

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College

Inspection report

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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 achievement 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
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. North Warwickshire and Hinckley College is a large general further education college (GFE) serving the three borough councils of Nuneaton and Bedworth, North Warwickshire, and Hinckley and Bosworth. The college has two main campuses, one in Nuneaton and one in Hinckley and also operates from five smaller learning venues in local communities. The catchment area is generally economically buoyant although the unemployment rate in Nuneaton is slightly above that seen nationally. The proportion of school leavers with five or more GCSE grades at A* to C in the area is below the national average overall.
2. The college provides academic and vocational education and offers courses in all sector subject areas although provision in agriculture, horticulture and animal care, and in history, philosophy and theology is very small. The most significant learner numbers are on courses in the health, public services and care sector subject area with very significant learner numbers also on courses in retail and commercial enterprise, preparation for life and work, and business administration sector subject areas.
3. In 2006/07, the college had approximately 20,000 learners of whom more than 2,000 were full-time 16 to 18-year-olds. Part-time learners studied programmes ranging from as little as six hours study through to full year long courses. There were 750 work-based learners on apprenticeship or advanced apprenticeship programmes and the college provided courses for 900 pupils aged 14 to 16 from 28 local schools. The overall participation rate on college courses by learners from minority ethnic groups was 9% which was above the proportion of the local population who are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
4. The college has four Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) and has strong working partnerships with local authorities, with local and regional employers and with the communities it serves. The college mission is "The excellence of North Warwickshire and Hinckley College will support the growth of economic prosperity and inclusion within the communities it serves".

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding: Grade 1
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grades:

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

5. The effectiveness of provision is outstanding. Learners' achievement is good and key headline success rates are above national averages and continue to improve. Overall success rates for both 16 to 18-year-olds and for adults at all levels are generally above average. Success rates on a very small minority of courses and notably on national vocational courses (NVOs) at level 1 are below average. Progression to further education, higher education and to employment is good.
6. Teaching and learning are good and continue to improve. The majority of lessons are well planned and teaching is characterised by a good range of learning activities with effective use of integrated learning technology (ILT) that promote enjoyment and develop understanding. Vocational teachers are very effective at developing learners' practical skills. A small minority of lessons are less effective and do not engage learners as effectively. Assessments are well conducted with good feedback provided to learners.
7. Provision to meet the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. The curriculum is highly responsive and inclusive and provides an extensive range of courses. The college is extremely effective in meeting the needs of employers and the local community. The approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding.
8. Guidance and support for learners are outstanding. The range of pastoral, welfare and personal support services is excellent. Initial advice and guidance arrangements are comprehensive and the monitoring of learners' progress is good. Tutorials are well used to set and review targets. Many learners benefit from high quality additional learning support.
9. Leadership and management are outstanding. The principal provides very clear and strong leadership and the college has developed highly effective and beneficial strategic partnerships. Governance and financial management are outstanding. Quality assurance arrangements are highly effective and continue to improve provision. The promotion of equality and diversity is good overall but the analysis and use of performance data relating to various groups of learners is an area for development. The management of work-based learning and the effectiveness of provision in this area are good.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

10. The college demonstrates an outstanding capacity to improve. Governors and senior managers provide outstanding leadership and they enjoy the confidence and support of staff. The self-assessment process is thorough and the report is broadly accurate. Quality assurance arrangements are highly effective in bringing about improvements to provision. The college is in a strong financial position and resources are deployed very effectively to improve the experience of learners. The college has adapted its provision well in response to changes in funding priorities, whilst building upon its strong commitment to inclusion.

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

11. The college has made good progress in addressing areas identified for improvement during the last inspection. Most of the areas have been successfully addressed and the strengths identified have been maintained or built upon. The management of work-based learning is now good. Success rates by learners aged 16 to 18 on many general certificate of education advanced (GCE A) level courses have risen and learners are now achieving in line with expectations. The number of learners benefiting from support has risen and is now high. Effective steps have been taken to integrate key skills teaching. Course reviews have improved, although there is scope for further improvement. The provision in science and mathematics which was unsatisfactory was judged satisfactory on re-inspection.

Key strengths

- high and improving success rates
- good progression to further education, higher education and to employment
- good teaching and learning
- excellent development of vocational skills
- highly responsive and inclusive curriculum
- outstanding pastoral, welfare and personal support for learners
- clear and strong leadership
- highly effective and beneficial strategic partnerships
- outstanding governance
- strong financial management.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates on a small minority of courses
- the use of data to better promote equality of opportunity.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

12. Learners' achievement is good. Success rates are high and in 2005/06 the overall success rate and the success rate for long courses were above national averages. Overall data for 2006/07, although not fully complete, continued to show a year-on-year improvement with the pace of improvement increasing. The college correctly identified the main strengths and areas for improvement in achievement and standards but overstated this aspect as outstanding in its self-assessment report.
13. Success rates for both 16- to 18-year-olds and for adults are generally above national rates at all levels on long, short and very short courses. However, on NVQ courses at level 1, success rates are well below average. Overall, long course success rates in the majority of sector subject areas are at, above or significantly above national averages. The rate of improvement does vary between different courses and in a minority of cases success rates are below national levels. Framework completion rates on work-based learning programmes are high. Completion rates for advanced apprenticeships are well above average. On apprenticeship programmes the overall completion rate remains above average, although the success rate declined slightly in 2006/07. Key skills success rates across the college have improved and are above national averages. Success rates for key skills qualifications at level 1 are especially high.
14. The college is successful in engaging young people not in education, employment or training and many learners on these programmes successfully achieve a positive outcome on completion of their course. Pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools achieve well. Data show that the college has been successful in improving the success rates of 16- to 18-year-old males and that overall no significant group of learners underachieve regardless of age, gender or ethnic origin. However, the success rate of different minority ethnic groups does vary from one year to the next.
15. Progression rates within the college are good and almost all learners progress to courses of further study either at the college, with another further education provider, to higher education or into employment. Most learners enjoy college life and attendance at classes is good. Value added measures show that learners make at least the progress expected and some learners make good and better progress. The standard of learners' work is good overall and in some cases is outstanding. The standard of practical work observed by inspectors in some construction and hospitality lessons was very high indeed.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

16. The college's self-assessment report correctly identified that the quality of provision is outstanding. Teaching and learning are good and feedback from

students is positive. Planning of learning is thorough. The range of teaching and learning methods is good. Teachers clearly explain the objectives of lessons to students. The use of information learning technology (ILT) is good and enhances learning. However, the use of ILT is more effective in some curriculum areas than others. Teachers are very effective at taking account of students' individual learning needs and vocational teachers are particularly good at developing learners' job skills.

17. Most questioning to check learners' understanding is good. Teachers make effective use of the learners' main area of studying to provide key skills tuition. Teachers of key skills and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have a particularly good understanding of the effective use of learning targets. However, occasionally, learning targets are too imprecise. In a small minority of lessons where teaching is less successful, students are not as engaged or motivated to learn.
18. Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are comprehensive and the process is rigorous. Teaching and learning continue to improve. Assessment is rigorous and accurate. It is carefully planned and monitored and meets course needs. Progress reviews are thorough and information sent to parents, carers and employers is detailed. Feedback provided by teachers on marked work is of a high standard and details what learners need to do to improve.
19. Provision to meet the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. The curriculum offer is wide and varied with an excellent range of courses at all levels including extensive provision for 14- to 16-year-olds and a significant apprenticeship programme. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. Highly effective work with partners ensures that many diverse groups of learners are able to gain new skills. Excellent collaborative partnerships significantly enhance the range of courses available.
20. The college is extremely responsive to the needs of community organisations and employers and finds innovative ways to extend its work in these areas. The college works successfully with many different employers and their trade unions to improve employees' skills and qualifications. It has responded rapidly to the needs of workers affected by the closure of local businesses.
21. The college offers an extensive range of enrichment activities. The programme includes a good breadth of sports activities which help promote healthy lifestyles and includes a strong focus on competitions for vocational courses. Enrichment activities within the curriculum are equally comprehensive and participation rates are high. Enrichment effectively contributes to learners' enjoyment of college and many make an outstanding contribution to the life of the college and to the community it serves. Students' views are important to the college and are considered appropriately in the decision making process.
22. Guidance and support for learners are outstanding. The range of pastoral, welfare and personal support services are outstanding and benefit learners. The college makes very good use of the Connexions service and other specialist

support agencies. The college chaplaincy offers valuable pastoral support for learners. Learners are well informed about, and make good use of, the available services. Learners receive excellent impartial initial advice and guidance and the online induction programme provides full-time learners with useful key information at the start of their course.

23. The college's tutorial programme provides good personal and social education for learners. Tutorials are used effectively to set and review targets and to monitor learners' progress. They promote the college concept of 'every learner matters' and enable students to develop team building, communication and leadership skills. These, together with the excellent skills developed by learners, make an outstanding contribution to the future economic well-being of learners.
24. Additional learning support for students is highly effective. Success rates for those with additional learning support needs are high for adults and similar to the college average for learners aged 16 to 18. The range of additional learning support services is good. The college correctly identified the need to improve data collection on attendance rates in its self-assessment report.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

25. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that leadership and management are outstanding. The college has developed outstanding arrangements for working with a wide range of strategic partners to promote education, training and skills. Partnerships with schools are exceptionally well developed and productive. The college has successfully ensured that projects to develop literacy and numeracy skills amongst adults have been extended. Excellent cooperation with local authorities and the local sixth form college has enabled the college to develop imaginative plans for investment in new buildings.
26. The principal and senior team provide very clear and strong leadership. Arrangements for monitoring and managing the performance of curriculum managers have improved significantly. Leadership and management in curriculum areas are good overall and outstanding in some areas. The management of work-based learning is good. Governance is outstanding. Governors have made an important contribution to the development of a set of clear and relevant strategic objectives. They maintain productive links with curriculum areas and conduct a thorough self-assessment of their work. Financial management is outstanding and the college provides good value for money.
27. Quality assurance arrangements have been strengthened and are highly effective. Success rates continue to rise. Staff appraisal is well completed and

the process is closely linked to strategic priorities and actions arising out of lesson observations. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and broadly accurate, although parts of the report are too descriptive. Associated quality improvement plans are well written and help to drive standards up.

Communications are much improved and staff morale is high. The college is compliant with relevant child protection legislation and promotes safe practices well. Appropriate bullying and harassment policies are effectively applied. Staff have received child protection training and understand their responsibilities.

28. Management information is accurate and accessible. It is well used by curriculum managers and by staff involved in curriculum planning and self-assessment. Resources are good overall. The college has very good arrangements to ensure that all teachers will be appropriately qualified. Staff development opportunities are very good. The college provides a pleasant working environment for staff and learners.
29. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college fulfils its statutory requirements relating to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and has responded well to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2002 (SENDA). Course teams conduct an annual audit relating to equal opportunities and, where appropriate, set targets for improvement. The college has been particularly effective in attracting learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or for whom engaging in learning is particularly challenging. The analysis and use of performance data relating to various groups of learners is an area for development.

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	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	03/04	782	68	61	7	1086	68	59	9
	04/05	853	68	65	4	992	64	62	2
	05/06	661	75	69	6	1069	74	65	9
GNVQs	03/04	13	69	65	4
	04/05	14	57	68	-11	1	100	64	36
	05/06	13	92	72	20	2	50
NVQs	03/04	156	73	61	12	91	58	62	-4
	04/05	135	79	68	11	202	75	66	9
	05/06	128	68	72	-4	148	67	74	-7
Other	03/04	613	67	60	7	995	69	59	10
	04/05	704	67	64	3	789	61	62	-1
	05/06	520	77	69	8	919	75	65	10

Note: College data for 2006/07 had not been finalised at the time of the inspection.

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	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	03/04	1332	63	56	7	2370	63	54	9
	04/05	1352	67	61	6	1758	62	60	2
	05/06	1208	69	66	3	1502	70	66	4
GCSEs	03/04	317	69	61	8	138	64	59	5
	04/05	370	68	64	4	108	75	63	12
	05/06	268	72	68	4	76	76	67	9
GNVQs	03/04	62	74	63	11	14	71	59	12
	04/05	108	65	67	-2	23	65	75	-10
	05/06	87	75	69	6	6	83	68	15
NVQs	03/04	366	53	51	2	707	59	53	6
	04/05	342	58	57	1	716	60	60	0
	05/06	317	56	65	-9	489	63	67	-4
Other	03/04	587	65	54	11	1511	64	53	11
	04/05	532	72	61	11	911	62	59	3
	05/06	536	75	66	9	931	73	65	8

Note: College data for 2006/07 had not been finalised at the time of the inspection.

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	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	03/04	1630	66	64	2	1245	60	54	6
	04/05	1652	72	68	4	1033	66	58	8
	05/06	1473	71	70	1	927	66	63	3
A/A2 Levels	03/04	197	84	84	0	73	64	66	-2
	04/05	150	87	86	1	70	80	69	11
	05/06	189	81	87	-6	58	81	72	9
AS Levels	03/04	449	54	63	-9	133	56	50	6
	04/05	483	63	66	-3	137	63	52	11
	05/06	481	63	67	-4	78	50	55	-5
GNVQs	03/04	280	73	53	20	24	71	45	26
	04/05	209	76	61	15	44	57	54	3
	05/06	82	66	66	0	34	47	57	-10
NVQs	03/04	56	52	54	-2	310	52	48	4
	04/05	42	67	63	4	202	56	56	0
	05/06	29	62	71	-9	172	58	63	-5
Other	03/04	648	66	57	9	705	63	56	7
	04/05	768	73	60	13	580	70	59	11
	05/06	692	75	65	10	585	70	64	6

Note: College data for 2006/07 had not been finalised at the time of the inspection.

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2005 to 2007.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No of learners *	College NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate **	College framework rate **	National framework rate **
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	69	49	48	38	34
		timely	69	38	31	20	22
	05/06	overall	68	68	53	49	44
		timely	75	43	34	28	28
	06/07 ***	overall	79	72	64	70	56
		timely	69	45	41	41	35
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	209	61	51	48	39
		timely	232	50	29	34	22
	05/06	overall	260	72	58	67	52
		timely	260	57	38	53	34
	06/07 ***	overall	223	71	65	66	60
		timely	197	57	45	53	45

* 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'

*** Data for 2006/07 for both overall and timely success rates are based on period 12 data