority of practical and theory lessons are of good quality, which helps students develop vocational skills and skills for employment.
- Support for students, particularly those with additional learning needs, is very effective in helping them to achieve their goals.
- Management actions are very effective in improving the range of courses on offer, the quality of lessons and practical sessions, and the resources available to support learning.
- Leaders and managers identify accurately what is good about the college and what needs improving. They are prompt and largely effective at raising standards.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough lessons stretch or challenge the most able students sufficiently well.
- Apprentices' achievements on agriculture, horticulture and business courses and the quality of training and learning require improvement.
- The development of students' English and mathematics skills and subject vocabulary is not routine in all lessons.
- Students' personal targets are not always helpful in informing them of what they need to do to improve further.
- Teachers do not plan sufficiently well for students to develop their knowledge of cultural differences.
- Recent changes to improve the few underperforming areas are at an early stage.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teachers' regular use of a wide range of assessment techniques in lessons. Ensure that teachers use these to check frequently on students' learning and progress and reshape their lessons appropriately to accelerate the pace, increase the level of challenge and deepen understanding where appropriate.
- Promote students' development of English and mathematics by reinforcing correct use of language, technical vocabulary spelling, reading, writing and use of mathematical skills in subject-based lessons. Ensure that teachers correct spelling and grammar consistently in written work.
- Sharpen the effectiveness of students' short-term targets in individual learning plans to help them accelerate the progress they make.
- Make full use of opportunities to develop students' learning about cultural differences.
- Ensure the management of apprenticeships is more effective by monitoring their progress rigorously, strengthening the link between training and assessment and ensuring employers and learners understand the programme fully.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners

- Most students make good progress, with more students on advanced level courses achieving higher grades passes than nationally. Workplace learners' outcomes are good as they make very good progress and achieve well within target completion dates. Poor management and planning of apprenticeships have hampered learners' progress on agriculture, horticulture and business programmes. Apprentices' outcomes require improvement.
- Attendance and punctuality are good. Students work well independently and co-operatively in groups, in their lessons and practical sessions. The quality of work students produce in college and through work-place learning is largely good. Students say they enjoy attending college and they value the expertise and support of their teachers.
- The proportion of students who complete and achieve substantial and shorter courses has improved since the last inspection, significantly so at intermediate-level for both younger students and adults. Success rates are above those for similar colleges.
- Performance declined on childcare, engineering and hairdressing courses. Managers have taken appropriate actions to improve this weaker provision. New courses, such as a CACHE diploma in childcare and a one-year BTEC diploma in event management better meet the needs of students and their plans.
- Female and male students achieve at similar rates, other than on qualifications for functional skills where female students' pass rates were higher in 2012. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who receive additional learning support achieve well. The numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds are too low to identify any significant gaps in achievement.
- While students' pass rates on functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics are high, teachers do not routinely develop these skills sufficiently well in vocational lessons. Substantive plans are in place to introduce a progression route to GCSEs in these subjects.
- An increasing range of additional courses and activities enable students to demonstrate and develop their knowledge and skills well across most subject areas. These include work

placements with local businesses and organisations, as well as through the college's own commercial operations such as the equestrian centre and events planning service.

- Good examples of students improving their employability skills well include: land-based students caring for and showing livestock, managing the large estate grounds and hosting equestrian competitions; performing arts and media students designing and running shows for the public and taking part in professional workshops and master classes; hairdressing and beauty therapy students gaining a customer service qualification very successfully which usefully complements their main course.
- The large majority of students progress to higher-level courses, at the college, with another provider or at a higher education institution. A substantial proportion of students successfully gain places on performing arts courses at university and drama schools. Managers keep detailed records of students' intended employment destinations. The collection of firm data for actual destinations is at an early stage.

The quality	of teaching,	learning and	assessment
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- Most college-based students acquire knowledge securely and gain good vocational skills because the large majority of teaching is good. The rising standards of teaching since the last inspection align with good outcomes for students and increasing success rates. However, most lessons do not challenge middle and high ability students to make rapid progress.
- Teachers carefully plan most lessons to ensure they contain relevant learning activities which interest and engage students. Students are thoroughly involved in their learning including tackling tasks in pairs or small groups, or contributing to discussions by sharing their experiences. They often learn well by doing practical tasks such as farming activities on the college estate or taking part in performances in the college theatre. Such activities work well to reinforce theory learning.
- The mutual respectful relationship between students and teachers is nearly always productive in helping students to learn. Students value teachers' expertise and specialist knowledge. Teachers identify carefully the barriers to learning that may exist for each student and are particularly effective in alleviating them. However, learning about cultural differences is less effective.
- Teachers use information and learning technology widely to support learning. Considerable investment has ensured that students have good access to technology. Students and teachers use the information held in the virtual learning environment frequently and well.
- Learning resources to support teaching are often of good quality. Well-advanced plans are in place at the Melton campus to improve teaching accommodation, in particular for dance facilities.
- Teachers keep students well informed of their assessment schedule. They benefit from teachers' good support and timetabled schedules for completing assessments. Teachers plan assignments carefully. Students receive mostly high standard feedback, although teachers do not pay enough attention to correcting spelling and grammar. Students appreciate the mostly very useful verbal feedback.
- Teachers' use of assessment during learning activities, such as through probing questions or by students' peer and self-assessment, is often less effective. This limits teachers' ability to gauge accurately the full extent of students' learning and progress. Accordingly, while students' progress is often good it is rarely better than this. Teachers often miss opportunities to accelerate students' progress.
- Staff provide a high level of care for students. In particular, the well-resourced provision of additional learning support is highly effective. A considerable number of students receive very effective individual and/or in-class support to meet a wide range of needs. Teachers and support

assistants work closely. They use individual learning plans very effectively to monitor students' progress.

- Staff monitor students' progress closely. They intervene quickly if students are at risk of underperformance. The range of uses of short-term targets helps students increase the breadth and depth of their learning. Targets are often used effectively where students negotiate these at the start of lessons and work towards them. However, short-term targets set in personal learning plans are mostly too general and rarely helpful. The use of target grades to guide and provide challenge for students is underdeveloped.
- The quality of information, advice and guidance has improved. Changes to what the college offers, allows staff to match the more able to courses that meet their needs. Students receive better information about the demands of course and staff prepare them well for their studies. Most students are confident about their career aims and where they can progress.
- Initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy is prompt and comprehensive. Teachers use the outcomes from assessments constructively in planning learning. The team of specialist teachers provide well-structured and very effective teaching of functional skills, which leads to good results for this area. However, reinforcement of language use, mathematical skills and reading and writing skills is inconsistent across mainstream teaching.
- Teaching and assessment for apprentices requires improvement. The quality and effectiveness varies across subjects and settings. Managers have only recently started to improve the consistency in assessment practice and ensure that staff plan and track learning. Where they have resolved shortcomings, for example, the planning and teaching of functional skills, it is now well organised in most subjects. However, in several subjects, learning and assessment remains disjointed and ineffective.

Animal care and equine studies

Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+

- Strategies to improve outcomes for students are proving successful. Most are at or above national rates for similar colleges. Students are well informed about the requirements of their courses, which courses meet their needs and aspirations well.
- Teaching, learning, attendance and punctuality are good. Teachers prepare lessons well and use learning activities to meet well students' different needs and abilities. The good quality lessons are lively, interactive and enjoyable, and incorporate group work and imaginative visual activities, for example, the use of flip books, models and felt shapes to explain aspects of biology.
- Teachers use well practical resources and vocational examples to reinforce theory. Classroom management is good. Teachers have productive working relations with students, who value their expertise.
- The use of directed questions and small wipe boards to check learning and maintain students' involvement is good. Students are confident, they enjoy lessons and develop approaches to learning independently very effectively, particularly in riding lessons. Attention to spelling and grammar is good, for example, where students produce individual dictionaries of frequently used words. During recap and assessment within the lessons, students demonstrate a good level of attainment.
- A few lessons have insufficient pace and challenge. Teachers' use of interactive learning technology to promote learning lacks imagination.

- Staff plan assessments well. Students value specific sessions to support assessments where teachers set clear targets set. Most of these targets students achieve. The writing of assignments is clear with good links to teaching and learning in lessons. A minority of assessment methods are innovative, for example, where students used a sequence of modelling clay replicas to produce an animation illustrating cell division. Assessors give comprehensive verbal and written feedback with clear indications of how students can improve their work and achieve better grades.
- A good range of high quality work placements, including Twycross Zoo, the Defence Animal Centre and the Dog's Trust, enable students to develop skills to prepare them for future employment. Readiness for work is also enhanced through a combination of routine care and cleaning duties in the equestrian and animal care facilities, and in practical lessons which enable students to gain additional qualifications such as British Horse Society examinations and the Work Skills Award.
- Students develop good practical skills during work placements. Employers report that students improve their confidence, self-reliance and employability. Employers complete a report on each student on work placement, but this does not include an assessment of their vocational skill levels.
- While learners enjoy the routine horse and animal husbandry duties which assist them in developing vocational skills, a minority of tasks lack pace and challenge. Staff do not routinely set targets for students and they do not always receive feedback on their learning and skill development. Progress to supervisory roles or tasks which are more challenging is limited.
- Students feel safe and know where to seek support. Teachers challenge appropriately students' attitudes and ideas during lessons, but they miss opportunities to develop students' understanding of different beliefs and attitudes to animals.
- Staff are positive and highly motivated. They feel involved in the work of the department and value the management style which promotes good teamwork and cooperation between equine studies and animal care. Staff are well qualified and have sound industrial experience. Teachers are highly aware of departmental targets, particularly those around students who are at risk of leaving their courses and the action to support them to succeed.

Manufacturing technologies and Motor Vehicle	
Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+ Other work based learning	Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment for students on motor vehicle courses at college and for trainees on meat manufacturing courses in the work place are good, which the high success rates for all courses reflects. A high proportion of students attain valuable additional skills to improve their employability, such as welding and employability skills.
- College-based students thoroughly enjoy their learning and respond positively to the challenges of their course. They develop excellent vocational skills, which they perform to industry standards, and have clear plans for future progression. Teachers usefully develop students' social and personal skills in functional skills classes, where they cover very effectively topics such as men's health issues and waste recycling.
- Teachers and assessors are highly qualified and use their extensive vocational experience well to extend students' knowledge by relating learning to current industry practices very effectively. They have high expectations for their students and manage their behaviour well in lessons, promoting good attitudes to learning. Teachers manage additional support staff very effectively to meet students' needs and to ensure success, particularly at foundation level.

- Teachers plan the majority of lessons well. They make them interesting with a variety of activities which promotes learning. These include interactive e-learning and written comprehension exercises completed in pairs. Most lesson plans do not use the information recorded in the detailed and comprehensive group profiles consistently well to set challenging individual targets for students. The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning is underdeveloped, particularly in vocational theory lessons.
- Students' development of English and mathematics is good in functional skills lessons. However, vocational teachers do not regularly check and correct spelling errors in theory lessons. Teachers develop numeracy well in the large majority of vocational lessons, such as in one lesson where learners manipulated formulae confidently to calculate voltage using Ohm's Law. In this lesson, the teacher expertly used stimulating interactive e-learning software, accessible to the learners via the virtual learning environment.
- Staff manage assessment of learning well for both college and work based learners. Portfolios of work are comprehensive and meet awarding body standards well. Teachers use a good range of assessment techniques to assess students and work-based learners' progress and provide them with detailed verbal feedback on their progress. However, not all written feedback informs them how to improve sufficiently well.
- Students and work-based learners feel well supported by their teachers and assessors. College-based students receive regular personal reviews which are very effective in ensuring they remain on target to complete their training. Their personal targets are too general and do not take into account their individual needs or how they are progressing sufficiently well, particularly for the more able learners.
- Learning environments in the college are well resourced. Learners adopt safe working practices in the workplace and in the college's motor vehicle workshops. They keep the facilities exceptionally clean and tidy. Learners benefit from using a good range of high quality hand tools to perform tasks and develop their skills. Advanced-level motor vehicle students do not have access to the required diagnostic equipment to complete their training for testing engine management component and analysis of exhaust gas.

Performing arts

Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+

- Teaching, learning and assessment on performing arts programmes are good as reflected by students' success rates and achievement on their courses. A substantial proportion of students gain high grades across the different subject specialisms of acting, dance and musical theatre. The majority of students progress to further study and higher education, including drama schools.
- The largely good quality lessons and workshops enable students to develop very effective skills in self-directed learning, such as organising rehearsals and working in groups out of timetabled sessions. Students have high aspirations for achievement and enjoy learning.
- Good support from staff in individual sessions and tutorials and in additional skill development sessions is very effective in encouraging students to achieve to their potential and acquire skills in the performing arts.
- Students demonstrate good practical performance skills. They are well disciplined and respectful towards each other, demonstrate confidence in their abilities and collaborate in teamwork very effectively.
- Most lessons and workshops challenge students very well to work to their potential to gain new skills across the three specialisms. Students contribute enthusiastically to a stimulating range of

tasks and learning activities. They display good listening skills, give peer support in a respectful manner and critique each other's work sensitively. In one musical theatre lesson, a student led a vocal warm-up exercise, which was warmly appreciated by peers.

- Students benefit from well designed and organised practical and written assessments, which promote opportunities for students to improve. Very clear tracking and monitoring of performance heightens students' focus on improvement and the achievement of high grades, which they value.
- Very constructive feedback on students' skills has the best impact when teachers pinpoint accurately the weaker aspects of performance and provide a strong critique to develop students' skills further. In a few lessons, teachers direct feedback at the whole group and do not provide individual actions for each student to improve.
- In a few theory lessons, teachers miss opportunities to pose challenging questions to check students' knowledge sufficiently well. Students' use of technical vocabulary in self-evaluation of work is underdeveloped. The quality of their written work varies.
- Assessment of additional learning needs is effective and support for English and mathematics is put in place promptly through additional classes. Students aim for functional skills qualifications in these lessons and are largely successful. Teachers do not develop students' technical language, spelling, grammar or calculation skills routinely in other lessons.
- Teachers provide a good range of in-house dance, acting and musical theatre companies to create a realistic working environment. Students benefit from increasing links in the community, such as with the local theatre, but have few opportunities to attend work placements or experience wider links and trends with the arts industry nationally.
- Performance spaces, studios and classrooms are adequate but uninspiring, with few displays or celebrations of learner work. While information learning technology benefits learning satisfactorily, opportunities to film students' performances to aid better reflection are underdeveloped.
- In lessons and workshops, students explore issues of the arts, disability and gender sensitively.

Business studies

Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+ Apprenticeships Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning are mostly good for college- based students on business and customer services courses, which supports the improving outcomes. Students develop sound analytical skills and discuss business concepts in depth. Customer service students reflect thoughtfully on examples of good and poor practice and test their ideas in the college's hairdressing and beauty salon. Pass rates for these students are high.
- In the best lessons, expectations are high. Students evaluate each other's work accurately and extend their learning well through confident presentations. Teachers do not always give the more able students tasks to challenge their abilities sufficiently, but they demonstrate good leadership skills when working in groups. Presentations using information learning technology are uninspiring on occasion. The structure of the business course limits the time for self-study and use of the college's facilities.
- The less effective lessons are too teacher-led with a slow pace. Tasks lack creativity and do not stretch students sufficiently. The college's experienced lead practitioners support well plans to improve weaker teaching and learning.
- College-based students work at appropriate levels and receive clear feedback on how to achieve higher grades. Teachers pay good attention to spelling and grammatical errors. They assess

frequently through probing questions and answers in lessons and individual tutorials. Students review their personal targets regularly through the virtual learning environment.

- Students benefit from well-structured and challenging additional learning support to help them succeed. The support students receive enables them to contribute more effectively in lessons and complete assignments to the standard required. Clear identification of students' support needs through the effective group profiles teachers use to plan learning effectively. Learners speak favourably about the support they receive from recently recruited teachers and assessors.
- Business and customer service students are able to progress from foundation to higher-level courses in the college. The advanced-level business events management course commenced in September 2012 and students have insufficient links with local employers and are not involved in work experience or realistic business projects. The learning environment for college-based students is uninspiring and does not convey an appropriate business focus.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity well for students on the college-based business course. Students and staff respect each other's differences sensitively. Teachers listen to feedback from students and make appropriate improvements. For example, students are better prepared for course assignments in the weeks leading up to the submission deadline and assignment tasks are broken down into manageable activities.
- Insufficient teaching and coaching for business apprentices contributed to a decline in these learners' achievements. Learners spend too much time alone writing answers to questions without sufficient professional discussion or peer reflection on business principles and theory. Learners make slow progress in part due to inconsistent assessment and insufficient monitoring of the apprenticeship programme.
- College managers fail to keep employers fully updated with staff changes and examination results. In most cases, functional skills are delayed to the end of the apprenticeship which has slowed progress. Apprentices and employers are not clear of the arrangements for the functional skills examinations.
- Large numbers of learners with a subcontractor fail to complete their work-based learning programme and for many destinations are unknown. The management of subcontractors is now robust.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	

- Leaders and managers' aspirations for their students and themselves are high. An ambitious and regularly updated three-year strategic plan emphasises that improved teaching, learning and assessment are key priorities for the college. The plan includes all aspects of college work, with a strong focus on improvements for students and learning. This is exemplified in the improvement plan which prioritises increased support for students and time for subject area managers to improve their provision further.
- Governors successfully hold the Principal to account for delivering a range of key performance indicators that support this plan. In the past year 29 of the 30 indicators have been achieved or on target for completion. Staff throughout the organisation are clear about the aims of the college, and supportive of them.
- Leaders and managers resolved successfully most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, for example, good feedback in lessons and good support ensures that students are aware of how much progress they are making and what they need to improve. The quality of students' targets in their individual learning plans requires further improvement.
- Managers expect staff and students to perform to a high standard. To this end, lead
 practitioners work alongside teachers to improve practice and coach them in techniques to
 promote better learning. Success rates and high grades show marked improvement since the
 last inspection.

- A variety of very effective performance management strategies has improved the consistency of provision across all areas of the college. Better monitoring has reduced short-term staff absence significantly in the past two years. Appraisal interviews focus very successfully on specific role competencies, raising awareness of the importance of the skills necessary for effective teaching, learning and management.
- Relevant and regular professional development includes sharing good practice across the college and subject areas. Teachers benefit from continuing development for teaching, learning and assessment by lead practitioners, programme team leaders and external training. Managers do not use sufficiently well the outcomes from lesson observations conducted by an external agency to identify cross-college staff development activities.
- Staff contribute well to self-assessment. The college self-assessment report is largely accurate, critical and uses good quality data. The use of learners and employers' comments is good. The report leads to a detailed quality improvement plan that managers monitor regularly against a realistically challenging timetable.
- Newly appointed programme leaders monitor information on students' progress and learning activities more closely, but it is too early to measure the impact of these latest arrangements.
- Management of the range of courses on offer to learners is good. Leaders and managers are making good progress towards providing learning programmes from foundation to higher-levels in six specialist areas; business studies, performing arts, media, land-based, equine and animal care programmes. Where appropriate, for example, in performing arts and media, managers work closely in partnerships with local schools and other training providers to avoid duplicating provision or resources.
- Programme team managers use their expertise to devise relevant and challenging development priorities in their subject areas. The management of subcontractors is good. The monitoring of the progress of land-based and business work-based learners has been ineffective, and communications with employers of business apprentices has been poor. From this year, management for work-based learning is with the subject area to which it belongs. It is too early to judge the effect of this on students' outcomes.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory through themed weeks across the college. Managers identify gaps in performance of different groups accurately, and are successful in narrowing these gaps. In lessons and tutorials, students learn to act respectfully towards each other, and how to avoid and challenge bullying or harassing behaviour.
- The college meets its statutory requirements in safeguarding learners. It has particularly strong links with the local safeguarding bodies, and acts promptly to identify and protect students at potential risk.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Brooksby Melton College									
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2		2	2	3	3			
Outcomes for learners	2		2	2	3	2			
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2		2	2	3	3			
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2		2	2	3	3			

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Animal care	2
Equine studies	2
Manufacturing technologies	2
Motor Vehicle	2
Performing arts	2
Business Studies	3

Provider details

Brooksby Melton College				
Type of provider Specialist designated institution				
Age range of learners	14+			
Approximate number of all learners over the previous	Full-time: 840			
full contract year	Part-time: 1268			
Principal/CEO	Mr Chris Ball			
Date of previous inspection	February 2010			
Website address	www.brooksbymelton.ac.uk			

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or Level 2 below		Level 3		Level 4 and above			
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18 19+ 16-18 19+		16-18 19+		16-18	19+		
Full-time	65	26	143	47	492	85	0	0
Part-time	34	12	81	14	28	49	0	8
Number of apprentices by	Inte	rmedia	te	Adva	nced		Highe	r
Apprenticeship level and age				16-18 15			·18 ′A	19+ N/A
Number of learners aged 14-16 Number of community learners Number of employability learners	23 N/A N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	 Distinctive Training Ltd Workforce Training & Development Ltd The Olive Grove Cookery School Limited Mobilis Consultancy (Leicester) Limited – One Take AXLR8 Charnwood 20:20 Harrow International Business School. 							

Additional socio-economic information

Brooksby Melton College is a small specialist land-based college. It operates on four campuses, two at Brooksby and two in Melton. The Brooksby campus is an 880-acre estate and working farm with a range of commercial activity, including an equestrian and plant centre. Following a typhoon in late June 2012 the rapid rebuilding of teaching accommodation on the Brooksby site ensured students starting in September were not disadvantaged. In Leicestershire, the percentage of pupils who gain more than five grade A*-C passes at GCSE including English and mathematics is above the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is considerably lower than the regional and national averages. The college offers courses in most subject areas.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Paula Heaney HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the Assistant Principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012

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