

Hartlepool College

General further education college

Inspection dates		25 February–1 March 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Inadequate-4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This college requires improvement because:

- In 2011/12 students did not achieve as well as they could and too many of them left their courses early without completing their qualifications.
- Pass rates and the proportion of high grades are too low on GCSE English and mathematics qualifications and in functional skills.
- Poor attendance and punctuality in too many classes is hindering learning.
- Although there is much good and better teaching, the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently high enough and there is too much variation both within and between subject areas. Target-setting for students is insufficiently challenging to enable them to progress as well as they should.
- Too many changes took place at the college at the same time and there was insufficient monitoring of the college's performance during this period. This resulted in a decline from the college's previously good levels of performance, although this is now being remedied.
- There is insufficient rigour in the challenge given to curriculum managers and not enough checks on underpinning evidence to support judgements on performance.

This college has the following strengths:

- Training and outcomes in work-based learning are good for the majority of apprentices.
- Students are supported well and enjoy the excellent college facilities.
- Links with the community and employers are highly effective and play a significant role in shaping the curriculum and responding to local and national skills' needs.
- Committed and well-informed governors who provide a good level of challenge.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Raise success rates on college-based courses by ensuring all students are set challenging targets based on prior attainment information, initial assessment results and taking account of their previous experience. Ensure learners attend regularly and punctually. Motivate learners to exceed their targets and to aspire to higher levels.
- Increase the proportion of high-quality teaching by ensuring that all teachers plan teaching strategies which engage students and meet different levels of ability. Increase the level of challenge for all students in lessons. Support all teachers to provide, as the best ones do already, a wide range of activities that engage and interest students.
- Make better use of the skills of good and outstanding teachers within the college to develop teaching and learning practice more widely so that the overall quality of teaching improves and there is more consistency in students' learning experiences.
- Raise the pass rates and the proportion of high grades on English and mathematics qualifications. Revise the current literacy and numeracy strategy to ensure that all teachers take responsibility for developing students' English and mathematical skills. Share the good practice that exists in sport to embed English into vocational lessons. Provide support for teachers so they can help students to enjoy developing their mathematical skills.
- Challenge managers more robustly and check underpinning evidence when assessing college performance and reviewing progress on actions taken to improve performance. Focus more on the evaluation of outcomes of actions taken to improve. Make more effective use of the accurate and widely available college data to set specific and challenging targets for further improvement. Ensure that action plans are sufficiently detailed and include essential milestones for measuring progress.
- Encourage the wider promotion of equality and diversity in lessons by improving the knowledge and confidence of staff in discussing and debating equality and diversity themes. Ensure curriculum planning incorporates the promotion of equality and diversity consistently and that naturally occurring opportunities are fully exploited to further develop students' knowledge and to challenge stereotypical views.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Inadequate
------------------------------	------------

- Success rates for college-based students on long courses have declined and were very low in 2011/12. For students aged 16 to 18, success rates declined at all levels, markedly so at intermediate and advanced where they are significantly below the national average. For adults, success rates are also very low. After rising to well above average in 2010/11, results on short courses fell in 2011/12 and are low.
- The proportion of students who remained on their programme fell in 2011/12 and was low for students aged 16 to 18 on advanced-level courses and for adults at all levels. Although pass rates improved at foundation level in 2011/12, overall pass rates fell to around national average levels for college-based students.
- The overall success rate for different types of vocational qualifications in subject areas varies widely. For example, in information and communication technology success rates increased dramatically in 2011/12 and were high. In contrast, success rates in many other subject areas fell to well below average levels. It is a similarly variable pattern for students taking AS- and A-level courses. The proportion of students achieving functional skills qualifications is low, as is the proportion gaining high grades of A* to C in GCSE mathematics and/or English.

- Success rates for apprentices, who comprise around one quarter of the college's provision, although declined from the high levels of 2009/10, remain good. This picture, though, masks variability in performance. In areas such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, engineering and construction, success rates including completion within the planned time, are good. In a few other areas, for example leisure, travel and tourism, apprentices' success rates are low.
- The majority of students who complete their courses make the progress expected of them based on their starting points. Students on AS-level courses and on the advanced-level subsidiary diploma make inadequate progress. The proportion of high grades on too many courses is low.
- The overall standard of current students' work requires improvement although there is an increasing amount that is good. For example, in catering, students develop good culinary skills and increase their self-confidence. In sports' courses, a strong focus on developing students' literacy is resulting in a better standard of written work. However, in many other subjects students produce work that just meets course requirements because they are insufficiently challenged to work to a higher standard.
- The number of students from minority ethnic groups in the college is too small to discern any trends in performance. There are also no identifiable trends in the performance of males and females. However, achievement gaps exist at different levels of qualifications and between different subjects on college-based courses. Actions taken by the college to close the gaps are beginning to have an impact. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve consistently better than their peers.
- Teachers pay much attention to improving students' employability skills by helping to build their confidence and self-esteem. Students enjoy coming to college and increasing numbers of them progress onto higher-level courses and into employment; apprentices make particularly good progress into full-time employment. However, low attendance and poor punctuality are factors that have gone unchecked in many college-based lessons and are preventing significant numbers of students from succeeding as well as they could.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
---	----------------------

- A large proportion of lessons are good or better. However, there are still too many lessons that require improvement and a small proportion that is inadequate. Apprentices receive good training on workplace learning programmes. In the better college-based lessons the balance between teacher input and student activity is well managed. Teachers plan lessons well and use a variety of learning techniques that engage students, including interesting, varied and relevant tasks which develop understanding and skills and enable students to make good progress.
- In less successful lessons teachers often talk at length for too long, and although their exposition may be lively and engaging they rely too heavily on students listening carefully without thorough checks of learning and understanding. Questioning is often perfunctory and although most teachers use questioning to ensure all students contribute, they miss opportunities to ask students to justify their answers, encourage deeper thinking or offer more eloquent answers that might also develop spoken English skills. Teachers are also sometimes too effusive with their praise for responses that are not explicit enough.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good in many lessons. The best teachers are highly skilled at picking up clues from students and deal quickly and unobtrusively with inattention. Such teachers are explicit about their expectations, set clear time limits for tasks that are appropriately demanding and establish a good pace, using every opportunity to develop English and mathematical skills.
- In lessons where students are set to work independently on projects the presence of the teacher does not always add much value. Interim deadlines and targets are sometimes too vague so that while some work rapidly and productively others are very slow and easily distracted.
- Helpful initial advice and guidance are provided to ensure that many students choose appropriate courses and this is resulting in many more students staying to complete their

courses. Teachers care deeply about their students' well-being but they are sometimes too ready to condone absence without fully explaining to students the likely impact on achievement.

- Although initial assessments of students' literacy and numeracy skills are carried out, the resulting information is not used systematically in lesson planning. In some areas pen portraits produced by teachers show a good knowledge of students' capabilities but this rarely results in planning or delivery tailored specifically to individual needs.
- Formal assessments are managed efficiently. More formative assessment is of variable quality. The quality of marking is variable with some that gives constructive feedback explaining how work can be improved. Target-setting is often not sufficiently aspirational or specific to individuals. The range of methods of assessment is often limited, for example, there is little use of peer assessment.
- Students' skills in English and mathematics are not being developed consistently across the college. Many teachers pay careful attention to developing vocabulary and specialist terminology, for example, through the use of glossaries. Terminology is explained clearly but teachers sometimes make too many assumptions about students' understanding of unfamiliar words. Where opportunities to develop mathematical skills occur naturally, as in engineering, these are developed effectively but teachers are not generally adept at making the most of opportunities.
- Resources in the new building are very good and are valued by students. There are some very good examples of the use of information and learning technology (ILT) to enhance learning, for example in the creative arts. However, in other lessons teachers rely on text-based presentations even when the subject matter lends itself to visual material or a more innovative approach. The virtual learning environment is well developed in some areas with a wide range of materials and links for students to use outside lessons. In other areas materials are limited, for example, to lesson presentations and assignment briefs.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement because it is inconsistent, with examples of both very good and poor practice. While some teachers' understanding of equality and diversity is sound they lack confidence in incorporating this into their teaching or in tackling students' prejudices effectively.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and this is mirrored in students' success rates on college-based courses, which are below average, although they are improving.
- There are pockets of good and outstanding teaching and this is resulting in better than expected progress made by students. In the best lessons students' understanding is checked frequently through probing questioning by the teacher. Opportunities to challenge the more-able students are fully exploited and students participate well.
- In the good or better lessons, students develop workplace skills that enhance their employability prospects. In aerospace lessons, students, working to strict Ministry of Defence standards, carry out routine maintenance tasks on static aircraft in the well-equipped workshops. In other engineering classes students apply up-to-date theory to practical skills very effectively. For instance, apprentices in one class designed logic circuits which have a direct application to their industrial work
- In the less effective lessons, and there are too many of these, teachers talk for too long and learning objectives are not sufficiently ambitious to ensure students achieve their best. Planned activities are routine and do not meet individual students' needs. In these lessons, students are insufficiently engaged and as a result they lose interest and progress slows.
- Many students develop good mathematical skills. Subject tutors support the development of learners' mathematical skills effectively in both practical and in theory classes. There are missed

opportunities in many lessons to improve literacy skills. For example, there was only limited discussion of new technical terms introduced into theory lessons.

- Many more learners are progressing into employment or higher education than in previous years. The department offers a good selection of short courses to enhance students' employability prospects. Progression of students completing courses in aerospace engineering is particularly high. The recent appointment of a business development manager has resulted in new and expanding links with companies; students are benefiting from this through the creation of over 50 new apprenticeships.
- The promotion of equality and diversity through teaching and learning is variable. In most instances it is not fully captured in the lesson plan but promoted informally within classes. Attention to health and safety is good and helps to prepare students well for future employment.
- Resources are good and students value highly the access to equipment, which is of current industrial standard. For example, in aerospace engineering lessons, there are two jet aircraft and a helicopter plus numerous engines for students' use. All classes are well equipped with ILT, including interactive whiteboards. However, these are not always used imaginatively to enhance learning both in and out of lessons.
- Teachers provide good support for students. Students enjoy college and their lessons, and most attend regularly.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this is reflected in the high success rates, including those completed within the planned time. The college has worked hard to develop its reputation as a high quality and responsive provider of work-based learning in engineering. Feedback from employers is extremely positive about the skills developed during training, which prepares learners fully for the workplace.
- Assessment in the workplace is good with effective questioning techniques used frequently to check apprentices' understanding. Learners speak confidently about the skills and knowledge they have acquired in their specialist area and demonstrate a good understanding of procedures in the workplace. For example, an engineering maintenance apprentice was able to answer all questions about company health and safety procedures confidently and demonstrated a high ability in interpreting job-related information and documentation.
- Learners are allocated workplace mentors who provide effective training and support to develop and refine skills to a very high standard. In one company, a female apprentice was asked to provide support for a fully trained new welding employee in order to ensure that the required company standards were being met.
- Resources at the off-the-job training centre and at the college are excellent and provide a realistic working environment in which learners can develop their practical skills. Learners feel safe in the training environment and develop very good practical skills early in their course, which prepares them fully for the workplace. Learners on fabrication and welding programmes develop a range of skills in addition to the core skills needed to achieve their qualification and produce practical work to a very high standard.
- Theory sessions at college require improvement. The few better lessons are characterised by the use of skilful directed questioning to check learners' understanding and progress. The weaker lessons are characterised by insufficient planning to take account of learners' differing needs and a lack of variety in learning activities resulting in learners becoming distracted and disengaged.
- Individual learners' progress is monitored carefully and appropriate support implemented promptly when necessary. Learners enjoy their training and speak highly of the support and

guidance provided by their trainers who utilise their own experience and skills effectively to motivate learners and encourage them to make progress. Learners are encouraged to reflect on their progress during their regular reviews. However, target-setting for learners is often insufficiently detailed and guidance on how to achieve targets is too general.

- There is insufficient focus on the further development of functional skills in the workplace. In many cases learners' written work included spelling and grammatical errors that had not been corrected by assessors.
- Equality and diversity are insufficiently promoted during progress reviews and lessons. Learners demonstrate only limited understanding of the relevance of equality and diversity in the workplace. Learners have a very good understanding of health and safety and relate this effectively to their roles in the workplace.

Construction and building services Apprenticeships

Good

- Apprentices enjoy good teaching, learning and assessment, which enable the majority of them to achieve successfully. Recession and employment patterns have affected completion rates in a few construction trades particularly at intermediate level in brickwork and carpentry and joinery. Success rates for adult learners taking construction National Vocational Qualifications in the workplace are high. Advice, guidance and support are good and help many intermediate level apprentices to progress on to the advanced apprenticeships.
- Apprentices develop good personal, social and employability skills to improve their effectiveness in the workplace. At work and at the college they are able to work both independently and as part of a team while solving problems, for example, working on complex hip and valley trussed roofing systems.
- Teachers make good use of their own and apprentices' knowledge and industrial experience to help them relate theory to practice. In the better theory lessons teachers use a wide range of teaching and learning activities that engage apprentices. Apprentices in plumbing enjoyed working as a group to share their site experience in how to correctly design, size and consider gas pressures for a central heating system. In a few college-based lessons teachers do not encourage apprentices' involvement in the session or routinely check that learning is taking place. Attendance in a few sessions is low.
- Apprentices complete a high standard of work both in the college and the workplace. Teachers and workplace supervisors reinforce this by regular demonstrations of various techniques and industrial working practices to further develop the apprentices' wide range of skills. Apprentices take part in local, regional and national competitions in which a number have been successful.
- Very effective and timely learner reviews help apprentices make good progress. Workplace assessors and reviewers provide good support and guidance to help learners collect good and wide-ranging evidence to meet course requirements. Most apprentices are set challenging targets. In a minority of cases, targets are not sufficiently specific and do not contain interim measures for monitoring short-term progress towards goals.
- Partnerships with employers are very strong. Employers are well informed of site evidence requirements to support their apprentices and receive frequent progress updates. Employers support apprentices effectively in meeting the range of evidence by moving them around on different contracts and using their supply chain.
- Apprentices feel safe in both the college, which offers a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere, and in the workplace. High emphasis is placed on health and safety, demonstrated through apprentices displaying rigorous attention to safe working practices and their correct use of personal protective equipment.
- The range of resources available to apprentices is very good. Construction and building services workshops are well equipped and maintained to industrial standards. There is extensive, high

quality ILT equipment available for students. Many teachers ensure that resources available on the virtual learning environment add interest and value to apprentices' learning and development outside of the classroom or workplace. However, ILT is not used enough in many lessons where it could enliven learning more effectively.

- Apprentices develop their mathematical skills well in most theoretical and practical sessions. Teachers link activities effectively to realistic work activities, such as joiners calculating the quantities of floor boards, and decorators estimating the number of wallpaper rolls required to decorate a room. Less attention is paid to developing apprentices' literacy skills. Spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes are not systematically corrected by teachers.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of matters relating to equality and diversity, although tutors often miss naturally occurring opportunities to develop their knowledge further.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and this correlates with students' outcomes, which are mixed. Success rates for students on beauty therapy level 1 are low. However, for students on advanced-level hairdressing courses, success rates are above the national average. Compared to a similar point last year, more students are staying to complete their courses. Current students' progress is satisfactory.
- In the best lessons learning and assessment are planned well. Students develop high standards of hairdressing and personal skills. Frequent assessment of students' learning and understanding results in good progress. An imaginative and wide variety of creative work is produced, especially for competitions. For example, styles incorporating magic hats and rabbits, snow queens sprayed white with plaits and twists, volcanos with extravagant colourful hats are all typical of the work students enjoy producing.
- In the weaker lessons planning is insufficiently detailed. Lesson plans do not take into account an evaluation of individuals' ability levels. Teachers ask general questions to the class and do not probe individuals' understanding in sufficient depth. Too many lessons lack pace and challenge and are characterised by the teacher talking for too long. Students are passive and lose interest in learning. Discussion is teacher dominated and they often answer their own questions.
- Practical rooms are well equipped with hairdressing and beauty resources that meet industry standards. Students attend their lessons regularly, but punctuality is often poor. Their lateness is not routinely challenged, and this is hindering the students' development of the realistic work expectations required for the hairdressing and beauty therapy industry.
- Staff have good subject knowledge and vocational experience which many use effectively to enhance and enrich the students' knowledge and understanding of hairdressing and beauty therapy. Theory is successfully related to practical activities, making good use of industrial examples.
- Initial assessments of students' individual needs are made but not used routinely to inform lesson plans. Targets set at the termly one-to-one progress review meeting are too broad and are insufficiently tailored to individual students' needs. Practical assessments are planned well and meet awarding body requirements. Written feedback on students' assignments is good. Teachers write helpful and constructive comments so that students know what to do in order to improve further.
- The development of students' English, mathematics and functional skills requires improvement. The spelling of technical terms used in hairdressing and beauty therapy is often highlighted and reinforced at the start of some lessons, but students' understanding is not sufficiently reinforced throughout the session. Too little attention is given to developing students' mathematical skills in a vocational context. Spelling and grammatical errors are usually corrected on written work.

- Equality and diversity matters are not promoted consistently to ensure that all students have a detailed understanding of aspects relevant to their chosen vocation. For example, most students have a reasonable understanding of equality and diversity, but many cannot relate the relevance to the vocational context within hairdressing and beauty therapy.

Public services, leisure, travel and tourism

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and this is reflected in the variable outcomes for students. There were significant improvements in success rates on several qualifications in 2011/12 but rates on many courses fell to below national averages. Too few students achieve high grades except on advanced-level sports courses.
- Recent initiatives, including enhanced diagnostic assessment, a centralised monitoring system, a standardised marking system and a strong focus on developing students' literacy skills, have been introduced. As a result more students are making good progress and staying to complete their courses. However, the impact of the college's recent actions is limited because attendance is extremely low in a significant number of classes and this is not yet being sufficiently addressed.
- In the better lessons, knowledgeable teachers share their own experiences to enrich learning and to build positive relationships that motivate and inspire students. They use a variety of activities to ensure students are actively engaged and eager to learn. Skilful questioning probes and challenges learning and students benefit from real life examples to underpin theory. In one lesson, David Beckham was used effectively to illustrate the concept of subjective poverty and this led to a lively debate in which students confidently expressed their own views around wealth and fame.
- In the weaker lessons, the pace is slow, too focused on teaching and not enough on what students are learning. Activities are unimaginative and do not provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively. In these lessons students are passive and learning is slow. Teachers' questioning techniques fail to challenge students to think of the answers for themselves and checks on learning are too infrequent. Opportunities to stretch the more-able students are not fully exploited.
- Standards of work are variable and require improvement. In the better lessons, students work attentively and produce high-quality work that shows a good level of knowledge and understanding. Students in public services demonstrated high-level analytical skills in interpreting levels of poverty, and in sport, students showed good evaluative skills following a practical lesson. However, in too many lessons, students produce work of a standard that is at or below their level of study.
- Assessment of marked work is good. Teachers set regular coursework and students benefit from detailed feedback on ways to improve. However, target-setting for students requires improvement because teachers' expectations are often too low. Targets are often insufficiently aspirational to motivate students to do their best and reach their full potential.
- The recently introduced strategy to develop students' literacy skills in sport and public services is a model of good practice. This work is underpinned by a literacy specialist who supports teachers to improve their own skills and be more aware of how to embed literacy in the curriculum. The strategy is beginning to have a positive impact on students' work: they are becoming more confident in the use of connectives to build up sentences and in the use of dictionaries to check spelling and to develop their reading skills.
- The use of ILT is effective in many lessons. Students make innovative use of mobile phones to support learning, for example in research, collecting photographic evidence and when videoing practical performances. Lessons are taught in high-quality accommodation which students appreciate greatly.

- Students value the effective advice and guidance from teachers and benefit from study workshops to help them keep up to date with work. Students in receipt of additional learning support receive effective in-class support. However, there is no clear strategy to reduce the level of support required as students progress and become more independent learners.
- Students speak positively about the wide range of course enhancement opportunities. The Hartlepool Sporting Association provides students with valuable volunteering opportunities to enhance their employability skills. Close partnerships with the armed forces have provided opportunities for skills development on public services. Additional qualifications in stewarding resulted in many students gaining experience as 'Games Makers' at the Olympic Games.
- There is a highly respectful culture and staff and students work well together to maintain this. Equality and diversity are promoted well. In one lesson, case studies were used to highlight barriers to participation in sport by minority groups. The college has been successful in recruiting more females to sport and public services through the use of role models and positive marketing. However, gaps in achievement remain between different groups of students, for example, males taking sports courses underachieve.

Literacy

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate, which correlates with the poor outcomes for students taking functional skills qualifications and the low proportion of high grades of A* to C at GCSE. Many lessons lack clear learning aims and the standard of students' work does not meet the requirements of their qualification. Poor attendance and punctuality affects the learning of significant numbers of students.
- In a minority of lessons students benefit from inspirational teachers who motivate them to develop high levels of English skills. There is emerging good practice in the college, but this is not yet widely shared to improve students' English skills.
- Planning for learning and assessment activities is mostly weak and does not inspire, challenge and motivate students to be involved in their learning. In a few lessons, teachers make effective and imaginative use of ILT to encourage students to explore and practise their use of English. However, the use of technology to engage and interest students is insufficient.
- Assessment methods lack rigour in many lessons. Checks on individual learning are often too infrequent. Students do not receive regular feedback to identify how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. The marking of work is not always constructive or corrected for misspelt words, sentence structure, or the use of capitals. In the few better lessons, students are encouraged to think for themselves through self-reflection and informal peer assessment. In one lesson, the teacher used the 'Dragon's Den' theme very effectively to embed functional skills.
- Additional learning support for English skills' development outside of the classroom is good. Students are encouraged successfully to develop effective strategies for use in their vocational coursework. The use of additional learning support in lessons is often effective, encouraging students to develop a range of strategies to further develop their reading and writing skills. However, the deployment and management of additional learning support staff on a few courses are less effective and hinders students' learning and development. This is the case where additional learning support staff speak or interact directly with the teacher instead of the student.
- Initial assessment is not always used effectively to plan for the needs of individual students or to identify appropriate targets. Progress reviews are detailed and refer to the learning targets that have been set. However, targets are too vague and often insufficiently tailored to meet individual students' needs and this lessens the impact of the review process on students' progress in developing their use of English.

- Many teaching staff do not exploit opportunities in lessons to explain or reinforce the importance of English skills in a vocational context or their significance when securing employment. Good practice does exist, for example in public services and in sport, where the importance of developing students' literacy skills both within and out of lessons is given high priority. However, this practice is not yet sufficiently widespread. Teachers do not routinely correct students' written work and too little attention is given to developing oracy skills.
- In the majority of GCSE English and functional skills literacy classes, the promotion of equality and diversity is inadequate. Teachers keep detailed written profiles of individual students but these are not used systematically to inform lesson planning, the deployment of resources or assessment practices to ensure students' different levels of ability are met. Resources used in many lessons do not reflect diversity, and issues regarding racism are not effectively defused.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. The strategic plan is aspirational and closely aligned with the needs of the town and its environs. The mission states a vision for excellence. The new college with its open and professional business environment is designed to inspire learners, staff and the local community. The operational plan articulates clearly the college's strategic aims to meet local needs. However, many plans, including the literacy and numeracy strategy, lack sufficient detail and coherency, and do not contain interim measurements of success. Monitoring of action plans is frequent but there is insufficient focus given to evaluating the impact.
- The principal has steered the college through a period of considerable change, including relocation to a new building, overcoming a significant financial deficit, implementing a revised management structure and revising the curriculum to meet the needs of the strategic plan. During this period college managers and governors accept that they did not focus sufficiently on improving teaching, learning and assessment. As a result students' success rates declined from previously high levels to below national averages in most subject areas. The principal, senior team, governors and managers share a clear view that they now need to focus on improving teaching, learning and students' outcomes as a matter of urgency.
- There are many actions in place to secure the improvements needed. Individual teacher underperformance is being tackled through focused support and mentoring, including peer support. These activities are fully understood and valued by staff, and are having an impact on increasing the proportions of good and better teaching. However, recognition of the strengths and areas that still require improvement are not identified with sufficient clarity to enable full evaluation of the effectiveness of the actions already implemented and what still needs to be done. Good practice is shared informally across many areas of the college, but mechanisms to systematically identify and share good practice are not sufficiently established.
- Assessment of performance strives to be honest and accurate. However, grades in the self-assessment report for the key aspects in 2011/12 were generous and were not underpinned by sufficient evidence. Quality assurance processes, including that for self-assessment, have since been revised. However, the evidence to support reported outcomes in curriculum areas is insufficiently checked or challenged by senior managers.
- Governance is strong and supportive. Governors use their good range of skills and knowledge to challenge the college effectively. Managers provide governors with adequate information to monitor college performance. Governors' rigorous investigation into the recent decline in success rates has resulted in very close and frequent monitoring of progress to ensure improvements in performance are secure and sustainable.
- The college is highly responsive to the needs of the local community. Around one quarter of the college's provision is in apprenticeships and workplace learning for adults. Management of this provision is good. Detailed analysis of local and national market needs, and significant

investment, have resulted in revisions to the curriculum to include innovative aeronautical engineering and environmental technology courses being offered.

- The college is an approved provider for five National Skills' Academies and is the regional Centre for Environmental Technologies. Partnerships with employers and local groups, such as Hartlepool Sporting Association, are strong and productive and benefit students. For example, the college trained and supported over 360 unemployed people to secure employment with prestigious employers such as Husqvarna and Barbour in 2012.
- Arrangements for students to have their say about their course and the college are effective and the principal is an active part of the process. The senior team encourage and respond positively to complaints, using these as an opportunity to improve.
- Arrangements for managing and promoting equality and diversity require improvement. The college provides a warm and welcoming environment to all, including members of the local community who are encouraged to use the college's 'Flagship' restaurant, coffee bar, hairdressing and beauty salons and other facilities. The college's 'Respect' agenda is promoted effectively through a calendar of events designed to increase learners' tolerance and respect for individual differences. However, there is too much variability in the way in which teachers promote equality and diversity themes and respond to the different abilities of individual learners in their planning of lessons.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for the safeguarding of students and has appropriate links with relevant referral agencies. There are appropriate recruitment and vetting processes for staff and governors. Training is appropriate and one governor has responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the college procedures.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Engineering and manufacturing technologies: class-based learning	3
Engineering and manufacturing technologies: apprenticeships	2
Construction and building services: apprenticeships	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy: college-based learning	3
Public services, leisure, travel and tourism: college-based learning	3
Literacy: college-based learning	4

College details

Hartlepool College	
Type of college	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1,439
	Part-time: 3,357
Principal/CEO	Michael Bretherick
Date of previous inspection	November 2009
Website address	www.hartlepoolfe.ac.uk

College information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	214	28	358	42	566	131	0	0
Part-time	316	1,140	767	798	226	226	0	70
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	212	127	244	199	0	0		
Number of learners aged 14-16	59							
Number of community learners	339							
Number of employability learners	856							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Catcote School ■ Fine Organics ■ Studio 47 							

Additional socio-economic information

Hartlepool College is a medium-sized further education college situated in the Tees Valley in the north-east of England. The college has one main site located in the centre of the town. The area is one of high social and economic deprivation. Many students come from wards that are among the most deprived in England. Unemployment is high and much higher than both regional and national levels. Levels of literacy and numeracy are poor for all ages.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Josephine Nowacki HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the assistant principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the college'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 and online questionnaires 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>

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



Learner View is a new website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too.

To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk or if you have any questions about Learner View please email Ofsted at: learnerview@ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store Street](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013