Norton Radstock College

General further education college

Inspection dates		13–16 May 2014
Overall effectiveness	**This inspection:**	**Inadequate-4**
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Inadequate-4

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is inadequate because:

- Leadership and management are inadequate. Since the last inspection, the college has not improved sufficiently. The Principal, senior leaders and managers have not carried out improvements and recommendations with sufficient urgency and effectiveness. They have been too slow to ensure planned improvements have enough impact.

- Although slowly improving, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not good enough overall.

- Too few teachers have high expectations of students. They do not prepare all students well enough for their next steps.

- Teaching does not support students to develop a sufficiently high level of competence in English and mathematical skills. Students are not prepared adequately for further learning and work.

- The Principal and senior leaders' actions to improve the quality of provision have not had sufficient impact. They have not acted with sufficient determination to ensure that targets, actions and sharing of best practice have secured consistent improvement across the college.

This provider has the following strengths:

- In some learning areas, opportunities for students to gain practical and social skills at the right level are good.

- Effective work with young people, particularly vulnerable students, keeps them in education and training, supported by good links with local schools.

- The curriculum is broad and meets local and national needs well. Staff respond readily and sensitively to employers' requirements for employees' training.

- Students are generally polite, courteous and respectful.

- Staff manage physical resources very well, including the recent building of an excellent facility for the college's specialist provision.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve, through better governance, the impact of senior leadership by holding the Principal to account for devising and successfully implementing strategies for improving the college at a more urgent pace.

- Build the capacity of the Principal and senior leaders to ensure that they are able to focus relentlessly on increasing the momentum to improve teaching, learning and assessment, so that the improvement actions that have already been implemented have swifter impact.

- Improve performance management procedures so that the Principal, senior leaders and teachers have ambitious targets linked to the quality of teaching and students' progress.

- Ensure that good practices are shared more effectively throughout the college to bring about improvements more quickly. These include effective professional development in improving:
  - course management and course reviews
  - tutorial practices
  - students' development in English and mathematics
  - work placements and work experience.

- Ensure that all staff receive effective training on managing challenging behaviour.

- Revise procedures for complaints so that these lead to improvements.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement

- Outcomes have improved since the last inspection but are still not good enough. There is much variation between long and short courses, although overall success rates remain in line with national rates. Students on nearly all short courses achieve their qualifications. However, success rates of students on several advanced-vocational courses are still not high enough, for example the diplomas in public services and in information technology (IT).

- On courses where pass rates are low, teachers' expectations are not high enough. Consequently, too many students do not make the progress of which they are capable. Pass rates of adult students are better than those of students aged 16 to 18. Students on level 3 courses achieve less well than students on level 1 and level 2 courses. Teachers do not demonstrate sufficient urgency, ambition and direction so students too easily settle for grades that are below their potential.

- Pass rates on English and mathematics functional skills courses are low. The proportion of students achieving GCSE English and mathematics at grades A* to C is also low. Around a third of students aged 16 to 18 have not gained five GCSEs at grades A* to C when they start college. However, these students make good progress from their low starting points on foundation and intermediate level courses.

- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications has improved gradually and is in line with national rates. Too much variation still exists between areas such as engineering and administration. The achievement of students in subcontracted provision is much higher than on courses based at the college.

- Students from minority ethnic groups, although not a high proportion of the student body, achieve better results than White British students. The difference in attainment has narrowed over the last three years. Pass rates of students who receive extra help with their studies are

higher than those of other students. Outcomes of students with learning difficulties and disabilities are higher than the college average.

■ The few students on the student intern work placement programme are gaining valuable skills and experiences to enable them to gain suitable employment. However, the introduction of study programmes has not led to enough students acquiring good employability skills through work experience or preparation for work. The development of a systematic, college-wide approach towards work experience and placements has been slow.

■ Students are developing good personal and social skills. The large majority of students behave well and often help one another spontaneously in lessons and around the college. In their spare time during the day they occupy themselves productively and make sensible use of good college facilities. Their attendance during the inspection was too low. The pattern of attendance during the year is below the college's target of 90%.

■ The college's information on the progression of students after their courses, although not complete, shows that a high proportion gain employment or go on to further study. The proportion of students who enter higher education from the college is small. The college is rightly proud of its achievement in successfully helping young people stay in education, employment or training. However, it relies too heavily on case studies rather than detailed data to show how it improves the lives of many of its other students.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement

■ Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because not enough lessons are good or better, and the effectiveness of teaching varies too much across the college. For example, good practice in information and communication technology (ICT), animal care and early years is not shared in other areas. Not enough lessons are good or better and a very small minority are inadequate. The outcomes for students reflect this variability.

■ In the most successful lessons, careful, thoughtful planning and skilful teaching ensure that students make good progress in developing sound technical skills and knowledge, often to high industry and professional standards, as in equine care. Media make-up students acquire similar high-level skills which they demonstrated in their creating the make up for the cast of a number of performances of High Society at a local theatre. They expertly applied glitter and cosmetics to the catwalk models, creating alluring crystalline faces that captivated the audience.

■ In other effective lessons, students develop good course-related skills and their work reflects their enjoyment of their courses. The teachers give them excellent direction and instructions. The students carry out detailed and profitable research as a result. Media make-up students produce good sketchbooks to support their practical work.

■ Some teachers use simple activities effectively that help students to learn or build on previous knowledge. For example, they imaginatively use symbols in the college's equality and diversity calendar to introduce lesson topics. Students on foundation courses research the details and improve their English by answering questions from their peers and the teacher.

■ In less effective lessons, teachers do not use their knowledge of students' abilities sufficiently when planning lessons. In these lessons all students complete the same tasks in a given time, without adequate consideration of their different skills and levels. Students' understanding of important topics is not checked in adequate detail. Consequently, some students fall behind and others lose interest.

■ In other weaker lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of the students. A minority of teachers accept students' undemanding aspirations and low prior attainment as elements they cannot influence or change. Students complete mundane or repetitive worksheets that do not extend their knowledge and understanding. The result is that students do not appreciate what potential they have and remain content with second best.

- Assessment of students' work and progress is satisfactory. The majority of students receive helpful and encouraging advice from their teachers in suitable detail. They explain well how students can improve and check their presentation and use of English. The feedback apprentices receive is appropriate.

- Assessment of students' prior achievements and skills at the start of their courses is thorough. This leads to support being provided quickly to those students who need extra help. However, not enough teachers use the information from these assessments when they plan lessons; they do not set all students sufficiently challenging work or targets that will raise their aspirations using the results.

- Students do not receive sufficient or satisfactory assistance from teachers when they review their progress targets. Targets are more often a list of activities and not specific. They do not build on students' knowledge and skills in order to move them to the next level. Too many students do not know the final grade that they are likely to achieve for their course; they also are unaware of the potential grade they might achieve with a little extra industry and push from teachers.

- Students do not improve their skills in English and mathematics well enough across the college. This was a key weakness at the last inspection. The teaching and assessment of functional skills are much better for adult students than for students aged 16 to 18. Teachers do not do enough to impress on the younger learners the importance of these subjects in helping them to progress in work or education.

- The success with which teachers integrate the teaching of mathematics and English within their vocational teaching varies too much between subjects. Students develop their skills in English and mathematics very well in hairdressing and small animal care within the context of the subject. For example, in practical salon-based lessons, students learn how to calculate and apply percentages accurately to measure the graduation of a long cut. In other areas, such as motor vehicle, the integration of English and mathematics into other subjects is not effective.

- The college provides clear and sound information, advice and guidance to potential students. This is supplemented well by the provision of good careers, personal health and other welfare advice. Students gain a clearer idea of their next steps. The college's local 'job shop' is invaluable in helping students in their search for employment and apprenticeships.

- The support for students in vulnerable circumstances is good, for example for carers, students in public care and those on the autistic spectrum. Students aged 14 to 16 also benefit from particular care and from programmes built around their needs that minimise the difficulties they face. The chaplaincy also provides good pastoral support and help to all students, regardless of faith and belief. However, the effectiveness of group tutorials is too variable to ensure that each student receives equal entitlement to high quality support for personal and social development. Not all staff have the skills to challenge students effectively in the small minority of incidents of poor behaviour.

- The college promotes appreciation of equality and diversity keenly through its centrally organised activities and calendar of events. However, its training of teachers to promote diversity in lessons has been less successful. Not all teachers effectively challenge stereotypical language and inappropriate behaviour in class.

Health and social care **16-19 study programmes** **19+ Learning programmes** **Apprenticeships**	Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as shown by the outcomes for students. Students on the introductory level course make very good progress and the standard

of their work is high. However, since the last inspection, teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes have not improved significantly enough across all courses. Not enough students make good progress. Attendance is low and the effectiveness of lessons varies too much.

▪ In the best lessons, students are fully immersed in their work and succeed because their teachers have provided them with interesting and relevant activities. They gain good vocational knowledge and skills. The use of vivid case studies ensures that students studying dementia care quickly grasp the importance of using patients' personal effects to prompt reminiscence.

▪ Students develop relevant technical language well. They make good progress in their understanding and knowledge of how to deal with key terms such as anaphylaxis. They become more confident and develop better awareness of how to keep adults and children safe.

▪ In the less successful lessons, students spend too long on tasks unproductively. Because they are not coaxed or encouraged enough, they do not complete their assignments. The structure and content of their lessons do not take proper account of their aptitudes and previous learning.

▪ Other less effective lessons are characterised by teachers not checking how much students understand, for example when they set out key learning objectives. Students do not consolidate learning points and updated guidance for teachers is not consistently used.

▪ The majority of teachers have high expectations of students. However, they are not always able to translate these into consistently good teaching. They possess a good understanding of students' needs through robustly assessing their prior learning at the start of their courses. However, they do not use this information effectively to plan lessons. For example, they do not routinely provide different work to stretch more capable students.

▪ The majority of students receive good support. Teachers make good arrangements to help students overcome personal challenges and difficulties. During the inspection, however, a few students expressed disappointment about frequent changes in staffing which have disrupted their learning and caused confusion over priorities for completion of work.

▪ Students know the level of progress they are making. They receive good written feedback on their marked work so that they know exactly what they have to do to improve it. Verbal feedback in lessons is less effective because it is too general; comments do not motivate or encourage students.

▪ Advice and careers guidance do not give all students a clear plan of what to do once their course is completed. Nevertheless, a high proportion of students progress into further learning or employment after completing their course.

▪ Curriculum staff work effectively with local employers to develop suitable work experience as part of their study programmes. However, not enough work placements are currently available for all students. A good range of short courses, such as mental health awareness and dementia care, meets the needs of employers very well. These also prepare students well for employment.

▪ The majority of students receive effective support to improve their understanding and use of English and mathematics in lessons. For example, teachers ensure students regularly use dictionaries and glossaries to improve their spelling; they also help them improve their speaking skills. They plan appropriate mathematical activities and questions that are relevant to students' interests.

▪ Assessment practice for apprenticeships is good. Assessors ensure employers are sufficiently involved in planning and reviewing progress. Apprentices make good progress and understand how the elements of their programme fit together. Their completed work is marked with helpful comments and returned quickly.

▪ Teachers develop students' understanding of equality and diversity appropriately within the context of the care sector. Students demonstrate good awareness of how to respond to the different cultural, physical and religious requirements of people receiving care. The vast majority of students feel safe and respect one another. Teachers take swift and suitable actions to challenge the few instances of inappropriate language and stereotyping.

Animal care and equine studies	Good
16-19 study programmes **19+ Learning programmes**	

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good; this is reflected in students' achievements on their advanced courses. Students develop good practical and employability skills. Success rates are average. Although retention of students is good, their attendance requires improvement.

- Teachers have high expectations of students and their thoughtful planning accommodates the range of different abilities. This results in good teaching and learning. The strongest lessons are most often practical and involve students learning how to work with different animals. Teachers make good use of the impressive facilities and good stock of animals to develop students' understanding of the peculiarities of each breed and type. Students make good progress as a result of teachers' frequent checking of their learning.

- In other effective lessons, students use information and learning technology adeptly and consolidate their learning in class through viewing pertinent video clips their teachers have selected. Students gain a good understanding of customer care from watching and analysing videos highlighting animals' behaviour traits, and how these relate to people and their relationship with animals. In these lessons, teachers include good additional activities that stretch the more capable students who complete work before others. These students who finish first evaluate other students' work, as they do, for example, on a horse handling exercise.

- Less effective lessons are the result of a minority of teachers not giving students sufficient time to complete activities; their explanations take too much of the lesson time, forcing students to hurry and allowing no time for checking and consolidating learning.

- Good direction from teachers helps students to improve their understanding of how to care for animals. The standard of practical and written work achieved by students is good. Their written work shows good tie-up between the practical and theoretical elements. Teachers assess and return work promptly to students, with helpful advice which enables them to progress at a good pace. However, they do not routinely correct errors in students' written English and spelling to ensure it meets the standards required for employment.

- The effectiveness of the teaching of English and mathematics within lessons varies. The most proficient and confident teachers incorporate good English and mathematical activities into their lessons well. For example, students on the level 1 course improve their English and knowledge of physiology through creating and discussing a poem on invertebrates. Not all teachers make the most of similar opportunities.

- Students benefit from the work experience they undertake. Teachers use the experience thoughtfully to develop students' job-search skills. For example, they arrange sessions on curriculum vitae, job applications and letter writing, and interviews. Students also gain additional course-related qualifications. They develop better communication skills by organising and taking part in community events in aid of local animal charities.

- Teachers know the students well through carefully assessing their prior learning at the start of their courses. They use this to compile informative group profiles. However, not all teachers use this information effectively to plan lessons and monitor the progress of students. Appropriate advice and careers guidance help students to make plans for their next steps.

- The effectiveness of tutorials varies. The tutorial programme helps the majority of students to understand and review their progress using good individual learning plans. However, the process does not help more capable students to achieve their potential. These students settle for targets which are too low, and which teachers do not question. Students capable of achieving distinctions appear satisfied with aiming for merits.

- Teachers often take opportunities in lessons to discuss and develop equality and diversity matters with students, so that students are better prepared for life when they leave college.

Teachers used the design brief for a veterinary surgery effectively to explore access and desk arrangements for visually impaired clients. In another example, consideration of how different cultures treat placental material stimulated good discussion.

Engineering **16-19 study programmes** **19+ Learning programmes** **Apprenticeships**	Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Success rates are broadly average, but too much variation exists between outcomes on long and short courses. A significant number of students complete short courses successfully. Success rates for students on longer programmes are not as high. The proportion of apprentices completing their qualifications within the allocated time is improving and now average.

- Students make good progress in a number of engineering courses, but poor attendance hinders their further progress. Teachers structure the activities in class well and use motivational targets that result in students gaining good practical skills. For example, in practical engineering workshops, good supervision enables students to work on projects from initial design through to production.

- Apprentices develop a good range of industry-standard vocational skills for employment and make satisfactory progress. Apprentices benefit from assessors' regular workplace visits and helpful reviews of their progress. However, not all apprentices or employers understand how college-based activities and on-the-job training fit together. This often results in apprentices not extending their knowledge and skills through planned additional training or enrichment activities.

- In more successful lessons, timely assistance of teachers results in most students developing good workplace engineering skills; they produce work to a high standard. One group of students on an advanced engineering course successfully designed and built an 'English wheel' within budget. They were effectively guided by well-planned tasks and stepped targets.

- In other good lessons, teachers check students' work carefully and probe how well students understand theoretical knowledge. This assists them in consolidating their knowledge. For example, students producing a stepped shaft in engineering checked tolerances and recorded the accuracy on a quality assurance sheet that reflects industry practices.

- In less effective lessons, teachers do not encourage students to reflect on work they have previously completed. They move students on to fresh topics without them learning from their experiences and linking this to the new aspect. The planning of teachers does not include activities to stretch more capable students and enable slower learners to catch up.

- Students benefit from the recent investment in good engineering resources in the form of up-to-date equipment. Teachers' use of information and learning technology in lessons holds students' attention and contributes well to their progress. Students improve their learning by good use of the virtual learning environment outside of lessons.

- Feedback on students' written work is variable in its helpfulness. In many cases, feedback does not give enough detail on what students need to do to improve. However, more recent assessments of students' work, submitted through the virtual learning environment, show feedback is well annotated and useful in helping students to progress.

- The introduction of study programmes has not led to appropriate work experience for students. Too few students participate in planned work experience or other realistic work-related activities. They also do not supplement their experience and development through wider enrichment activities.

- The development of functional skills in lessons requires improvement. Teachers develop mathematics adequately in some lessons through naturally occurring activities, such as calculating the cutting speed and feed rates when using an engineering lathe. However, this is not done routinely enough and few teachers regularly develop students' English skills as part of their lessons.

- Teachers' use of the assessments of students' prior learning, undertaken at the start of their courses, is satisfactory. An additional engineering awareness test identifies gaps in students' knowledge and skills, but the information is not always used systematically in planning to improve their skills.

- Students receive timely advice on the progress they are making through regular one-to-one review sessions. However, too few students receive adequate careers advice and guidance.

- The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons requires improvement. Teachers do not include in their planning, and in their lessons, ways to develop students' awareness of equality and diversity in their lives or in the workplace.

Motor vehicle **16-19 study programmes** **19+ Learning programmes** **Apprenticeships**	Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate. Attendance in motor vehicle classes is low and too many students arrive late to lessons. Not enough apprentices complete their programmes within planned timescales, owing to ineffective planning of their programmes. Teachers do not follow health and safety practices rigorously enough. Not enough students progress on to higher level study or into employment as a result of studying on the motor vehicle courses.

- Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of students. Consequently, students do not work to sufficiently high professional standards. Activities to help students learn are often poorly planned and, as a result, some students do not make adequate progress. They find the work dull and uninspiring. Students in foundation motor vehicle classes work at too slow a pace, often just using study booklets. Insufficient direction and help result in only the more motivated students reaching their full potential.

- Apprentices have helpful targets, but learning activities are not structured enough to help them progress at a good pace. They do not have suitable planned additional training or enrichment activities that extend their knowledge and skills.

- Teachers introduce fresh topics enthusiastically but do not relate the work to what students have learned previously. Students do not learn from making links with their previous work; they therefore do not build up their knowledge to make secure progress. Teachers do not set specific targets for students to work towards and so students do not improve.

- Not enough work experience opportunities and other realistic work-related activities are available. Students do not participate in college enrichment activities frequently enough. Students do not improve their IT skills and therefore employability skills, because opportunities to use information and communication technologies are too limited.

- Assessment of students' work and feedback are not detailed enough. Comments only tell students that work has not been completed, with insufficient detail about what they need to do to improve. Students are not made aware of where they are on their course and what they need to do to succeed.

- Lessons and workshop activities do not develop students' competence in English and mathematics sufficiently. Teachers do not identify beforehand, or take when they arise,

opportunities to improve students' skills and understanding in these subjects in the context of motor vehicle workshops.

- Students are well behaved in the workshops and aware of the college's commitment to promoting equality and diversity. However, teachers do not routinely relate these commitments to students' everyday work.

- Standards of health and safety and professional practice in the motor vehicle workshop were inadequate during the inspection. Students did not comply with personal protective equipment requirements in unsafe situations. In the workshop, teachers do not always enforce professional standards. The behaviour of some students in the workshop does not reflect industry or employers' expectations.

Information and communication technology (ICT) for practitioners. **16-19 study programmes** **19+ Learning programmes**	Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in the good progress students make. Good teaching results in students developing good ICT skills. They acquire secure technical knowledge of subjects such as programming web sites, animation and computer maintenance.

- Students effectively develop skills for working on their own through helpful coaching and high quality online resources. They make good use of quick reference (QR) codes to locate homework on their mobile devices, such as phones and tablet computers. As a result of good assistance and encouragement from teachers, the majority of students work hard, are enthusiastic and enjoy their studies.

- In effective lessons, students, supervised by their teachers, help and challenge each other to do better. They develop good communication skills in this way and learn from each other. Through problem-solving exercises, students improve their competence in ICT further. Teachers check students' learning frequently. They plan well for the needs of most students, but sometimes miss opportunities to accommodate more capable students. Their planning does not include activities to stretch such students.

- Teachers produce good learning materials with clear explanations and well-constructed exercises that carefully develop students' understanding. The guides and examples they provide, available through the virtual learning environment, help students to practise techniques introduced in the classroom. These cover a good range of topics, such as how to manipulate images in creating animations using sophisticated commercial software.

- Students and teachers make excellent use of very good specialist resources and equipment and develop good technical skills. For example, students use servers that are separated from the main college network to develop skills in networking and writing web server scripts. The skills they develop prepare them well for industry. They learn how to manipulate files in a secure manner on servers, including gaining access to databases and managing passwords.

- Students develop English skills well within their vocational lessons. Students on administration courses undertake regular spelling tests and learn to use punctuation correctly. They develop skills in accurately creating and proof-reading business documents. Teachers routinely correct students' spelling errors, which helps students develop their own proof-reading skills.

- Teachers explain and reinforce mathematical concepts well in the context of the subject. They use puzzles and quizzes appropriately at the beginning of lessons. During lessons they help students develop their mathematical skills by requiring them to calculate the sizes of graphics files using bit rates and animation lengths.

- Assessment practices are good. Teachers assess students regularly and thoughtfully in ways that help them to improve. For example, they send back assignments submitted electronically very promptly, with helpful feedback on the assessed work. The feedback shows how the work can be improved. Marking is informative and encouraging.

- Students improve their own learning by assessing each other's work. For example, when exploring mental health and work-related stress, students research different aspects of mental illness. They then explain to each other their findings, assess each other on clarity, understanding and how well they have explained different topics.

- Students who require extra support receive this promptly after being assessed at the start of the course. Teachers assess their students' individual needs and use the results well in planning lessons. Their target setting with students is less effective as the targets are often not precise enough. This is particularly the case for students on open-access ICT courses.

- Students receive appropriate advice and guidance. They are clear about progression opportunities, including entry to higher education.

- Students on ICT courses do not have enough work experience opportunities. They also have very little enrichment from visiting speakers from business or industry.

- Teachers in lessons actively encourage students to understand the differences between people, respect others' views and act fairly. As a result, students develop a good appreciation of equality and diversity. They receive good training in internet safety and are aware of the dangers of cyber bullying.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate

- Progress made since the last inspection has been too slow. College leaders have not taken action swiftly or been sufficiently decisive in ensuring improvements are made quickly. Since the last inspection, the senior management team and governors have set out a clear mission for the college. This provides a much sharper focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment. However, the actions taken have not been swift or decisive enough, and have had insufficient impact, particularly in improving success rates across the college.

- Although senior managers regularly set and review challenging targets for improvement, teachers have too limited a grasp of how they can contribute towards them. Managers have not effectively translated the overarching priorities into meaningful, challenging and attainable targets at course or curriculum area level.

- Although governors are supportive, and readily challenge the senior management team in some areas, they have not taken decisive actions to ensure that the Principal is held rigorously to account for improving the college at a more urgent rate.

- Since the last inspection, the Principal and senior leaders have not focused with sufficient concentration on improving teaching, learning and assessment. The introduction of a new observation process has started to have an impact in some areas. Some teachers have improved their teaching as a result of good follow up by individual managers, and development activity. However, some observers do not evaluate the impact of teaching on learners' progress sufficiently and assess normal practices, such as good planning and rapport with students, as strengths. Therefore, the process has not improved teaching and learning with sufficient urgency.

- Performance management procedures are inadequate. The Principal and senior leaders have not implemented rigorous measures for managing the performance of teachers. They have not properly applied plans to ensure that observation of teaching should contribute to the appraisal of teachers. As a result, performance management has had limited impact to date on changing practice in the classroom to improve teaching and learning.

- There has been insufficient sharing of good practice across the college. Efforts to ensure that every teacher understands the relevance of such training have not been successful. A few teachers still wrongly perceive some aspects of developments in teaching and learning as not being appropriate to them.

- Resources and accommodation of industry standard provide an excellent environment for learning. For example, within a new engineering and construction block, students construct a '21st century eco-house' which supports the college's 'green skills' programme. This activity also develops the skills of teachers as 'domestic energy advisers'. The work environments in the hairdressing and equine curriculum areas positively contribute to students developing employability and work-readiness skills. However, teachers do not utilise good technology resources to improve teaching and learning.

- Revised arrangements for self-assessment focus on teaching, learning and assessment. However, these arrangements have not yet been fully implemented. The accuracy and coverage of course reviews vary too greatly. The great variation in the quality of evaluation by course teams has held back improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. Course reviews do not take into account how the large numbers of short courses can give an overly positive view of success rates, or properly evaluate subcontracted provision.

- Senior managers do not monitor rigorously the progress or impact of actions for improvement arising from self-assessment. This has severely limited the college's capacity to improve. The process of self-assessment takes limited account of students' views. Students' comments, concerns and complaints are not always fully investigated and used to make improvements.

- Managers are flexible and creative in their approach to developing the college's short course curriculum, which is highly responsive to the needs of employers and the community. For example, the college has taken on the management of a local 'job shop' to advertise employment opportunities and improve the offer of apprenticeships, following the closure of Jobcentre Plus.

- The college has highly responsive relationships with local schools. The links provide clear vocational routes for young, challenging, and often disadvantaged, pupils. The college offers them a stimulating and motivational learning experience. Many pupils gain renewed self-assurance and confidence in education and, as a result, progress further in their education and training.

- Managers, in introducing study programmes, have not developed opportunities for work experience sufficiently, other than in childcare and land-based courses. The teaching of English and mathematics across the college is not yet good enough. The formation of a cohesive functional skills team to help students to improve their English and mathematics is too recent to show impact.

- An effective equality committee organises a good programme of events which raises awareness of equality and diversity. It closely monitors the performance of appropriate equality targets, including those for the performance of different groups of students. The college promotes inclusion by providing a free bus service covering outlying rural areas, which enables many students to attend college who would not otherwise be able to do so.

- Students feel secure, are courteous and respectful. Harassment and bullying are rare. However, procedures to investigate and deal with such events are not always followed through rigorously enough.

- The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. All staff and governors are appropriately trained. Relevant policies and procedures are in place and effectively implemented, with the exception of the e-safety policy which is not up to date. The management of health and safety is inadequate within the motor vehicle subject area.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Norton Radstock 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	4	-	-	4	-	4	-	-	-
Outcomes for learners	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	4	-	-	4	-	4	-	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	3
Animal care and equine studies	2
Engineering	3
Motor vehicle	4
ICT for practitioners	2

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16 to 18 and 19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	4794
Principal/CEO	Shirley Arayan
Date of previous inspection	November 2012
Website address	www.nortcoll.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+
	121	281	253	2700	197	413	-	59
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	**Intermediate**		**Advanced**		**Higher**			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	64	32	29	48	1	2		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	7							
Part-time	70							
Number of community learners	75							
Number of employability learners	81							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	▪ Learning Curve (JAA) ▪ N-Gaged Training ▪ Templegate Training							

Contextual information

Norton Radstock College is a small general further education college in rural north-east Somerset, providing vocational programmes in 13 subject areas. The main college site is in Radstock, with a vocational centre in Radstock, another at Keynsham and a number of small community venues.

Attainment at GCSE in local schools is modest and about a third of students come to the college with low prior attainment. Most learners are on foundation and intermediate programmes and the college offers apprenticeships in eight areas. The college works with local schools and training providers to broaden vocational opportunities for learners aged 14 to 16, and offers foundation degrees and access to higher education courses. Around 5% of the learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds; this proportion is higher than that in the local population. The college draws a significant number of learners from areas of high deprivation.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Peter Green HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the senior manager for student support services 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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