

Gateshead College

General further education college

Inspection dates		3–7 February 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- The proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications or apprenticeships in the planned time is low in a few subject areas.
- Not enough teaching is good or outstanding.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are not sufficiently challenging and varied to enable all learners to achieve or exceed their potential.
- Teachers do not support learners sufficiently to improve and develop their English and mathematics skills and too few learners are challenged to work towards attaining higher levels in these subjects.
- Lesson observations do not set teachers clear enough targets or identify sufficiently how they can improve their practice and the outcomes of their learners.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Leaders and governors have a clear and ambitious vision for the direction and improvement of the college.
- Learners receive good advice, guidance and timely support, to place them on courses that meet their needs and ambitions well.
- Learners benefit from very high quality learning facilities and good partnerships, which provide a strong focus on employment, work-related and practical skills.
- Very good personal support, particularly at times of increased need or when learners are at risk of dropping out of learning, has increased the number of learners that remain on their course and make progress.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Take urgent action to reduce the proportion of teaching that is not yet good and ensure that the lesson observation process enables teachers to improve by:
 - being clear about why learners are not making enough progress in their learning
 - indicating clearly when and how support and professional development will help teachers to improve their practice
 - setting clear milestones for implementing and reviewing the impact of improved teaching and learning strategies.
- Increase the proportion of learners who complete English and mathematics qualifications successfully by:
 - making sure that all teachers understand the importance of these skills for helping learners to do well and succeed in their learning and career ambitions
 - ensuring teachers are provided with training and guidance to embed English and mathematics in all learning more effectively
 - inspiring ambition in those learners who are able to, to progress to and achieve higher levels of English and mathematics skills.
- Increase the proportion of learners and apprentices completing their qualifications successfully by:
 - improving the management and organisation of administration, business management and health and social care apprentices' programmes so they complete within the planned time
 - systematically and regularly reviewing learners' progress and setting clear and challenging targets to help them to improve their skills and knowledge and achieve their qualifications on college-based courses, particularly in construction and social sciences, where this is currently low.
- Develop teachers' understanding of how to challenge the more able students to achieve high grades and exceed the grades expected of them, for example, through additional activities during lessons and setting targets in tutorials related to the achievement of high grades. Share more widely the examples that exist in a few subject areas of good practice in planning and teaching challenging lessons that enable all learners to reach their potential.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managers have secured some significant improvements since the last inspection in the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications in many subject areas. However, there is still too much variability and pass rates, particularly on advanced level qualifications, are not yet good in all areas. For example, in construction and social sciences they remain well below the national average. ▪ The proportion of apprentices in engineering subjects who achieve successfully, and who do so within the planned time, improved further in 2012/13 and is outstanding. However, in health and social care, business management and administration the proportion of apprentices who achieve within the planned time has declined significantly. At well below the national average, this requires improvement. ▪ Too few learners improve their English and mathematics skills sufficiently well. Few learners on full-time courses studied qualifications in English and mathematics in 2012/13, and for those that did, the proportion that achieved was low. Since the introduction of study programmes, all learners aged 16 to 18 now study elements towards qualifications in these subjects. However, 	

too many only study towards part qualifications when they could be working towards more challenging full qualifications.

- In 2012/13, too few learners made sufficient progress on advanced-level college-based courses compared to their peers nationally who took the same qualifications. Although managers have identified that improving this is a key priority, not enough teaching challenges and supports the most able, or those who find learning harder, to reach their potential. Learners who take A-level qualifications achieve slightly fewer high grades than the national average.
- Learners enjoy the work they do in their vocational learning. They improve their knowledge and practical, professional and artistic skills well and develop good attitudes to work. Teachers prepare unemployed learners for employment well and help them improve their English and mathematics skills at a well-equipped facility that the college operates in partnership with Nissan and other providers. A high proportion of learners subsequently obtain employment or apprenticeships with Nissan and other companies.
- Data show few differences in the performance of different groups of learners, other than adults on advanced-level qualifications who achieve less well than learners aged 16 to 18. College managers are aware of the specific programmes, for example, a poorly performing access to HE programme, that contribute to this and are taking appropriate action to redesign the courses to make them more suitable for adult learners.
- Learners have good opportunities to engage in a range of enrichment activities that improve their employability, social and entrepreneurial skills well. Sports studies learners participate in a good range of sports competitions in which individuals and college teams have achieved some notable and motivational successes.
- Almost all apprentices remain in employment that meets local need when they complete their qualifications with some, particularly in engineering and motor vehicle, gaining promotion at work. A good proportion of classroom-based learners progress into apprenticeships, higher study or employment when they complete their studies.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies across the college, reflecting the variation in success rates in curriculum areas. Not enough lessons are consistently good to secure good outcomes for all learners. Lead practitioners have provided targeted support for teachers to raise the standards of teaching and learning. This action is showing early signs of success, but has not had sufficient time to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all learners.
- In the better lessons, teachers have high expectations of learners, and teaching and learning activities are well planned to meet each learner's needs. Learners often work well independently, in groups and pairs, share ideas and learn from each other. These lessons are exciting and fun, and teachers set and demand high standards for their learners, using a good range of strategies to explore their understanding effectively.
- In lessons where improvement is required, teaching is insufficiently captivating and lessons lack sufficient pace, direction and variation to challenge all learners to achieve well. Too frequently, all learners complete the same tasks irrespective of their ability. Higher-performing learners do not always have opportunities for additional challenge to accelerate their learning and progress.
- The assessment of learners' work is inconsistent and the quality of feedback varies considerably across subject areas. In the better lessons, teachers provide detailed and frequent feedback that helps learners to improve their work. However, in other lessons, teachers provide insufficient written feedback and learners are unclear how to improve and achieve higher grades.
- New arrangements to evaluate and improve teachers' professional practice are showing benefits for learners in some, but not all, subject areas. Feedback following observations of teaching is not specific in all cases and does not report or reflect on the impact of teaching on learning and progress consistently.

- A broad enrichment programme that includes visits, talks by outside speakers, meetings with employers and work experience enhances learners’ experiences well. These elements are important in supporting the college’s introduction of study programmes.
- The modern and well-designed accommodation supports the creation of a vibrant learning environment. Resources are good in almost all college areas and the excellent access learners have to high-quality venues in the local community enhance their experiences further. Teachers are well qualified and use their occupational expertise effectively in some, but not all, lessons.
- Tutorials are generally well structured and contribute to the development of good personal, social and independent learning skills. However, the monitoring of individual learners’ progress in many curriculum areas requires improvement. The new electronic system to track, monitor and analyse the progress of learners is being used well in visual and performing arts to set and revise challenging targets. Consequently, these learners are aware of how much work they have to do to achieve. This is not the case for many other learners.
- The new English and mathematics teams are working hard to deliver interesting and engaging lessons to support the development of English and mathematical skills and are beginning to bring about improvements in the confidence and progress of learners on English and mathematics courses. A few teachers identify and correct learners’ spelling, punctuation and grammar effectively, but this is not the case across all provision. In too many lessons the development and reinforcement of learners’ English and mathematics lacks impact.
- Support for learners is good. Teachers and support staff assess learners’ abilities accurately prior to them coming to college in order to place on them on appropriate courses. They identify the support needs quickly of those learners requiring additional help with academic or personal support. Knowledgeable and accessible staff provide good guidance for learners, ensuring that they are able to make well-informed choices about their future education, training or employment. Where learners are experiencing personal problems, they receive very good support to enable them to remain on their courses. Specialist staff have a wide range of specialist expertise in supporting learners with, for example, dyslexia or mental health needs.
- All staff work hard to provide an inclusive and safe learning environment. Learners treat each other with respect and courtesy. Although teachers promote equality and diversity very well in some lessons, this is not consistent across the college.

Early years and playwork

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. This reflects the variation in the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications successfully, which, although improving, is too low on a few courses. Most learners enjoy their lessons, find them interesting and work cooperatively together. Attendance is good and learners gain good employability skills.
- Managers and teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to improve the provision and have made recent changes in the structure and organisation of courses to support this. In the better lessons, teachers plan learning well and use high-quality resources effectively to make lessons interesting. Teachers are well qualified and use their practical experiences well to link theory to practice. A planned visit to a science workshop reinforced to learners the importance of hygiene in early years settings.
- In less effective lessons, teachers do not plan sufficiently well to take into account the different abilities of learners in the class. Although teachers set challenging targets for learners, too often these do not translate into challenging learning activities. Work set is often undemanding and fails to inspire learners to meet and exceed their targets.
- Information, advice and guidance have improved and are now good. The number of learners that withdraw early from their courses has declined significantly. Initial assessment and

introductions to courses are thorough and well structured and identify individual needs and interests well. Teachers provide good personal support and encouragement for learners to stay on learning programmes. They know their learners well and work with them effectively to develop individual learning plan targets that help them to reach their employment goals. Good communication between teachers and work-placement supervisors enables learners to improve their confidence and skills well through work experience.

- Verbal feedback to learners in lessons identifies what they need to do to improve. This is not the same for much of the written feedback, which lacks clarity for learners to reflect on and make necessary improvements to their work. For example, many learners on advanced-level courses are unable to reference their work correctly. Teachers do not guide learners sufficiently to read a range of texts when carrying out research. Learners rarely use primary sources of reference material, instead using a range of unreliable websites.
- Although planning documents identify opportunities to include mathematics and English in vocational early years teaching, teachers do not follow these plans to improve learners' skills in these subjects sufficiently in lessons. Teachers do not routinely highlight spelling and grammatical errors in learners' work or guide them to correct these.
- Teachers create a positive and safe learning environment. Teaching materials promote and encourage learners to identify where discriminatory practices might have an impact in childcare settings. Lesson plans identify opportunities to promote equality and diversity. However, in many lessons, equality and diversity are not covered explicitly and opportunities to discuss diversity that occur due to the subject content are missed. For example, in lessons covering healthy eating, teachers do not extend discussions to explore the impact that culture, religion, and ethnicity might have on a child's diet.

Engineering and motor vehicle

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers and assessors have high expectations of what apprentices can achieve. Apprentices respond well, make good progress, develop good levels of knowledge and understanding, and achieve high standards in practical work. A high proportion achieve apprenticeship frameworks and many engineering apprentices achieve distinctions in their technical certificates.
- Employers are positive about the provision and its responsiveness to their needs. Accommodation and equipment that apprentices use in college, for example, in vehicle body and paintwork, are excellent. Employers provide a good range of work, which enables learners to make good progress. Many apprentices are working towards higher-level technical certificates. Teachers and assessors design and deliver apprentices' programmes well, ensuring that the majority pass these demanding and challenging qualifications.
- Teachers and assessors use their expertise well to link theory to practical work and to industrial situations. For example, in an activity on vehicle braking, the teacher drew on his industrial experience well to develop the apprentices' understanding of different brake mechanisms.
- Teachers encourage apprentices to work with considerable autonomy while undertaking interesting workshop activities. Apprentices plan their work well, research technical information and write sequences of activity before commencing work. Teachers ask frequent questions that develop and reinforce apprentices' understanding well during practical training. However, occasionally, apprentices who have completed activities are left waiting for extra work, or they observe other apprentices engaged in repetitive activity, slowing the pace of their learning.
- Much theory teaching is well planned and good. For example, in a lesson on vehicle transmission, the teacher made good reference to workplace situations and vehicle sub-assemblies to make the lesson interesting. Apprentices respond well and show good levels of

knowledge and understanding. Occasionally, however, teachers do not involve all apprentices when asking questions to extend and check learning. Apprentices leave a few theory lessons with only limited written records of what has been covered.

- Apprentices articulate their technical learning and progress well and the majority of their written work is good. Learning activities in the college and at apprentices' workplaces enable them to develop confidence and the ability to work independently. Marking of work for technical detail is thorough and includes useful annotation, including for the correction of spelling and grammar. Apprentices improve the quality of their work as a result.
- Assessment is rigorous and includes a good proportion of direct observation. Good use is made of questioning which probes and develops understanding. However, recent assessor changes have delayed the completion of some job cards to support assessment evidence for too long.
- Workplace reviews require improvement. They focus appropriately on the achievement of National Vocational Qualification competences but treat other aspects of apprentices' learning programmes in a cursory way. Although covered well during induction and lessons, reviews only touch on health and safety, and the promotion of equality and diversity superficially.
- Good attention is given to ensuring apprentices are placed on the right course and receive appropriate support. Teachers monitor apprentices' progress on technical certificates closely but do not monitor progress sufficiently on National Vocational Qualifications assessed in the workplace. With the numbers of apprentices increasing, managers are aware that they need to bring more rigour to monitoring processes.

Building and construction

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and this is reflected in the proportion of learners who achieve qualifications, which is well below the national average. In the current year, more learners have stayed on their courses and learners now make better progress. Teachers work enthusiastically with learners but most do not have high enough expectations for their achievement.
- Teachers have good construction industry experience and use this well to design practical tasks for learners to improve their trade skills. Teachers encourage learners to employ safe methods of working and good working practices. Programmes are flexible, enabling learners to learn at their own pace. However, learners are rarely set challenging targets in lessons to make better than satisfactory progress.
- Practical learning resources are very good and, in the better theory lessons, teachers make good use of information and learning technology that enlivens learning. Planning of learning is variable in quality and too often it does not focus sufficiently on the needs of individual learners. As a result too many lessons lack sufficient challenge for the more able learners to achieve their full potential. The pace is slow in a minority of theory lessons. In these lessons, teachers do not change learning activities frequently enough to maintain learners' interest.
- Initial assessment is accurate in establishing learners' starting points and their English and mathematics support needs. Learners identified as requiring it receive good additional support that enables them to achieve as well as, or better than, their peers.
- Assessment of learners' practical work is accurate and provides them with clear feedback on their progress through planned activities. However, too many learners receive only verbal feedback, particularly following assessment of their practical work. When providing written feedback, teachers recognise good work, which motivates learners well. However, feedback rarely gives suggestions for how learners could improve their work. Written work handed in for assessment is not always marked or returned to them promptly.

- Learners develop and improve their skills in mathematics well during practical sessions through measuring and setting out their work. For example, in carpentry and joinery, learners improve their skills in geometry through setting out, cutting and fixing roof components. However, teachers do not help learners to improve their English skills well, rarely correcting spelling and grammatical errors.
- Information, advice and guidance given to learners before they join courses have improved. It is now effective in ensuring that most learners are on the right course and numbers of early leavers and transfers have both reduced in the current year. Ongoing advice and guidance help learners to progress to further learning.
- Although working in realistic working environments in the college, very few learners have had the opportunity to carry out planned work experience with employers to develop employability skills. Few learners have had opportunities to broaden their understanding of the construction industry through visits or other enrichment activities.
- Teachers do not embed equality and diversity well in teaching and learning. Few teachers use naturally occurring opportunities within lessons to promote equality and diversity or to incorporate it into assignment briefs.

Hospitality and catering

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This reflects the improving proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications and the very good skills and knowledge they develop while at college.
- Enthusiastic teachers set high expectations, which motivates learners well and broadens their horizons for future progression and employment. Teachers provide good encouragement and support to which learners respond well by producing work of a high standard. Teachers motivate learners well by providing additional learning opportunities such as accredited higher-level projects and opportunities to participate in external events and competitions.
- The majority of teaching is good. Teachers are very good at demonstrating new techniques to learners and provide effective group and one-to-one coaching. Resources and equipment that learners use to practise their food preparation and service skills are good. The high number of customers that use the college's restaurants enable learners to develop employability skills well as they prepare and serve food in situations that reflect industry standards and constraints.
- In the small proportion of weaker lessons, teachers do not allow sufficient time for learners to complete activities. They do not involve learners sufficiently in the introduction and recap of lessons or check understanding and learning.
- Initial assessment is effective in planning learning and support. Staff take care to ensure learners are placed on the most appropriate courses, as well as planning for specific learning or personal support needs. Teachers use learners' profiles well to plan lessons that meet learners' individual needs well.
- Teachers provide good verbal feedback in lessons that enables learners to understand what they have done and how to improve. However, written feedback following assessment of learners' assignment work, although providing sufficient detail so that learners know whether they have met the required standard, is brief and does not make it clear to learners how they could improve their work further.
- The support that teachers give to help learners improve their English and mathematics skills is adequate. Learners improve their understanding of aspects of mathematics such as ratios and measurements when working with recipes. In service, learners are encouraged to develop good writing and speaking skills when dealing with customers. However, teachers often miss naturally

occurring opportunities to assess and develop skills further, for example, by identifying and correcting spelling and grammar errors.

- Information, advice and guidance are good. Learners receive good information at the start of their courses, allowing them to make informed choices that meet their needs and circumstances. The college has good links with high-quality hospitality and catering employers and use these well to provide work experience and employment opportunities. Nearly all learners who achieved their qualification in 2012/13 progressed onto further college courses or into employment.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners respect each other and work safely. Within lessons, there is a good focus on raising awareness of different cultures, including specific food preferences, such as Halal meat. External events promote understanding of diversity further. Teachers used a recent link developed with the Indonesian embassy well to promoted greater understanding of national cultures.

Performing and visual arts

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. In 2012/13, learners' outcomes required improvement. Overall success rates were around national averages, but showed too much variability within subjects. However, there is clear evidence that improvements managers have made to the provision have resulted in more learners remaining on their courses this year and the vast majority of learners are now making good progress.
- Teachers have high aspirations for learners who work towards ambitious target grades. Teachers vary their questioning methods to encourage learners to think creatively before settling on solutions to challenges. Assignment briefs enable learners to develop good practical and employability skills. Art learners develop precise, observational drawing techniques using diverse media. In longer sessions, teachers vary activities well to sustain learners' energy levels and attention.
- Teachers use learning technologies well and break down complex topics into carefully sequenced simple steps. This encourages learners to work independently using online study guides to reinforce their knowledge. Accommodation and learning resources are good and used well by teachers. For example, photography and multi-media learners showcase their learning in response to good demonstrations by teachers on how to apply masked layers using specialist software.
- In the small proportion of weaker lessons, teachers do not make it clear to learners what they are expected to achieve through the activities they are undertaking. Teachers do not use questioning well or probe deeply enough to assess learners' understanding and there is insufficient planned interaction between learners to share learning points.
- Teachers work vigorously to challenge and encourage learners to work towards higher grades. They encourage learners to reflect on and assess their own performance, and use peer assessment well. The quality of feedback on written work gives learners detailed pointers for improvement.
- Performing arts learners benefit significantly from excellent links with prestigious local partners. Learners have good work experience and opportunities to carry out technical work or perform on professional stages alongside highly skilled practitioners who set learners very high professional standards in master-classes. Music theatre students become the choir for touring professional singing companies. Visual arts learners gain good work experience responding to live briefs, such as designing the welcome symbol for a local rail interchange.
- Learners review their progress towards meeting their target grades well with staff who offer them good support on personal issues. These discussions help motivate those who are

struggling. Good initial assessment and advice ensures learners are on the right course. Sound advice on progression opportunities support many learners into universities and employment.

- Teachers encourage learners to understand technical language and the vocabulary required to talk knowledgeably about separate disciplines. For example, ballet learners are not only able to use specialist terms confidently, but also to illustrate the movements they describe. However, not all teachers emphasise correct spelling and grammar or extend learners' mathematical skills sufficiently.
- Teachers ensure working environments are safe. They use assignment briefs well to extend learners' understanding of equality issues through themes such as autism or the study of prejudice in the music industry. Art students explore diversity themes well, for example, through investigating contrasting portrayals of women alongside concepts of beauty and disfigurement.

Foundation English

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Although improving, the proportion of learners that pass English qualifications remains low. Adults and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress on courses designed for their needs, including GCSE English. However, teaching requires improvement for the large majority of learners aged 16 to 18 who attend functional English classes as part of their study programmes.
- Learning activities are interesting and challenging for adults and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, learners quickly reinforce their learning of spelling, punctuation and grammar by passing a ball around the group, answering specific questions on their turn. Teachers in these classes use media and technology well to reinforce learning, for example, through interactive English quizzes. Adults receive good individual coaching during challenging writing activities, carefully designed to be relevant to everyday life, such as by producing personal statements for job applications.
- Too many functional skills English lessons for learners on study programmes require improvement. Too often, tutors do not plan effectively to push all learners to achieve their potential. In these lessons, work that is either too difficult or too easy impedes learners' progress. Sometimes activities take too long or do not stretch the more able learners.
- The standard of learners' work in specific English lessons is good. Teachers mark spelling, punctuation and grammar in detail with helpful comments on how to improve. This varies considerably in vocational lessons, however. For example, in visual and performing arts, teachers help learners to develop good technical language and vocabulary. However, in early years and playwork, reading and writing activities are too complex for a few of the learners who find reading and writing difficult, and this becomes a barrier to their learning.
- Initial and diagnostic assessments are thorough, but teachers do not use the results of these assessments well to plan to meet individual learners' needs in lessons or to identify a challenging full English qualification. Lessons focus too much on the achievement of one identified unit, with learners usually focusing on their weakest skill and insufficiently on the other skills they need to achieve a full qualification. Too few learners that are capable of working towards intermediate-level functional skills in English are doing so. Teachers record only general comments such as 'on target' or 'has begun English' on the learners' progress-recording system, with insufficient detail to enable challenging targets to be set.
- English lessons take place in inclusive and safe learning environments where learners feel comfortable to discuss any problems they have with reading and writing. Teachers enable learners to develop a good understanding of equality and diversity through a range of relevant topics, such as discussing and writing about different religious festivals.

Administration and business management

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, which reflects the significant decline in the number of apprentices that achieve their qualification in the planned time. This is now well below the national average. Although the proportion of apprentices who eventually achieve remains above national averages, this has declined over the last three years.
- Well-qualified and experienced assessors visit apprentices regularly in their workplaces. Employers and apprentices appreciate the efforts assessors make to work flexibly to meet organisational needs, priorities and workloads. Communication between the majority of assessors and learners is good, which makes apprentices feel well supported. However, assessors do not update employers sufficiently about their employees' progress and priorities for development.
- Assessors use interviews and skills scans well to develop long-term personal learning plans with apprentices. However, not all assessors have a sufficiently good understanding of what apprentices do in their daily work, particularly where responsibilities have recently changed. Consequently, training and assessment is not always sufficiently personalised to reflect the specific work roles and duties of apprentices, which does not enable them to improve their skills and knowledge as quickly as they could do.
- Assessors use praise consistently well to motivate apprentices and to maintain positive working relationships. However, they do not have sufficiently high expectations of apprentices, particularly those on advanced apprenticeships. As a result the demands of the training and assessment programmes are not challenging enough for apprentices, many of whom make slow progress.
- Apprentices have a satisfactory understanding of employment rights and responsibilities. A few apprentices benefit from creative approaches to the development of their personal learning and thinking skills. For example, administration apprentices developed good project-management skills when they designed, implemented and evaluated a charity carnival event for their employer. Off-the-job training workshops provide useful opportunities for management apprentices to develop their knowledge of leadership styles and theories of organisational improvement and how to apply these in their workplaces.
- Resources to support learning are limited. Workbooks and worksheets used by assessors are often too basic, requiring only low-level responses with little opportunity to challenge apprentices to consider subjects in more depth. Although a few assessors and apprentices use an electronic portfolio well to record and manage assessments and feedback, most apprentices do not have access to this. Apprentices have limited access to good-quality online learning resources, restricting their opportunities to improve knowledge and understanding between assessment and review visits.
- Arrangements to improve apprentices' skills in English, mathematics and other functional skills are good. Dedicated functional skills tutors provide a good range of workshops and resources that apprentices value. For example, apprentices at a local car manufacturer benefit from intensive English and mathematics workshops during which they improve their skills in these important subjects and gain awareness of how this makes them more effective and versatile employees.
- While formal reviews prompt assessors to cover equality and diversity, this is often rushed or covered only superficially. Assessors rarely check that apprentices understand the importance of equality and diversity in their workplace, or how they relate to their own role and responsibilities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management**Requires improvement**

- The Principal, ably supported by a strong and enthusiastic leadership team alongside committed and supportive governors, has a clear and ambitious vision for Gateshead College learners. Leaders and managers work very well with partners and employers to raise expectations and to provide a learning and cultural environment in which learners develop vocational skills, gain 'the employment edge' and so progress to employment, further education or training.
- Recent improvements have done much to establish a culture of 'expecting more', and the Principal has, for example, set challenging targets for attendance. However, there is not yet enough evidence that all curriculum areas have embedded this culture consistently enough for it to have a sustained impact on raising the proportion of learners that achieve well.
- College leaders have implemented a staffing structure that gives greater responsibility and accountability for performance management and improvement to curriculum operations managers and lead practitioners. This has increased the speed with which teachers receive targets and some support to improve their teaching. Where teaching requires improvement or is inadequate, teachers benefit from coaching and follow-up observations. Leaders and managers are not afraid to challenge poor practice and teachers that have not been able to make the necessary improvements have left the college. However, although there is an increased focus on targets that stretch and challenge learners to do better, managers do not provide all teachers with sufficiently clear instructions, guidance and support on what to do to improve their teaching.
- The senior leadership team understands the strengths and areas requiring improvement in the provision. Governors are active critical friends providing good stewardship and challenge so that managers give clear evidence about learners' achievement and progress. However, judgements in an update to the self-assessment report are overly optimistic about the impact of recent improvements. Judgements on teaching, learning and assessment do not make the link sufficiently well between improvements in the quality of teaching over time and the impact on how well learners do.
- Leaders and managers work closely and creatively with governors and partners to use local and regional employment and economic data to plan for, and offer a curriculum that prepares learners for, current and future employment needs. For example, subject area staff and employers have developed bespoke courses or apprenticeships to prepare learners effectively for work in specialist areas such as electric vehicle manufacture, music and theatre technicians, and digital media.
- Managers and subject leaders have restructured courses well and have planned for work-related activity or work experience to fulfil the requirements of the study programme in most areas. However, although managers have recruited a sizeable team of English and mathematics teachers, they have not made sure that learners progress quickly enough to study these subjects at the right level.
- A developing focus on 'job pursuit', led well by the Principal and supported very effectively by employers, is helping learners understand more readily the importance of studying hard and preparing well for future employment.
- College leaders collect feedback from learners and employers to develop a curriculum that they find interesting and vocationally relevant. Managers display the results of feedback throughout the college so that learners can see the actions that managers have taken.
- Learners value their time at college highly. Incidents of bullying and harassment are rare. When incidents are reported, action is swift and staff provide effective on-demand support and mediation.
- Gateshead College is truly inclusive. The equalities steering group works well with governors and representative organisations such as Stonewall to ensure that that college plans and policies support fair and equal access to learning for all. For example, many learners are from low-

income groups and governors and managers amended the equality and diversity policy to ensure that learners in financial hardship are not excluded from learning.

- Leaders and managers use data to monitor the performance of different groups, and have implemented strategies to close achievement gaps. Because of direct interventions, most learners who receive additional support are successful in their learning. However, managers do not use data about learners' achievement and progress sufficiently well to inform the focus of observations of teaching, learning and assessment and subsequent staff development.
- Gateshead College meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Leaders and managers have secured strong links with external agencies so that they can provide appropriate support for vulnerable learners. Teachers and learners emphasise strongly the importance of health and safety in their work in, for example engineering, building and construction, visual and performing arts and catering.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)**Gateshead College**

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	3	NA	NA	3	NA	3	3	2	NA
Outcomes for learners	3	NA	NA	3	NA	3	3	2	NA
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	NA	NA	3	NA	3	3	2	NA
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	NA	NA	3	NA	3	3	2	NA

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Early years and playwork	3
Engineering	2
Motor vehicle	2
Building and construction	3
Hospitality and catering	2
Performing arts	2
Visual arts	2
Foundation English	3
Administration	3
Business management	3

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college							
Age range of learners	14+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 3,225							
	Part-time: 20,835							
Principal/CEO	Ms Judith Doyle							
Date of previous inspection	May 2012							
Website address	www.gateshead.ac.uk							
Provider 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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	348	219	553	154	1,621	204	N/A	N/A
Part-time	124	1,347	169	4,711	67	957	N/A	112
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	265	1,770	142	832	N/A	N/A		
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	58							
Number of community learners	185							
Number of employability learners	4,815							
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"> ■ NA College Trust ■ Group Horizon Limited ■ Penshaw View Training Limited ■ Cablecom Training Limited ■ Baltic Training Services Limited ■ Premier Training International Limited ■ Construction Plant and Assessment Ltd ■ Flooring Assessments (UK) LLP 							

Contextual information

Gateshead College is a very large general further education college with its main campus in the centre of Gateshead. The college also has campuses in the Team Valley, Sunderland and at the Gateshead International Stadium. The college provides full-time 16 to 19 study programmes, college-based learning programmes for adults and a range of apprenticeship and workplace learning programmes. The proportion of school leavers gaining at least five or more good GCSEs in Gateshead is around the national average and slightly higher than the average for the North East region. Unemployment in Gateshead is higher than the national average but slightly lower than the average for the North East.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Malcolm Fraser HMI
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Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and eight additional inspectors, assisted by the college's Strategy Manager, Teaching and Learning 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 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 relevant 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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