

# Hull College Group

General Further Education College



17–20 November 2015

## Inspection dates

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Require improvement
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Full-time provision for 14 to 16-year-olds	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- The successful focus staff place on developing employability skills ensures learners and apprentices have very positive attitudes to learning, improve their self-confidence and progress well to positive destinations.
- Highly effective and innovative partnership working provides excellent learning opportunities for learners and apprentices.
- Teaching and learning are good and improving.
- Wide-ranging and high-quality adult provision meets the needs of learners and the local area very well.
- The newly introduced full-time provision for 14 to 16-year-olds is good and there are very high levels of pupil progression to further education and training.
- Apprenticeship provision has improved significantly and is now good.

### It is not yet an outstanding provider

- Although improving, the progress learners make on study programmes, particularly with their English and mathematics qualifications, is not yet good.
- Teachers' planning of learning does not always make sure that the different abilities of all learners are met and that the more-able learners are suitably challenged.
- While senior leaders and managers have improved aspects of the provision over the last year, they have not always identified underperformance and put effective actions into place swiftly enough.

## **Full report**

### **Information about the provider**

- The Hull College Group is one of the largest general further education colleges in the country with centres in the city of Kingston upon Hull, Goole and Harrogate. In addition the college manages a very large number of apprenticeships, based throughout the country, through its HCUK Training division.
- Around half of those learning with the group are adult and a third apprentices, with the remaining fifth on the 16 to 19 study programme. The college has also recently introduced full-time provision for 14 to 16-year-olds and there are just under 200 pupils currently enrolled for this provision. The majority of learners come from Kingston upon Hull, which is the tenth most deprived local authority area in England. Around three quarters of learners aged 16 to 19 enrol at the college without a GCSE grade C or above in English or mathematics.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve further?**

- Identify dips in performance as soon as they arise and put effective strategies in place to address them before they cause a decline in learner and apprenticeship progress and achievement.
- Further develop the strategy for improving English and mathematics for learners on the 16 to 19 study programme, making sure staff use it well in all areas, monitor learner progress effectively and put prompt interventions in place where needed.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment further by:
  - ensuring teachers' planning of lessons takes account of all the different abilities of learners and apprentices within the group
  - providing the most-able learners and apprentices with tasks and activities which are at the right level and which challenge them to achieve their best.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Senior leaders, managers and governors have high aspirations for learners, apprentices and staff and are committed to, and passionate about, improving the provision to achieve high standards. They have taken decisive action and made good progress in rectifying areas requiring improvement, such as underperforming provision and teachers' performance.
- Senior managers and governors set a clear strategic direction for the college and the chief executive officer (CEO) provides strong leadership. They work very successfully with a range of partners and stakeholders and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to ensure that provision is exceptionally responsive to local and regional priorities. This ensures learners have excellent opportunities to progress. For example, the curriculum is delivering LEP priorities in engineering and construction, with course options such as welding to meet local demand. Managers are planning innovative provision in conjunction with a large international employer, to provide significant training and employment opportunities for the people of Hull.
- The CEO and governors have worked very successfully to ensure the financial stability of the group. They have created a well-resourced environment for learning, including high-quality workshops and commercial outlets, such as those in construction, hairdressing, beauty, and catering, which prepares learners well for work.
- Senior managers have strengthened the quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment. This process is rigorous and links closely to appraisal and performance management. Where teachers are underperforming, they receive high-quality support and training that enables them to improve. Managers use lesson observations and themed learning walks well to support teachers, share good practice and plan training. Staff value the focus on improving professionalism and feel well supported.
- Managers' self-assessment of the provision is broadly accurate and uses a wide range of information to make judgements. The associated improvement plan developed by managers accurately identifies the themes required to improve provision. Most quality improvement plans set out detailed actions for course teams and focus rightly on actions to improve teaching, learning and outcomes. However, improvement plans in a few areas lack detail and measurable targets, making it difficult to monitor progress. Previous issues were not picked up quickly enough and managers made slow progress with some interventions.
- For a number of years the quality of provision and success rates for apprenticeships were weak. Leadership and management of apprentice provision are now good. All aspects of subcontracted delivery have been reviewed and managers have put rigorous measures in place to risk assess the quality of partners. The quality improvement strategy is now very effective; as a result, apprentice success rates have risen markedly and the provision is now of good quality.
- Managers have worked effectively to ensure that study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19 are relevant, with clear progression routes in place at all levels. These programmes prepare learners well for their next steps. However, the strategy to improve English and mathematics was unsuccessful last year and success rates declined significantly. A new strategy is now in place and is starting to have a positive impact on learner progress.
- The promotion of equality and celebration of diversity is particularly good and is at the heart of the group. Managers successfully increase the large majority of learners' awareness of both equality and diversity through events and promotions throughout the year. Learners with a wide range of abilities and from different backgrounds receive a high level of support to overcome any personal barriers to learning.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise to the board; they are well informed and have a good understanding of key strengths and areas for improvement. They provide effective challenge by asking searching questions of senior leaders and hold them to account well; for example, in improving the quality of subcontracted apprentice provision and English and mathematics.
  - Governors support managers well in their drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning by an 'excellence' committee. They rigorously interrogate the accurate information they receive on retention and achievement, comparing outcomes with targets.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
  - The college is a safe and welcoming environment. Designated safeguarding managers are appropriately trained. Managers work closely with relevant agencies and with parents to ensure that learners are safe. The few incidents that have required action have been well managed and reported to governors. The central register of staff cleared to work with young people is comprehensive and up to date.

- Managers are very aware of dangers of the internet and maintain a strong focus on online safety. There are strong links with local agencies that support vulnerable people well, including the local safeguarding children’s board. Managers ensure that teachers update their knowledge of safeguarding; for example most recently on how to identify and tackle extremism and radicalisation.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- Teachers have high expectations and set challenging targets; learners and apprentices have very positive attitudes and arrive at lessons ready to learn.
- Leaders have made changes to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Although very recent, the changes are leading to better teaching and learning because lesson observations are focused on developing teachers’ practice and aiding this through helpful support and a comprehensive programme of staff development. This is resulting in more learners making good or better progress.
- Teachers are well qualified and use their knowledge and vocational expertise effectively to devise teaching strategies that engage and inspire learners and apprentices. Information and learning technology are used innovatively to enhance learners’ knowledge and understanding. For example, in construction, teachers have developed coded links to materials that demonstrate techniques, such as installing a dado rail, that learners can download and refer to when working on-site.
- Teachers promote, and learners adopt, high professional standards. For example, in hairdressing and beauty therapy, learners reach stringent industry standards at all times and understand fully the need to do so. In vocational lessons, teachers place a very high priority on employability skills and focus on the development of learners’ and apprentices’ English and mathematical skills. Learners in many subjects are adept at keeping glossaries and practising technical terminology. Learners in a level 1 construction class demonstrated good numerical skills in calculating the number of bricks required for a building project.
- Teaching assistants provide good additional learning support both in and out of lessons. Learners in receipt of support achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, their peers. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and learners with high needs, achieve very well and make good progress because of the high-quality support they receive from teachers and staff.
- Teachers use questioning very effectively to probe and assess learners’ and apprentices’ understanding. In the best lessons, teachers’ questions are directed and vary in difficulty so that learners of all abilities are challenged to progress. For example, in a level 1 lesson, the teacher used learners’ responses as ongoing assessment, and their feedback was used skilfully to modify the course of the lesson. Written assessment, however, requires improvement; it is often not helpful enough in showing what learners need to do to improve.
- Staff assess all learners and apprentices thoroughly at the start of their course to find out what they know, and can do, and the levels of their English and mathematics skills. The information from the assessments is used effectively to direct learners on to the most appropriate English and/or mathematics course and to indicate whether learners require additional support. The college’s discrete provision for English and mathematics is improving, but managers are aware that there is still more work to be done.
- In the small minority of lessons that require improvement, teachers do not plan sufficiently for the range of abilities in the class. In particular, teachers do not provide enough challenge for the more-able learners. Consequently, these learners finish ahead of others and have nothing to do; this hinders their progress. In the weaker lessons, teachers give too little attention to learners’ acquisition of knowledge and understanding of new ideas. Learners are often engaged for too long in activities that are task based, and although they appear busy, they are not making sufficient progress in their learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is good

- Learners and apprentices across all types of provision develop very good employability skills, despite the weak performance of learners on the 16 to 19 study programme in their English and mathematics qualifications last year. These skills help those without employment to gain work and those with employment to gain greater responsibilities or promotion. The employability passport, which has been created with input from employers, is a highly effective way of helping learners track the skills they are achieving.
- Almost all learners on the 16 to 19 study programme take part in a well-structured programme of relevant, external work placements, which develops useful skills and feeds into their employability passport. For example art learners present and work in local galleries. Pupils aged 14 to 16 also have a period of work experience, which motivates them and helps them understand the high industrial standards needed in their vocational studies.

- Learners and apprentices are keen to explain how their self-confidence has improved as they have progressed with their studies. They produce work and develop practical skills of a high standard; for example in carpentry and joinery they make door and window frames to cabinet making standards. Learners use technical language effectively. Design students can explain the ideas behind their project, the different techniques they will be using and how these will combine to form the final product, such as a wallpaper design for a child's room.
- Learners and apprentices receive high-quality, impartial advice and guidance which ensures they have a good understanding of their career options and what they need to do to achieve them.
- Learners and apprentices know how to stay safe and who to contact if they have any safety concerns in the college or the workplace. Apprentices and most learners behave well; however, a very small minority of learners use inappropriate language and show poor behaviour on occasion.
- Staff have worked hard to develop strategies to encourage learners to lead a healthy lifestyle, such as the 'Get up and get out' campaign. The positive impact of this can be seen in areas targeted such as construction and computing.
- While learners and apprentices in a number of areas have an understanding of concepts such as democracy and tolerance, this is not the case in all areas. In addition, few are able to explain how these concepts relate to their college experience or workplace.

## Outcomes for learners

are good

- Learners and apprentices make good progress on the majority of courses and are very well prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment. All staff support learners and apprentices very successfully to develop their employability skills. Learners are able to take additional qualifications, work experience and a wide range of enrichment activities to improve their understanding and skills.
- Adult learners, who make up around half the total number of those learning with the group, succeed on a wide range of courses at a variety of levels. The large number of learners on employability courses make very good progress, achieve their qualification and move on to positive destinations. Most learners on access to higher education courses succeed, and success rates on GCSE mathematics and English are high. Learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision make good progress; success rates are improving after a dip in 2013/14. Learners on functional skills courses are making better progress this year than in previous years.
- Apprentices make up around a third of those learning with the group, and the numbers are growing. Their success rates have improved significantly over the last three years and those currently on programme are making good progress. The most recent improvement has been greatest in subcontracted provision where previous success rates, both overall and within the planned timescale, were weakest.
- For the small number of 14 to 16-year-old pupils current progress is very strong, as are attendance and retention. Almost all of the pupils who completed in summer 2015 have progressed to further education or training.
- For learners on the 16 to 19 study programme success rates for English and mathematics in 2014/15 declined significantly. College staff have put in place actions to address this issue and their positive impact can already be seen. Learner attendance, progress in lessons and progress over time show marked improvement, with the majority of learners on track to achieve. Learners are also making good progress on their vocational courses.
- There are no groups of learners or apprentices who underachieve compared to their peers.
- Staff have successfully secured destinations data on three quarters of their leavers. This reveals that more than 90% progressed to a positive destination, such as sustained employment or further education. Additional work is taking place to ensure they reduce the proportion of unknown destinations.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- Currently 2,970 learners are on the 16 to 19 study programmes, which represents 20% of overall provision. Study programmes cover a wide range of subject areas and levels, with large numbers of learners in health, public services and care, engineering, and arts, media and publishing.
- Success rates for both functional skills and GCSE English and mathematics were very low in 2014/15 and significantly below those of similar providers. This had an impact on overall success rates. However, recent changes of strategy and implementation for the teaching, learning and tracking of these subjects reveal that learners are now making better progress. Attendance is also much improved.
- In too many lessons teachers do not challenge learners sufficiently; consequently learners do not make

the progress of which they are capable. Teachers do not routinely provide extension activities for those learners who complete tasks before their peers, resulting in some becoming bored, disengaged and, very occasionally, behaving inappropriately. However, there is good teaching across all the vocational subjects. For example in hairdressing and beauty therapy, teachers have very high expectations and set non-negotiable high standards.

- All staff have been trained in recognising and promoting British values and identifying learners who might be at risk from extremist views. However, they have not yet fully implemented this training in their lessons to develop learners' awareness and understanding of these issues.
- Teachers integrate English and mathematics well into vocational assignments. They rigorously monitor the correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar as well as ensuring that all written communication is clear. The integration of numeracy enables learners to recognise the importance of mathematics in their everyday lives. For example, learners in a preparing for employment lesson calculated which type of savings account would be best when saving for a proposed holiday by comparing different interest rates.
- Accommodation and resources support teaching and learning well. Those in hairdressing and beauty therapy, construction, motor vehicle and visual and performing arts, are excellent. Learners benefit from having access to industry standard equipment, enabling them to produce good standards of work and prepare them well for future employment.
- Teachers offer valuable encouragement and learners appreciate this. Teachers' good feedback ensures learners know what to do to improve and can immediately act on this, for example when drawing graphs in mathematics and when labelling an axis to show meaning.
- Teachers imaginatively encourage the use of mobile technology to improve assessments. For example, in a musical theatre lesson learners recorded a run-through of a dance routine on their mobile phones and then immediately uploaded it so they could collectively identify areas for development.
- Teachers prepare learners very well for employment. They insist on the correct use of specialist vocational language and terminologies and promote an awareness of the various codes of conduct required in the workplace. Visiting speakers and employers regularly visit the college to acquaint learners with the demands of the workplace. Art and design and hairdressing and beauty therapy learners regularly work successfully to fulfil the demands of clients. The large majority of learners take part in meaningful and stimulating work placements which have resulted in some cases in regular employment.

## Adult learning programmes

are good

- Adult learners account for around half of the total number of those learning at the group. Most follow part-time programmes across all subject areas. A high proportion of adult learners progress to positive destinations including sustainable employment.
- In the large majority of lessons, teachers plan their lessons well to take learners' individual starting points and learning needs into account. As a result, the learners work confidently and independently, developing and practising the skills they need for the workplace. Professional cookery sessions are lively and challenging, with excellent pace and good extension of professional vocabulary. In carpentry and joinery courses, teachers guide learners to produce work of exceptional quality.
- Teachers are well qualified and make very effective use of their recent industrial experience to enhance their lessons. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, sessions are vibrant and busy; teachers promote high industrial standards, and provide learners with excellent preparation for work. Learning is linked to professional standards. Teachers use realistic scenarios and role play to help learners prepare for salon roles.
- In access to higher education classes, teachers very effectively help learners to develop good study and research skills. Teachers use incisive questioning to build on and extend learner understanding. Learners speak highly of their learning experience, and of the valuable careers advice and guidance they receive to ensure that they are on the right programme for their chosen subject.
- GCSE English and mathematics classes for adults are effective. Staff support learners to develop their skills through careful explanations, thought-provoking activities and frequent checks on understanding. As a result the majority of learners make good progress and GCSE pass rates for adults at grades A\* to C are high.
- Learners following short courses to help them gain employment are enthusiastic about their learning and benefit from the lively approaches their teachers use in classes. For example, in considering work in the retail sector, they explored what customers want, and devised and promoted innovative new products. For the large majority, the programme boosts their confidence and skills sufficiently to enable them to progress to positive destinations.
- In ESOL classes teachers' thorough planning translates into structured and purposeful learning for the large majority of learners. Stimulating and challenging activities develop the skills ESOL learners need for employment and citizenship. Teachers have high expectations of learners, and motivate them to take part



and learn from one another; for example, through evaluating one another's written work and giving positive feedback. As a result learners make good progress.

- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of learners. Learners have too little opportunity to demonstrate their learning, for example through making extended spoken contributions. As a result, learners remain passive listeners rather than active contributors. In a small number of classes, most learners complete the same tasks at the same time, meaning more-able learners in particular do not work to their full potential.

## **Apprenticeships**

**are good**

- Apprentices make up one third of the total number of those learning at Hull College Group. Subcontractors provide two thirds of these apprenticeships. Apprentices work across nine main subject areas specialising in: engineering; building and construction; retail and commercial enterprise; business administration and customer services; health and social care; information and communication technology (ICT); sport, leisure and recreation; creative media and design; and direct learning support. The proportion of apprenticeships is set to grow further to meet the current and future employment and training needs of local and regional employers in areas such as logistics and energy technologies.
- Managers, employers and higher education partners work together well to design effective learning opportunities in the workplace, and to identify the range of skills that apprentices need to demonstrate their growing confidence and abilities. Building on carefully coordinated and skilled teaching, most apprentices gain the theoretical and technical knowledge they need. Teachers and assessors use honed and targeted questions well to check learning and secure understanding. Consequently, apprentices develop their job-related skills well, often to very high levels. For example, apprentice process engineers controlled a full-scale and realistic petro-chemical processing plant with panache, displaying stringent and excellent team and project management skills early in their apprenticeship. Occasionally, in business administration and customer service, classroom training and workplace activities are insufficiently challenging for advanced-level apprentices.
- Apprentices are attentive, respectful and work conscientiously to exacting standards. They display professional and respectful attitudes. Most apprentices attend work and training sessions on time, and absence rates are low. Apprentices enjoy their learning; due to the high standard of their work, their employers see them as indispensable team members. Apprentices progress well into relevant employment, gain promotion or additional responsibilities at work. Many take up opportunities to further their learning and skills by taking additional qualifications.
- Assessors and teachers give supportive spoken and written feedback on vocational work. Most assessment is suitably rigorous and often exceeds the standards apprentices need to reach. In a very small minority of cases, poorly planned assessments leave apprentices confused about their achievements. In these few instances, apprentices make little progress.
- Apprentices develop their English, mathematical and ICT functional skills well through work activity and direct training; for example, they apply challenging mathematical skills in complex work-related scenarios. However, many assessors do not correct spelling and grammar mistakes consistently, and so fail to promote appropriately professional standards of writing.
- Managers have improved the performance of most subcontractors; success rates within subcontracted provision have improved significantly. Through rigorous subcontractor management and performance reviews, managers ensure that apprentices benefit from regular reviews in which assessors set them targets to ensure they stay on track. Consequently, the large majority of apprentices go on to complete their apprenticeship on time. Too often though, these targets are about completing coursework and not about the skills and knowledge apprentices need to demonstrate.
- Apprentices feel safe at work and at college. Most are aware of the dangers of radicalisation and understand the importance of staying safe online. Apprentices have contact cards, and know who to see and where to go in order to report concerns. Although assessors and teachers know about equality and diversity, health and safety, and the importance of democracy, tolerance, respect and healthy lifestyles, few apprentices were able to explain how these aspects affect their daily lives.

## **Full-time provision for 14–16-year-olds**

**is good**

- There are currently 178 14–16-year-old pupils directly enrolled with the group, who attend at either the Hull or Goole site. The group offers a broad and inclusive curriculum which meets the statutory Key Stage 4 requirements. Pupils follow an individualised learning programme and study a combination of core subjects and a wide range of vocational options and enrichment activities which prepare them well for progression on to further study or training.

- Pupils benefit from individual careers guidance which enables them to make informed choices about their 14 to 16 learning programme and helps them start to develop clear and realistic plans for their future. This guidance is clearly understood by pupils and their parents/carers.
- The effective allocation of pupil premium funding has contributed to the raising of attainment levels of disadvantaged pupils. A range of positive measures including dedicated individual support, and extra-curricular activities have ensured that disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Attendance is good and the vast majority of pupils arrive promptly for their lessons. Staff and managers follow up unauthorised absence promptly through robust monitoring procedures. This reinforces the importance of good work ethics and means a prompt start to classes.
- The vast majority of pupils demonstrate very good behaviour and have a positive attitude to learning; they are highly motivated, eager to learn and display high levels of respect for others' ideas and points of view. For example, in a personal, social and development lesson on drug awareness, pupils engaged in topical discussion and were able to provide mature and informed responses to questions from the teacher and their peers.
- In most lessons teaching and learning are effective and pupils make good progress from their starting points. Suitably qualified teachers with relevant subject knowledge of the 14–16 curriculum and experienced vocational tutors effectively support the development of both academic knowledge and vocational skills.
- Assessment of learning is rigorous and effective. Teachers use a range of strategies including discussion and nominated questioning to check pupils' progress and provide pupils with regular and informative verbal feedback to reinforce their understanding of key learning. This helps consolidate pupils' understanding and enables them to make further progress.
- Safeguarding arrangements are highly effective and both college sites have a dedicated and secure 14 to 16 area. Pupils feel safe at college and feel confident in approaching a member of staff if they have any issues. They have an informed awareness of the potential risks posed by online grooming.
- The majority of teachers provide detailed and constructive written feedback to pupils on what they need to do to improve further and routinely highlight spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. However, feedback from a few teachers is unhelpful in identifying areas for improvement and their highlighting of spelling, grammar and punctuation errors is inconsistent.
- In the better lessons teachers use assessment information effectively to plan learning and meet the individual needs of all pupils. This ensures that all pupils, regardless of ability, engage in learning that is appropriately demanding. However, this is not always the case and in a small number of lessons learning activities are not sufficiently challenging for the more-able pupils, which restricts their progress.



## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	General further education college
<b>Age range of learners</b>	14+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	26,492
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Gary Warke MBE
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.Hull-college.ac.uk">www.Hull-college.ac.uk</a>

## 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	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	810	1,300	905	1,240	1,235	802	0	14
	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	693	2,079	326	1,175	2	64		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	15		13		28			
Number of learners aged 14-16	178							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deere Apprenticeships Ltd</li> <li>■ Ensis Solutions Ltd</li> <li>■ Impact Training</li> <li>■ JT Development Solutions Ltd</li> <li>■ Logistics and distribution Training Ltd</li> <li>■ London Coat</li> <li>■ Prospect Training</li> <li>■ Tyro Training</li> <li>■ Youtrain Limited</li> </ul>							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

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The above team was assisted by the Group Director of Quality and Standards, as nominee, and carried out the inspection at short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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