



# Myerscough College



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

Better  
education  
and care

## Inspection report

Audience  
Post-sixteen

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130743

## Contents

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Basic information about the college	3
Background of the organisation	4
Scope of the inspection	4
<hr/>	
Summary of grades awarded	6
Curriculum areas	6
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Overall judgement	7
Main findings	10
Curriculum area inspections	15

## Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Myerscough College
Type of college:	Specialist land-based
Principal:	Ann Turner
Address of college:	Bilsborrow Preston Lancashire PR3 0RY
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Chair of governors:	Ann Jones
Unique reference number:	130743
Name of lead inspector:	Jo Parkman, ALI
Dates of inspection:	9-13 October 2006

## Background of the organisation

1. Myerscough College is one of the largest specialist land-based colleges in the country and is located near Preston in Lancashire. The main campus is situated on a 600 hectare estate which includes a farm, horticultural production, a sports centre, a golf academy, animal care and equine units. The college runs courses at centres in Blackburn, Burnley, Liverpool, Manchester, Dorset and Blackpool. The college also runs a rural business centre. There is residential accommodation for 700 learners at the main campus. The college mission is to provide high quality education and training together with research and advisory facilities for the rural land-based and related industries in the communities that it serves.
2. The area served by the college varies from relatively prosperous areas to areas of deprivation. West Lancashire is ranked 127 in terms of deprivation index scores. The proportion of young people in Lancashire gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C in 2004 was 58.9% compared with the national average of 53.7%. For Lancashire as a whole, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 5.3%.
3. The college is the focus for land-based education and training in Lancashire, but it also recruits learners nationally and from overseas. In 2004/05 the college enrolled 15,289 learners of whom about 40% were aged 16-18. Over 1,000 learners were attending HE courses at the college in 2004/2005. In 2004/05, 66% of learners aged 16-18 and 53% of adult learners were male. Around 47% of learners come from Lancashire. For learners aged 16-18, the largest proportion of enrolments is at level 3, but for adults it is at level 1. There are around 570 work-based learning apprentices, most of whom are working towards NVOs in horticulture. Some 40% of the full-time FE learners are resident on the college campus. In 2004/05, around 1% of learners were from a minority ethnic background.
4. The college is a partner in two Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs). These are in farriery, in association with the Farriery Training Council and in arboriculture and forestry, in association with the University of Central Lancashire.

## Scope of the inspection

5. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: animal care and veterinary nursing; equine studies; horticulture; golf, sport and leisure and access programmes.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: grade 3
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: grade 3

*Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.*

## Curriculum areas

Animal care and veterinary nursing	Good: grade 2
Equine studies	Satisfactory: grade 3
Horticulture	Good: grade 2
Golf, sport and leisure	Good: grade 2
Access programmes	Satisfactory: grade 3

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

6. This is a satisfactory college. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. College data shows that success rates for 2005/06 are satisfactory, having improved significantly from 2003/04. However, retention rates on level 3 courses remain unsatisfactory. Work-based learners' progress and success rates are good. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners develop good practical skills and enjoy their studies.
7. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The college makes very good use of practical resources in teaching and learners develop good practical skills. The college has eradicated most of the unsatisfactory teaching, although there is still too much dull and uninspiring theory teaching and insufficient outstanding teaching. Assessment practice is generally good. The college does not use initial assessment consistently across all curriculum areas to ensure the identification of learners' additional learning needs. However, additional learning support is effective.
8. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. The college has been successful in widening participation in education and training to people from non-traditional backgrounds, with learning difficulties and disabilities, and mental health difficulties. The college's links with employers, industry and schools are strong and productive. The proportion of learners from postcode areas with high deprivation indices has increased and is the highest in the sector. Provision for learners aged 14-16 provides good progression routes onto other college courses.
9. The college provides satisfactory guidance and support for learners. Pre-course guidance is good but the college does not promote careers information well in college areas, although learners have access to intranet information. Target setting in most tutorials is insufficiently challenging and the structure and quality of tutorials is not yet satisfactory on all courses. Managers monitor attendance closely and it is generally high, although in 2005/06 it declined over the year for most national diploma courses.
10. Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. Financial management is good. The Principal gives a high priority to the improvement of quality. Quality assurance is insufficiently rigorous and the college makes insufficient use of data. Retention rates are improving but are not yet consistently good. Some success rates have not yet risen sufficiently in spite of recent improvements to processes. The management of work-based learning is now good. Self-assessment is satisfactory but not always sufficiently critical or accurate in identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

## Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: grade 3

11. Since the last inspection the college has demonstrated that it has satisfactory capacity to improve. Successful action has been taken to improve parts of its provision, such as success rates, especially at level 3 and in work-based learning. The college has eradicated most of the unsatisfactory teaching. One curriculum area has improved by one grade, but one has declined from good to satisfactory.
12. Self-assessment is still not sufficiently critical or accurate at identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Inspectors agreed with three of the curriculum grades awarded by the college but judged one curriculum area to be better and one to be poorer than the college's assessment.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

13. The college has made satisfactory progress in promoting improvements since the last inspection. The college has addressed some of the key weaknesses identified at the last inspection but has yet to resolve others. Retention and success rates had fallen significantly at level 3 and then started to rise again, but are still low for some programmes. Success rates for work-based learning have improved significantly and are now good. The use of data for quality assurance and improvement is still underdeveloped.

## Key strengths of the college

### *Strengths*

- good use of practical resources in teaching
- good and well-managed work-based learning
- good development of learners' practical skills
- strong links with employers, industry and schools
- strong financial management
- good progress in widening participation.

## Areas for improvement

### *The college should address:*

- retention rates on level 3 courses
- the quality of theory teaching
- the structure and quality of tutorials
- the quality of career advice and guidance offered by the college
- target setting to challenge learners and monitor progress
- the consistency of initial assessment for literacy and numeracy
- the analysis and use of data



- the use of self-assessment as a tool for quality improvement
- the effectiveness of quality assurance.

## Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

*Contributory grades:*

*Work-based learning*

*Good: grade 2*

14. Achievements and standards are satisfactory overall and are good in work-based learning. In 2005/06, success rates on further education courses were in line with the national averages at levels 1 and 2 for all ages. At these levels, success rates have generally kept up with a rising national average since 2003. However, success rates at level 3 for all ages have declined since 2003 and only began to rise again for 2005/06. They are now in line with the national average for learners aged 16-18, but still below the national average for adults despite a 15% improvement on the previous year. Retention rates show a similar picture. At levels 1 and 2, retention has been in line with national averages for all ages and above national averages for adults at level 1. Retention rates for level 3 courses declined significantly since 2003 but have improved in 2005/06. Currently, retention rates for all ages remain below the national average for level 3 with adults having poorer retention rates than learners aged 16-18. Pass rates have shown a steady improvement at all levels and are at least at the national average and significantly better for adults at level 3. Pass rates on some externally examined horticulture courses are particularly high. The college provided the incomplete and unvalidated 2005/06 data. The self-assessment report identified the poor retention rates at level 3.
15. Key skills success rates improved considerably in 2004/05. Overall, success rates for key skills have improved dramatically from around 13% below national rates to 9% above, for 2004/05. The biggest improvement has been at level 2. However, the success rates at level 3 have not improved and they remain well below national rates, although very few learners study at this level.
16. Work-based learning success rates have improved significantly since the last inspection and are currently good at 57% for apprentices. Around 70% of apprentices achieve their national vocational qualification (NVQ) which is significantly better than the national average of 57%. Timely success rates remain well below the national average but current learners are now making good progress and achieving in a timely way. The college has yet to evaluate success rates for school pupils aged 14-16, who study at the college. Progression to higher level courses and employment is good for most learners.
17. Learners achieve good practical skills through lessons and work placements and develop a thorough understanding of safe working practices. Standards of learners' written work are at least satisfactory. Most learners enjoy their

studies. Attendance during inspection was good, although records for 2005/06 show a decline in attendance across the year on most national diploma courses.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

*Contributory grades:*

*Work-based learning*

*Good: grade 2*

18. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as identified in the college's self-assessment report. The college has introduced a more rigorous system for the observation of teaching and learning related to teachers' professional development. Most lessons are now at least satisfactory, although few are outstanding. The college's lesson observation records identify this but the college has made little progress in increasing the amount of outstanding teaching in some curriculum areas.
19. Practical teaching is better than theory teaching. Teachers make productive use of many specialist resources including the college estate, a well stocked animal care unit and excellent sports facilities. Teachers are knowledgeable and keep up-to-date with current industry practices. In less effective theory lessons, teachers talk too much, for too long and with little change of activity. Teachers do not always give learners enough to do.
20. The learning support department co-ordinates work well and ensures that tutors receive the results of initial assessment promptly. Target setting for the monitoring of learners' progress is still a relatively new process. Although most learners know how they are doing overall, some are unaware of their targets to improve or their targets are insufficiently challenging. Assessment of learners' work is good. Work-based learning assessments are carried out particularly effectively in the work place. Most internal verification is thorough and the college routinely follows up any actions from external verifier reports.
21. Teachers do not use information and learning technology (ILT) sufficiently in most lessons. Learners in horticulture, landscape and sport have access to high quality learning materials on the college's virtual learning environment (MOLLNET), but other curriculum areas have not developed this resource. The reporting of learners' progress to parents and employers is good.
22. The college's response to the needs and interests of learners is good. The college plans the curriculum well and offers a wide choice of courses and progression from pre-entry to higher education (HE) or employment in many areas. Most learners progress to employment. The links with the University of Central Lancashire are productive. In most curriculum areas, the match of learner to the level of the course is good. A recent analysis into the reasons for low retention rates on level 3 programmes has led to shorter study modes

- at national certificate level for some learners. Links with employers offering work-based learning placements are strong and employers are fully involved in their apprentices' programmes.
23. The college centres in Liverpool, Blackburn and Burnley have successfully widened access to under represented groups. For example, courses enable young people to work with professional football clubs and re-enter education. The college approach is highly responsive in meeting the needs of employers across a wide range of land-based and wider curriculum areas. The curriculum is flexible and imaginative and employers appreciate the way in which collaborative work has developed.
  24. The college has an expanding and vibrant provision for approximately 300 learners aged 14-16 from local schools and other educational centres. The college has not analysed and evaluated the achievements of these learners. The college is a key partner in collaborating in external developments for learners aged 14-19. Links with secondary schools enable good development of land-based provision.
  25. The college publicity and marketing are effective and enhanced by a range of taster events, activities and projects working with local and regional schools and the community. A range of enrichment activities is offered and includes sports and vocational visits. Learners are keen fundraisers for charities. However, the enrichment offer is not always of interest to learners or inclusive enough for those with difficulties and/or disabilities. There is no evaluation of learners' participation in enrichment.
  26. Support and guidance for learners are satisfactory but good for learners on work-based learning apprenticeships. There are good transition arrangements for all learners, and particularly for learners with difficulties and/or disabilities. These learners and their parents, value the additional learning support highly. The college manages learning support well and the service has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The college has also made good progress in improving the number of qualified learning support staff, although specialist expertise in curriculum areas is insufficient. Induction helps most learners to settle into their studies. The college has a wide range of services available including those of nurse, chaplain and counsellor.
  27. Links to external welfare services are good. Senior managers are knowledgeable about the progress and care of vulnerable young people. The college does not discourage smoking around all areas of the campus sufficiently. Neither does it promote healthy eating sufficiently. The college has reviewed tutorial arrangements to include clearer guidance for tutors; however, the quality of group tutorials remains too inconsistent. The college has produced guidance to tutors on the content of group tutorials. However, guidance on personal health, careers, visits and coverage of social issues is insufficient. Learners value the support they receive from their personal tutor and the support and information provided by Connexions staff. The college

does not give sufficient attention to the quality and timing of career advice and guidance. The college does not promote career information well, although learners have access to intranet information.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

*Work-based learning*

*Good: grade 2*

28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management and monitoring of college finances is appropriately thorough. Managers control costs carefully while maintaining good levels of expenditure on resources. The college has developed comprehensive systems for managing data. However, in some areas, the use of data to analyse performance comprehensively is insufficient.
29. Staff are appropriately experienced in their vocational area, and they work with the college to develop their skills in teaching and learning. Mentors now support teachers during their first year at the college. A structured approach to staff development identifies needs, but attendance at staff training is not consistently high. Despite involvement in national initiatives to improve the teaching of theory, progress towards excellence in teaching practice is still insufficient.
30. The college has grown and widened participation successfully. The college now provides learning opportunities in more urban community settings. In 2005/06, a quarter of learners on long courses were from postcode areas with high deprivation indices. The college goes to considerable lengths to accommodate learners with disabilities successfully, but a full range of measures to evaluate the effectiveness of equality and diversity arrangements has yet to be implemented.
31. The new Principal places considerable emphasis on improving quality and on effective communication with, and involvement of, staff at all levels. Quality assurance is insufficiently rigorous. Retention rates have improved but they are not yet consistently high. Some success rates have not yet risen sufficiently in spite of recent improvements to processes. However, the college now manages work-based learning provision strongly. This provision has high success rates and effective quality improvement systems.
32. The annual self-assessment process uses the views of staff, learners and external stakeholders. The latest self-assessment report, completed in January 2006, contains more emphasis on quality issues and targets for improvement. However, it is still insufficiently critical and is not always accurate in its assessments of provision or of further improvements needed.
33. Resources and facilities at the main college site and its outreach centres are good and some are excellent. Processes to assess risk and promote safety are

good. Excellent partnership work with employers benefits learners and the wider community and the college hosts a rural business centre.

34. Governors discharge their duties effectively and are now more aware of the need to improve quality. The response of the college to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 has been satisfactory. Satisfactory progress is being made towards meeting the requirements of child protection legislation. The college has responded to recent DFES guidance and is improving its staffing records. A child protection policy is in place.

## Curriculum area inspections

Animal care and veterinary nursing

Good : grade 2

### Context

35. A wide range of courses are offered at the main college site and four outreach centres. The provision falls into two areas: animal care and veterinary nursing. There are 36 learners on animal care level 1 courses; 139 learners at level 2; 213 learners at level 3; 19 on part-time courses and 16 learners aged 14-16 on a level 1 course. There are 19 learners attending college and 75 distance learning learners on the animal nursing assistant course and 123 learners on day or block release veterinary nursing courses.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates in veterinary nursing, NVQ level 1 animal care and National Diploma animal management
- good development of practical skills
- well produced handbooks to support and enhance learning
- excellent practical resources
- good progression into education and employment
- effective links with employers.

### *Areas for improvement*

- poor retention on some animal care courses
- uninspiring theory teaching
- insufficient recognition of skills gained during work experience in animal care
- ineffective aspects of self-assessment.

### Achievements and standards

36. Learners' achievements and standards are good. Success rates in all veterinary nursing courses are consistently above the national average. Recent success rates in NVQ 1 and the National Diploma in animal management are above national average. Some retention rates on diploma courses and the ABC certificate at level 2 are low at the outreach centres, and retention on national certificate is low at the college. Learners develop good practical skills. They liaise well with technical and academic staff to ensure effective use of the animal care unit, without over-handling of the animals.

### Quality of provision

37. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with practical teaching being more effective than theory. Teachers dominate the less effective lessons and do not involve learners sufficiently. Teachers do not always challenge the more able

learners sufficiently. Neither do they always meet the needs of less able learners effectively. Teaching rarely involves the learner in analytical discussion, peer or self-assessment. Most courses use well produced, comprehensive hand books which engage the learners and support and enhance teaching.

38. The purpose-built animal care and veterinary nursing facilities at the college are very good. They include a commercial dog grooming parlour. The range of animals is wide and the college gives a high priority to the enrichment of the animals' environment. The outreach centres provide good facilities in accessible locations. They give learners access to other animals; for example, one out-centre has a farm with rare breeds of livestock.
39. The college has good links with a wide range of work placements and veterinary training practices. Support for learners is good on these courses. The communication, support and training offered to the practices are all good. However, the college does not track the training received by learners on work experience, nor does it credit learners with skills gained while on work experience.
40. Progression routes into education and employment are clear and well utilised, particularly from level 1 through to level 3. In response to some poor retention, the college now offers additional courses to meet learners' requirements.

#### Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff appreciate the new management structure and communication is good. Appraisal accurately identifies staff development needs. Quality assurance of teaching is satisfactory; however, some aspects of self-assessment are ineffective and the college did not identify the poor retention and success rates on some courses. The college does not analyse centrally the data collected from the outreach centres, and although staff roles are clearly defined there is still some uncertainty about who should lead improvements at the outreach centres.



## Equine studies

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

42. Courses at levels 2 and 3 run at the main college site and at two riding centres linked to the Croxteth and Towneley Hall outreach centres. Courses at level 1; training for British Horse Society qualifications and higher education courses are available on the main site. There are 25 learners on level 1 courses, including 14 aged 14-16; 51 on level 2 and 147 on level 3. The majority study full-time and are aged 16-18.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on the NVQ 1 course
- high pass rates in key skills qualifications for First Diploma learners
- good use of extensive specialist resources
- broad range of courses offering good progression rates
- effective actions to improve retention on diploma courses.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low success rates on the national certificate course and British Horse Society qualifications
- insufficient initial assessment of numeracy
- insufficient co-ordination of group tutorials
- ineffective self-assessment .

### Achievements and standards

43. Learners' achievements are satisfactory. Success rates on levels 2 and 3 full-time programmes were below the national average up to 2005. College data show that success rates improved for diploma courses in 2005/06, to at or above national averages, mainly because significantly more learners completed their courses. Success rates on the level 3 certificate course and on British Horse Society courses are low. However, when taken at stage 1 as additional qualifications by full-time learners, success rates are above national average. Success rates on the NVQ1 course are consistently high, as are key skills pass rates by first diploma learners. Standards of work, including practical stable skills and riding, are satisfactory. Learners enjoy their studies, especially the practical elements.

### Quality of provision

44. Teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory with some good features. The most effective lessons link theory and practical well and encourage learners to think for themselves. The extensive practical resources provide a good learning environment. In a minority of lessons, teaching and learning strategies are ineffective. In these unproductive lessons, questioning is

unchallenging, teaching methods do not develop or extend learning or skill development and the pace is slow. Support for learners is satisfactory. Initial assessments take place, but they exclude numeracy. The college does not plan additional numeracy support needs in advance. Target setting does not yet make good use of all this information and relies too much on prior academic attainment.

45. The curriculum meets learners' needs well. The college has introduced a wider range of options on full-time courses and more practically based courses at level 3. Progression into further study, especially from level 1 to level 2, is good. The college has revised entry requirements sensibly to ensure a better match of learner to programme. Equine provision at the two main outreach centres is popular and it widens participation. Tutorials are satisfactory, although the co-ordination of group tutorials is insufficient to ensure full coverage of health issues and careers guidance.

#### Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The team leader and several course tutors are relatively new to their roles and are quickly developing their management skills. Managers recent actions to improve learners' outcomes have been successful. Self-assessment is ineffective and evaluation is insufficiently accurate and objective. Data analysis of provision across all centres is weak. Work is in hand to ensure the consistency of the quality of provision across all centres, but it is at an early stage.

## Horticulture

Good: grade 2

### Context

47. The college offers full-time and part-time courses from entry level to level 4. There are 47 learners aged 16-18 and 162 adults. About 230 apprentices and 30 advanced apprentices are on work-based learning programmes. About 40 pupils from local schools take part in horticulture courses.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on the certificate of land-based studies, RHS general certificate and WBL apprenticeships
- high standards of learners' work in work-based learning
- good practical skills development
- effective partnerships to support learning
- good horticultural learning resources.

### *Areas for improvement*

- too little good or outstanding teaching
- insufficient use of information technology to aid learning
- insufficient opportunities to share good practice.

### Achievements and standards

48. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates on the certificate in land-based studies and the Royal Horticultural Society general certificate are much higher than the national average. Work-based learning apprenticeship success rates are well above the national average. Learners structure their portfolios well and include good evidence. Managers have addressed the slow completion of apprenticeships. Learners develop their horticultural practical skills well and enjoy this work.

### Quality of provision

49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but the proportion of teaching and learning which are good or better is insufficient. Teachers frequently dominate lessons and do not involve learners sufficiently. Teachers make insufficient use of the good ILT facilities available to enhance learning. Practical lessons are more successful and teachers and learners make good use of resources. Internal verification is thorough and assignments are vocationally relevant. Teachers recognise individual learning needs but do not always respond to them. Assessors give work-based learners good workplace support. The assessment of work-based learners is particularly effective. It takes place entirely in the work place and assessors plan and manage it well.

50. Work experience placements provide valuable support for vocational skills and career progression. Links with industry are good. The college is responsive to, and quickly meets, employer needs. Visits to gardens and shows, community work and team building events, provide useful enrichment opportunities.
51. Tutors provide good pastoral support using the college tutorial programme as guidance. They cover topics such as healthy living in tutorials and integrate them with the practical skills of growing food. Too often, target setting only relates to assignment deadlines. Vocational tutors give satisfactory careers advice and arrange visits to various employers. A high proportion of those who progress into employment remain in the horticultural industry.

### Leadership and management

52. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership and management of the work-based learning programmes are good. The development of separate self-assessment reports and data collection at the various outreach centres has inhibited the sharing of good practice. In work-based learning, all the assessors write the self-assessment report. The partnerships with employers and other learning providers are strong and effective and they provide learners with good vocational practice. Horticultural resources are very good. The library at the main site is well stocked with journals. Some classroom accommodation is inappropriate. Work-based learning workplaces have good equipment and facilities.

Golf, sport and leisure

Good: grade 2

### Context

53. The programme of full-time courses is broad and includes entry, introductory and first diplomas in sport and national certificates and diplomas in sport and exercise studies. The college offers a range of additional qualifications to full-time learners in sports leadership and coaching qualifications. The college has academies in football, rugby, cricket, netball, hockey and golf. Most learners are aged 16-18 and most of them are on level 3 provision. About 40 learners aged 14-16 work towards units of the First Diploma in sport. The college offers courses at its main site and at its outreach centres.

### *Strengths*

- improving success rates on most courses
- good teaching of practical and theory lessons
- excellent sports facilities and resources
- high participation in very good vocational enrichment
- good curriculum management.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low proportion of high grade achievement.

### Achievements and standards

54. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates on most full-time programmes have improved. At level 3, success rates have doubled over three years and the number of enrolments has increased to over 400 in 2006/07. Success rates, at levels 1 and 2, are satisfactory. Learners work towards and achieve relevant additional qualifications appropriate to their chosen sport. The current retention rate on the National Diploma is satisfactory. Learners work well in theory lessons, demonstrating good reflective skills. In practical lessons, learners work hard to achieve their full potential in their chosen sport. At levels 2 and 3, the proportion of high grades achieved is consistently low.

### Quality of provision

55. Teaching and learning in practical and theory lessons are good. Teachers plan practical lessons well so that they both build on and test concepts covered in theory sessions. Support for learners is good. The use of ILT is good. Learners enjoy practical lessons and develop and refine their skills. In a minority of lessons, teachers dominate proceedings and don't allow learners to develop good analytical skills. Few learners take notes during these less effective lessons. Learners present assignment work well using ICT with good quality images and graphics.

56. The sports facilities are excellent and contribute significantly to the quality of teaching. They include a putting green and indoor golf facilities; several football and rugby pitches; a golf course; a well equipped sports hall with gym; sauna; steam and solarium; very well equipped sports laboratories and a physiotherapist. Library resources are good.
57. Sports learners participate fully in the wide range of enrichment activities. They also benefit from the very good links with professional sports clubs. Course tutorials are regular. Tutors review learners' individual targets at personal tutorials at least four times a year. However, targets do not challenge learners to reach their full academic potential.

#### Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are good. Teamwork and communication are good and the commitment to improve learners' experiences is clear. The college has managed carefully the growth in enrolments, improvements in success rates and the quality of provision. Strategies to improve success rates have been effective. Support for new staff is good.

Access programmes

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

59. The courses available include three full-time programmes which lead to the essential skills award, ABC skills for working life and NPTC skills for working life, from pre-entry to entry level 3. The college also offers EDEXCEL entry level 1, 2 and 3 provision, including football studies. Twelve outreach centres across the Northwest, offer NPTC at entry levels 2 and 3. About 120 part-time learners with mental health difficulties, take part in non-accredited courses in seven outreach centres around Lancashire.

*Strengths*

- high success rates
- good use of practical activities to aid learning
- good support for learners.

*Areas for improvement*

- weak aspects of quality assurance
- inadequate focus on language, literacy and numeracy
- insufficient planning in lessons for individual learners' needs.

Achievements and standards

60. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates have risen consistently over the last three years and are now high. All certificated courses have success rates above national benchmarks. Retention rates are above national averages. Learners progress well through entry levels. They thoroughly enjoy their work, particularly the work in outside horticultural activities; with small animals and on the farms. Learners successfully develop their personal skills.

Quality of provision

61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lesson planning for the whole group is good, but the focus on individual learner's needs is insufficient. This reduces opportunities to challenge learners at appropriate levels and to assess their skill levels. Teachers use practical activities well to facilitate learning. These include effective role play, games, outside visits and a wide range of college environments. The new custom-built resource for independent living skills is well used. Teachers pay good attention to health and safety. Teachers use effective behaviour management strategies for individual learners. The reinforcement and development of language, literacy and numeracy is insufficient. Target setting is weak. Most targets are too broad, non-measurable and teachers do not monitor them in lessons. Individual learning plans for part-time learners are inadequate.

62. Initial assessment is good. In some courses, the planning and recording of individual ability is insufficient. Staff use literacy and numeracy assessment well to determine the level of learners' needs. However, the information transferred to enable teachers to make the best use of learning opportunities is insufficient.
63. Support for learners is good. Learning support assistants are particularly effective. Support staff have good expertise in supporting learners with personal, physical, sensory and learning difficulties. The link with the Connexions service works well at referral and exit stages for learners. Learners value individual tutorials and tutors use them well to monitor progress.

#### Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication within the access team is good. All staff have basic teaching qualifications although few have specialist qualifications. Monitoring of the quality of provision is weak. The annual programme review lacks rigour and data analysis. Monitoring of part-time provision is inadequate. The recorded evaluation of programmes for people with mental health difficulties is insufficient. The self-assessment reports for each area focus on strengths and are insufficiently critical. The college has made significant physical access improvements for people with mobility difficulties. It also ensures that those with sensory impairments and physical disabilities receive good support.



## Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	02/03	472	54.0	61.3	-7.3	248	56.9	52.2	4.7
	03/04	489	55.0	61.8	-6.8	463	53.1	49.3	3.8
	04/05	538	62.3	65.0	-2.7	479	73.1	61.9	11.2
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	6	66.7			1	100		
	03/04								
	04/05								
NVQs	02/03	77	39.0	62.0	-23.0	51	33.3		
	03/04	52	73.1	71.0	2.1	32	34.4	59.4	-25
	04/05	55	47.3	60.3	-13.0	35	68.6	70.9	-2.3
Other	02/03	389	56.8	61.0	-4.2	196	62.8	51.5	11.3
	03/04	437	52.9	60.9	-8.0	431	54.5	48.6	5.9
	04/05	483	64.0	65.7	-1.7	444	73.4	61.4	12.0

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	02/03	821	55.4	58.5	-3.1	737	55.4	56.0	-0.6
	03/04	726	58.5	61.9	-3.4	828	52.5	54.8	-2.3
	04/05	762	64.6	67.7	-3.1	669	62.5	61.2	1.3
GCSEs	02/03								
	03/04								
	04/05								
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	10	70.0	72.3	-2.3	69	76.8		
	03/04	32	62.5	71.3	-8.8	27	81.5		
	04/05	1	0.0	72.8	-72.8	2	50.0		
NVQs	02/03	136	46.3	34.5	11.8	196	53.1	44.3	8.8
	03/04	82	26.8	41.3	-14.5	292	41.4	43.2	-1.8
	04/05	38	34.2			162	44.4	54.2	-9.8
Other	02/03	675	57.0	63.3	-6.3	472	53.2	58.7	-5.5
	03/04	612	62.6	63.3	-0.8	509	57.4	56.8	0.6
	04/05	723	66.3	69.0	-2.7	505	68.3	62.1	6.2

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	02/03	431	55.5	63.9	-8.4	464	48.9	44.9	4.0
	03/04	397	48.9	65.0	-16.1	306	39.5	49.3	-9.8
	04/05	505	52.1	68.8	-16.7	190	33.7	56.1	-22.4
A/A2 Levels	02/03								
	03/04								
	04/05								
AS Levels	02/03								
	03/04								
	04/05								
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	242	62.4	60.5	1.9	30	60.0	50.6	9.4
	03/04	71	47.9	45.2	2.7	17	47.1		
	04/05	5	20.0			2	0.0		
NVQs	02/03	7	85.7			74	43.2	36.7	6.5
	03/04	11	27.3			145	36.6	40.7	-4.1
	04/05	5	20.0			78	21.8	45.6	-23.8
Other	02/03	182	45.1	68.7	-23.6	360	49.2	45.7	3.5
	03/04	315	49.8	66.5	-16.7	144	41.7	51.6	-9.9
	04/05	495	52.7	67.7	-15.0	110	42.7	57.8	-15.1

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2004 to 2005.

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	123	28	32	53	47
	Advanced	81	11	31	40	48
2004/05	Apprenticeship	102	44	38	56	50
	Advanced	63	17	34	38	48

\* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

\*\* College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

b) Timely success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	95	11	16	27	24
	Advanced	78	1	19	18	30
2004/05	Apprenticeship	168	16	21	19	29
	Advanced	91	8	21	18	31

\* The number of learners who planned to complete their learning programme in the given year

\*\* College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'