

Craven College

Inspection Report 23-27 April 2007

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. Craven College is a medium sized general further education college located in Skipton, North Yorkshire. The college has six main sites in Skipton, and also works in a number of outreach centres spread over a large rural area. In 2005/06, there were 9,163 enrolments of which 1,388 were for learners aged 16-18 and 7,775 were for learners aged 19 or over. The number of learners has risen over the past three years, with the number of 16-18 year old full-time learners showing the greatest increase. Approximately 62% of learners are female and 4.6% are from minority ethnic groups.
2. The college holds a work-based learning contract with North Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and has nearly 300 learners on apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships. Work-based learning programmes are managed by the commercial training division in the college, Tyro Training, which also delivers a wide range of full-cost training to local and regional organisations. The college holds contracts for Train to Gain and learndirect.
3. Provision is offered from entry level to level 7, and the range of courses offered covers all of the sector subject areas. In 2005/06, the largest number of enrolments for both 16-18 year olds and adults was on courses in care. The college's provision for 14-16 year olds has grown, and over 400 school pupils from a number of schools are completing vocational training programmes. The college has a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in business leadership and management and joint CoVE status in two others, tourism and aviation. The aviation centre is located at Leeds - Bradford airport.
4. The college's mission states that Craven College will "Raise aspiration, participation and attainment through the provision of high quality education and training within an inclusive and supportive environment" and that it will "Contribute to economic and social development by working with individuals, organisations and the business community in response to the particular needs and attributes of the region".

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: grade 2
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: Contributory grade 2</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. Craven College provides good quality education and support for its learners. Achievements and standards overall are satisfactory. Success rates on short courses are high. For young people on long courses, success rates are above the national average at level 1, well above at level 2 and just below at level 3. Success rates on most long courses for adults are improving and are good at level 1 but are just at the national average at levels 2 and 3, with low retention. Achievement rates in key skills have improved significantly, as have overall success rates in work-based learning.
6. Teaching and learning in the college are good. Particularly effective staff development focuses on improving teaching and learning, and the proportion of outstanding teaching is increasing. Lesson plans are thorough and most lessons are well paced with a good range of teaching and learning strategies. Teachers make good use of information and learning technology (ILT). A new and robust internal observation system has been introduced. Assessment is effective and most assessors provide good feedback to learners, but in a few cases there is insufficient written feedback. Internal verification is thorough and well recorded.
7. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is outstanding. A very wide range of provision provides very good opportunities for progression and closely matches the needs of the local and regional economy. Links with schools and partnership working are very strong. Employer engagement activities are extensive. Information advice and guidance are good. Learners requiring additional learning support receive good support. However, there is insufficient analysis of the impact of additional learning support. There is very good support to meet learners pastoral needs.
8. Leadership and management of the college are good. The principal and governors provide outstanding leadership. The college has fully addressed most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and made significant progress on the others. Compliance with quality assurance procedures is much improved and the system leads to improvements. There has been considerable investment in accommodation and resources. Financial management is robust.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

9. The college's capacity to improve is good. Quality assurance procedures have been strengthened and are leading to improvements. Success rates have improved significantly in work-based learning and key skills and are improving on all long courses, apart from level 1 for adults, where they are already high and at level 3 for 16-18 year olds. The college has experienced significant growth in learner numbers, and continues to respond well to LSC priorities. Funding targets have been met and a strong financial position has been maintained.
10. The self-assessment process is inclusive and comprehensive. The report is detailed and evaluative. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the report, but some were optimistic. Quality improvement plans are effectively linked to strategic priorities, and are monitored regularly. Areas of underperformance are showing steady improvement.

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

11. The college has made good efforts to maintain strengths and address the issues, identified in the inspection of 2003. It has expanded its range of provision and made significant improvements to its accommodation and resources. It has enhanced its links with industry, schools and other partners. The internal lesson observation system is now rigorous. The management of work-based learning has improved. Managers have been successful in improving achievement rates in key skills, but retention and success rates on many courses for adults are still low. The use of some management information data requires further development. Issues relating to quality assurance procedures have been addressed.

Key strengths

- outstanding leadership
- good quality assurance procedures which lead to improvements
- very high standard of accommodation and resources
- good improvements in key skills achievement
- very good improvement in work-based learning success rates
- strong teaching and learning observation process
- good provision for additional learning support
- particularly effective staff development for teaching and learning
- outstanding range of provision which meets the needs of learners, employers and the local community
- highly effective partnership working and links with schools and employers

- very good support for learners' pastoral needs.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low retention rates on long courses for adults
- low success rates on levels two and three long courses for adults
- insufficient analysis of the impact of additional learning support
- insufficient analysis and use of management data by learner type
- insufficient external validation of self-assessment.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grades:

learndirect

Good: grade 2

Train to Gain

Satisfactory: grade 3

12. Retention rates on short courses continue to be very high but retention rates on long courses for adults are below the national average. The college has introduced a number of strategies to improve retention. Some of these have only recently been introduced and it is too early to fully judge their impact. In-year retention is being monitored, and there has been a recent and significant improvement at level 1 for young people and at level 2 for adults.
13. As identified in its self-assessment report, the college has significantly improved key skills pass rates over the past three years. College data show that the improving trend in key skills achievements is likely to continue in 2006/07. Pass rates, overall, are at or just above the national average.
14. Success rates for young people at level 1 are above the national average and at level 2 are well above. Both are improving. However, the self-assessment report is over optimistic regarding success rates across the college as a whole. Success rates at level 3 are static, just below the national average, and on AS and A2 courses are below national averages. The college has introduced a number of strategies to improve success rates, particularly in A level provision. AS and A2 pass rates in January 2007, were significantly higher than those at the same time in 2006. Success rates for adults on level 1 long courses are significantly above national averages. They are improving at levels 2 and 3 and are broadly at national averages.
15. Overall success rates for work-based learning have improved dramatically over the three years to 2005/06, and college data shows that this improvement is likely to be maintained in 2006/07. As identified in the self-assessment report, overall success rates for the majority of work-based learners are now at the national average. In learndirect, Skills for Life success rates are good and success rates for the small number of information and communication technology (ICT) learners are satisfactory. Success rates on Train to Gain programmes are satisfactory overall.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

Contributory grades:

learndirect

Good: grade 2

Train to Gain

Satisfactory: grade 3

16. Teaching and learning are good and the proportion of outstanding teaching grades awarded by the internal lesson observation scheme is significantly increasing. Teaching by full-time teachers is more effective than that delivered by part-time teachers. Lesson plans are thorough but a few lack detail and focus on teaching rather than learning. Most lessons are well paced with a good range of teaching activities. A few lessons are too reliant on lecturing and note taking. ILT is used frequently, and the college virtual learning environment is used by a high proportion of full-time learners and an increasing number of part-time learners. Workshops for learndirect are well planned and meet learners' needs.
17. The provision of staff development to improve teaching and learning is very good and a more rigorous teaching and learning observation system has been introduced. The observation process effectively identifies outstanding and inadequate teaching. Where weak teaching is identified, quality improvement plans are produced and intensive support is provided. However, the system does not sufficiently analyse aspects of cross-college teaching, or differences between teaching carried out by salaried and hourly paid staff. Links between the observation process and staff appraisal are insufficiently developed.
18. Assessment and verification are satisfactory. Assignments set by teachers are relevant, and assessment criteria are clear. Work is marked and returned promptly. Most assessors praise learners who produce good work, but a few learners receive insufficient feedback. Internal verification is thorough and well recorded and standardisation ensures that marking is consistent. On Train to Gain programmes, good planning maximises assessment opportunities.
19. Additional learning support is good. The support begins early and take up is high. A range of effective strategies are in place to deliver support, and learners are able to select the style of support which best suits them. The success rate for learners receiving additional learning support is equal to the college success rate for all learners. Analysis of the impact of additional learning support on the relative performance of those benefiting from it, is insufficiently detailed.

20. The range of provision in the college is outstanding. Courses from entry level through to higher education are available, and all sector subject areas are represented. The college has significant work-based learning provision. It has CoVE status in business leadership and management, and joint CoVE status in tourism and also in aviation. Provision is closely matched to the needs of the local and regional economy. Progression into higher education and employment is very good. Many learners benefit from a wide range of additional qualifications and curriculum enrichment.
21. The college works very effectively with employers and schools. The college's commercial training division, Tyro Training, provides an extensive range of training to over 450 employers, involving over 6,000 learners annually. The provision is well managed and managers are very successful in acquiring funding to deliver a wide range of projects. The college has very good links with local schools and plays a key role in developing collaborative partnerships. Common timetabling across partner schools and the college enables over 400 pupils aged 14-16 to benefit from a wide range of good vocational training. Success rates on these programmes are good and progression rates into further education are high.
22. Information, advice and guidance are good. Applicants receive well structured impartial information and guidance which helps them to make informed and appropriate learning choices. Prospective learners are well supported in the move from school to college. Applicants attend good recruitment activities, including taster days and campus tours. Close liaison with schools enables the provision of other orientation events for more vulnerable learners.
23. The college very effectively promotes inclusion, and an increasing proportion of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are included on mainstream courses. Good additional learning support is delivered through a range of strategies, including one-to-one, small group, team teaching and mentoring. Learning support staff are well qualified and have a wide range of expertise.
24. Support to meet learners' pastoral needs is very good. Those at risk of leaving their programme receive very high quality support from mentors. Counselling and welfare arrangements are well managed and links with external support agencies are good. Learners receive extensive support to deal with a range of personal problems including homelessness, family breakdown, drugs and substance misuse, and financial problems. Learners enjoy the friendly and supportive environment in the college.

25. Tutorial provision is effective and well managed. Full-time group tutorials provide good information on aspects such as healthy eating and sexual health. Learners have regular reviews of progress; however, in a minority of cases, the targets set on the individual learning plans are insufficiently specific, detailed or measurable. Regular formal and informal contact between the college and parents of 16-18 year olds is effective.

Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

learndirect

Satisfactory: grade 3

Train to Gain

Satisfactory: grade 3

26. Leadership and management are good. The principal and governors provide outstanding leadership and set a very clear strategic direction for the college. The college has well established values, clear targets and a strong, positive ethos. Staff value the open management style and morale is very high. There are very effective links between strategic and operational planning.
27. Quality assurance procedures are clear, effective and comprehensive. Compliance with procedures has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The quality and improvement unit provide good support for staff. This includes targeted support to raise standards in underperforming areas. There is easy access to management information. This supports planning, monitoring and self-assessment.
28. All areas of the college are involved in self-assessment, which is thorough and evaluative. Senior managers, governors and the quality and standards steering group, provide challenge and rigour in the validation of self-assessment judgements but there is insufficient external involvement. There are systematic, inclusive methods for gathering the views of learners, staff, parents and other stakeholders.
29. There has been considerable investment in accommodation and standards are very high. Access to learning resources is good and there are good links between the learning resource centres and curriculum areas. Staff are well supported by an effective staff development programme, which is linked to strategic priorities.
30. Financial management is robust. Budgets are well managed to support college priorities and maintain responsiveness. The college has retained

- financial category A status for the last five years, alongside a period of growth. Value for money is good.
31. Equality of opportunity is good. The college is inclusive and is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities. The equality and diversity coordinators provide good support, including staff development. The equal opportunities committee has instigated actions to address areas of concern, such as under-representation in some curriculum areas. Governor awareness is good, and the college complies with race and gender equality and disability discrimination legislation. There is insufficient analysis and reporting of learner satisfaction, success, retention and achievement by learner type.
 32. The college is highly proactive and responsive to employer and community needs. It has established a range of innovative partnerships that enhance opportunities for learners in the region. The college has a very good reputation within the local community and is well regarded by schools, parents, employers and other stakeholders.
 33. Governance is strong. Governors are highly committed and well-informed about the college. They are active in strategic planning and bring a broad range of expertise that is used to benefit the college. Governors are aware of their responsibilities regarding the safety and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults, and good arrangements are in place to ensure the safety, wellbeing and progress of the growing number of 14-16 learners. The college has effective policies relating to bullying and harassment, and these are regularly updated. All staff are appropriately vetted, and child protection procedures are well coordinated and understood.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2004 to 2006, 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	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	03-04	239	61	60	+1	1609	71	59	+12
	04-05	244	61	64	-3	1101	73	62	+11
	05-06	536	68			512	71		
GNVQs & precursors	03-04								
	04-05								
	05-06								
NVQs	03-04	16	31	61	-30	9	56	62	-6
	04-05	41	80	67	+13	9	89	67	+22
	05-06	50	96			6	83		
Other	03-04	223	63	60	+3	1600	71	59	+12
	04-05	203	58	64	-6	1092	73	61	+12
	05-06	486	65			506	71		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2004 to 2006, 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	03-04	658	64	56	+8	1135	44	54	-10
	04-05	701	69	61	+8	1142	51	60	-9
	05-06	631	70			941	59		
GCSEs	03-04	170	61	61	0	102	59	59	0
	04-05	249	59	64	-5	204	45	62	-17
	05-06	187	72			105	71		
GNVQs and precursors	03-04	30	70	63	+7	5	60	57	+3
	04-05	35	80	67	+13	7	71	70	+1
	05-06	9	56			2	100		
NVQs	03-04	141	48	52	-4	324	24	53	-29
	04-05	141	75	57	+18	163	47	60	-13
	05-06	119	81			256	53		
Other	03-04	317	72	54	+18	704	50	53	-3
	04-05	276	74	60	+14	768	54	59	-5
	05-06	316	65			578	59		

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2004 to 2006, 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	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	03-04	1109	59	64	-5	657	46	53	-7
	04-05	1105	65	67	-2	796	49	57	-8
	05-06	1132	65			717	58		
A/A2 Levels	03-04	173	74	84	-10	40	50	66	-16
	04-05	153	76	86	-10	90	53	69	-16
	05-06	156	81			69	75		
AS Levels	03-04	381	58	63	-5	120	48	50	-2
	04-05	368	55	65	-10	165	48	52	-4
	05-06	407	55			101	57		
GNVQs & precursors	03-04	125	43	52	-9	14	36	44	-8
	04-05	95	47	60	-13	6	50	53	-3
	05-06	68	43			4	25		
NVQs	03-04	35	46	54	-8	160	30	47	-17
	04-05	14	64	62	+2	139	29	54	-25
	05-06	32	78			179	49		
Other	03-04	395	60	56	+4	323	53	56	-3
	04-05	475	73	60	+13	396	55	58	-3
	05-06	469	71			364	60		

Table 4

Success rates on Work-based learning 'apprenticeship' programmes managed by the provider/college 2004 to 2006.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	10	30	48	10	31
		timely	12	8	30	0	19
	04-05	overall	26	58	48	42	34
		timely	23	4	31	0	21
	05-06	overall	6	83	53	83	44
		timely	7	57	34	43	27
Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	26	35	47	19	32
		timely	39	10	24	5	16
	04-05	overall	47	34	50	30	39
		timely	49	6	29	4	22
	05-06	overall	62	53	58	50	52
		timely	68	19	38	18	34

* 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'

Table 5

Success rates on Work-based learning 'Train to Gain' programmes managed by the provider/college 2006 to 2007.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	05/06	overall	134	62%
		timely	82	78%
	06/07	overall		
		timely		

* 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'

*** Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'Skills for Life'

Table 6

Outcomes on learndirect programmes

Q1&2 2007	Enrolments	Counted for data	Success rate (%)	Withdrawal rate (%)
All sectors	105	59	76	11
ICT	34	10	60	33
Skills for Life	91	49	80	5
Business and management	1	0	0	0

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