

# Hull College

## Inspection report

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Provider reference 130579  
Published date July 2008

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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](http://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](http://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. Hull College is one of the largest general further education colleges (GFE) in the country. It operates from four locations in the city centre: Queen's Gardens campus; Park Street Centre which houses the school of art and design; Cannon Street Centre which houses the school of motor vehicle, fabrication and welding; and the learning zone, situated in the Kingston Communications Stadium, which is run in partnership with Hull City Council and offers sports programmes. It also has a campus in Goole, 30 miles from Hull. Community education courses are offered in over 30 venues across Hull and the East Riding. The college services to business training arm, 'Invest Business Training Solutions', located in Waterside Business Park Hessle, offers bespoke training programmes to industry. Two other smaller centres in the city cater primarily for New Deal learners and provision for young people not in education, employment and training (NEET). The college is the lead provider in two Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) and is a partner in two others. It was awarded an Association of Colleges (AoC) Beacon Award for lifelong learning in 2005, was highly commended for its equality and diversity work in 2006 and won a National Training Award in 2006.
2. The college primarily serves the areas of Hull and East Riding and recruits nationally to its commissioned work and higher education (HE) provision. In the immediate catchment area of the college, Kingston upon Hull, there are areas of significant deprivation. In 2007, the number of pupils gaining five A\* to C passes in GCSE at 30%, is significantly lower than the national average of 46.8%. Almost a third of all adults have literacy and numeracy needs. The unemployment rate at 8.2% is above the national rate of 5.5%.
3. Hull College offers courses in all 15 sector subject areas leading to qualifications from pre-entry level to HE. In 2006/07, the college enrolled about 26,000 learners. Of these, around 5,100 were aged 16-18. The college's recruitment of full-time 16-18 year olds has grown by 8% over the last two years, particularly at entry/foundation level. Some 17,000 adult learners were enrolled on part-time courses, mostly at level 1. Apprenticeship programmes were provided for around 750 learners, 180 were enrolled on Entry to Employment programmes (E2E) and around 1,000 on Train to Gain (T2G). The college also provides a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) workstep programme for around 35 learners. Some 5% of learners enrolled at the college are of minority ethnic heritage, compared with 2.3% in the local community. The college works with all 15 secondary schools in Hull and 14 in the East Riding to provide vocational programmes for around 1,200 14-16 year olds and 160 who participate in Young Apprenticeships.
4. The college mission statement is, 'the college delivers high quality vocational and academic education and training raising the aspirations and prosperity of the local and global community in collaboration with partners'. It has nine core values which are focused on improving the quality of provision for its learners'.

## Summary of grades awarded

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

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

5. Hull College is an outstanding organisation. Learners make exceptional progress during their time at the college. Overall success rates are high and improving; for adults and learners aged 14-16 they are outstanding. The achievement of work-based learners has improved significantly and is good. Success rates of learners on Train to Gain programmes are very high. Key skills success rates are outstanding. Success rates on provision for learners aged 16-18 are good. The personal and social development of learners aged 16-18 are outstanding.
6. Most teaching and learning are good or better. The college has an accurate understanding of the strengths in teaching and learning and is taking robust action to ensure continuous improvement. Most lessons are planned well and meet the diverse needs of learners. Students enjoy college; their aspirations and attitudes to learning improve significantly. Improvements to accommodation and resources are prioritised very effectively to respond to changes in the curriculum. Vocational workshops provide realistic and up-to-date preparation for work.
7. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is outstanding. The promotion of equality of opportunity permeates everything the college does. It provides an inclusive, supportive and empowering environment for both learners and staff. The college is proactive in working with the local community, schools and employers. It provides considerable strategic leadership in the development and delivery of coherent high quality programmes for learners aged 14-19. The college offers an outstanding range of provision that meets the needs of learners exceptionally well and responds effectively to new demands such as the language needs of migrant workers. Guidance and support to help learners to achieve are outstanding. A very proactive and highly successful team of workers in the community and on college campuses provide friendly support to ease transition to college for vulnerable learners and to support them during their courses. Learners in need of additional support to help them succeed are identified early and helped through a range of very effective services. The college is highly accessible to learners with physical disabilities; excellent specialist facilities are available for learners with sensory impairments. The views of learners are valued and acted upon.
8. Leadership and management are outstanding. The principal provides inspirational leadership, supported by senior managers and outstanding governance, they provide clear strategic leadership. Outstanding arrangements for quality assurance are successfully improving standards. Financial management is strong. The college offers outstanding value for money.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

9. The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. The college has effectively realigned its strategy and senior management structure to embed quality

assurance across all aspects of its work. The quality assurance framework is particularly effective in driving up success rates and the quality of the learners' experience. Self-assessment is accurate and supported by exceptionally good management information. Action plans are very clear in identifying how high standards will be maintained and areas for improvement will be addressed. Staff performance management is thorough and supported by exceptional training and development opportunities. Governors are highly effective in monitoring the college's performance and supporting the strategic vision of the principal.

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

10. The college has made outstanding progress since the last inspection. The areas for improvement identified have been successfully addressed. Accommodation and resources have improved; most are at least good and some specialist resources are exceptional. Retention and pass rates have improved and the small numbers of vulnerable or under-achieving courses are closely monitored by senior managers. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively; a robust lesson observation system identifies areas for development and opportunities for sharing good practice support improvement. The college has invested well in new technologies and staff development to improve the quality of teaching. Strategies to improve the provision at Goole College have been extremely effective.

### Key strengths

- inspirational leadership and outstanding governance
- inclusive and empowering culture for learners and staff
- learners make exceptional progress
- high and improving success rates, including for 14-16 year olds
- outstanding key skills success rates
- highly responsive, innovative and inclusive curriculum
- outstanding contribution to 14-19 developments
- outstanding guidance and support for learners
- outstanding specialist facilities and support for sensory impairment
- highly effective arrangements for quality assurance and performance management
- very strong financial management
- holistic approach to sustainability.

### Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- success rates on a minority of courses.

## Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

*Contributory grades:*

*Work-based learning*

*Good: Grade 2*

11. Achievement and standards are outstanding. This agrees with the college's self-assessment. Success rates are high and improving. The overall success rate on long courses has improved consistently since the last inspection and, in 2007, is significantly above the previous year's national average for similar colleges. On courses for adults, the majority of the college's enrolments and for the large cohort of learner's aged 14-16, success rates are outstanding. For 16-18 year olds success rates are good. Arrangements for identifying, managing and improving the performance of individual courses with lower success rates, are very effective in raising outcomes for learners. The college sets itself challenging targets to improve retention and pass rates, rigorously monitors progress and has a history of exceeding targets. At the time of the inspection in-year retention rates had improved significantly when compared with the previous year, and are very high. Success rates on apprenticeship programmes have improved significantly and are now good. Key skills success rates are outstanding. Attendance has improved over the last three years and is high.
12. Learners make exceptional progress at Hull College given their previous levels of attainment and experiences of learning. Around half of all students at the college come from disadvantaged areas; many have low aspirations. A small minority of full-time learners aged 16-18 enrolling at the college have GCSE A\* to C English and mathematics. The progress made by 16-18 year olds is outstanding; on their main qualifications most achieve higher grades than predicted and over a third gain additional relevant vocational qualifications. In addition, almost all full-time learners leave the college with appropriate key skills qualifications. High grade GCSE English and mathematics success rates are very high. The personal and social development of full-time 16-18 year olds are outstanding. Their attitudes to learning improve significantly, they enjoy their time at college and their attendance is very good. Many develop confidence and self-esteem through enterprise activities and the many opportunities to take an active role in the life of the college and the community. Adults' achievement is outstanding on vocational courses, particularly at level 1. Those in employment also achieve very well. Success rates on Train to Gain programmes are very high. Employers speak positively of the confidence their employees gain and the good levels of industrial skills they develop. The college's role in changing the lives of many learners is significant. Levels of progression to further study within the college are very good. A high proportion of learners progress to higher education (HE) and progression into relevant employment is high.
13. The success rates of learners from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are higher than their white counterparts. Learners with learning difficulties and/or



disabilities and those receiving additional support for literacy and numeracy achieve in line with the high success rates of other students.

## Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

14. Inspectors agree with the college's self-assessment that the quality of provision is outstanding. Teaching and learning are good. Robust arrangements for lesson observation and an effective teaching and learning strategy are successfully driving improvements. Most observations accurately identify the key strengths in teaching and areas for improvement. The college is supporting well those observers who lack confidence in identifying areas for improvement and providing feedback to teachers. Quality improvement and student support managers (QuISSMs) in each curriculum area are very effective in disseminating good practice. Comprehensive support is provided for new teachers to enhance their skills. Good use is made of feedback from learners to review and improve the quality of teaching.
15. Teachers are well qualified and extensive opportunities for professional development ensure they keep up-to-date. The college has developed a highly successful accredited programme for teachers working with 14-16 year olds. Teachers' schemes of work are comprehensive and most lessons are planned well to include a wide range of activities that ensure all students are challenged. The integration and development of key skills in lessons are outstanding and learners are able to use the college's virtual learning environment (VLE) to access additional materials to support their learning outside of lessons.
16. Rigorous verification and quality assurance of assessment procedures ensure that the provision meets awarding body requirements and that most learners receive prompt and clear feedback on what they should to improve. In a minority of cases typing and grammatical errors go uncorrected on learners' work.
17. An outstanding range of provision meets the needs of learners exceptionally well. The curriculum is highly responsive to the needs of the local community and employers; developments of new provision are innovative and inclusive. The range of programmes is reviewed constantly, with new courses developed and introduced to respond to local needs. Bespoke provision for local and national companies responds very well to the complex and varied requirements of employers. Links with schools are excellent. A very wide range of courses is offered for a large number of learners aged 14-16 that includes the largest contract nationally of Young Apprenticeship pathways. The range of courses available at level 1 and for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) has increased substantially. Opportunities to progress within the college are available at all levels, including at degree level, in all curriculum areas.
18. Enrichment activities are extensive and designed well to interest and challenge students' thinking on a wide range of themes such as political freedom, active citizenship, health issues and how to stay safe. A wide range of sports and social activities are enjoyed by many learners. Specific activities are arranged

for work-based and adult part-time learners. Learners are provided with an excellent range of opportunities, which most use very well, to develop the skills needed to be able to make a positive contribution to the community when they leave college.

19. Support and guidance for learners are outstanding. Learners in need of additional support for specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those needing help to improve their levels of literacy and numeracy are identified quickly. High quality support is provided promptly. The college has excellent facilities and staff to support learners with sensory impairment and very good support for learners with dyslexia and other learning difficulties. Learners are aware of their target grades and how to achieve or surpass them. Tutors regularly review their progress, to identify and arrange extra support for those who need it. Learning mentors provide excellent support for learners at risk of underachieving through rigorous monitoring of their attendance and the provision of additional pastoral support. The tutorial programme is very well planned to include a comprehensive range of activities designed to increase learners' understanding of key issues such as equality and diversity, sustainability and enterprise. Interesting and challenging events such as 'Question Time' provide a forum for learners to understand how local democratic processes work. Learners' views about the quality of services provided for them by the college are collected through an extensive and well established range of methods and are used well to inform improvements.
20. The college provides excellent information, advice and guidance to students, before they enrol and during their courses, to help them to make appropriate choices. Connexions staff and college advisers carefully guide learners through realistic progression routes. Very effective support is provided to those applying to higher education and for those wishing to secure employment.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

*Contributory grades:*

*Equality of opportunity*

*Outstanding: Grade 1*

21. Inspectors agree with the college that leadership and management are outstanding. Inspirational and highly effective leadership from the principal, supported by strong senior managers and governors, has successfully improved the quality of provision. Success rates have improved consistently and learners make outstanding progress. A clear strategic vision has been carefully developed and responds well to local and national priorities. It sets a clear agenda for the college's future and is supported by a set of core values. An independent review of the college indicates the very positive social and economic impact that it has in the community.
22. Communications and team working are exemplary. Managers at all levels are open and approachable to staff and students. An effective management structure provides staff with autonomy, and clear lines of responsibility and accountability. Arrangements for performance management are robust, effectively using the outcomes from lesson observations and students'

achievement to recognise the efforts of staff, share good practice and identify areas for development. Effective curriculum management has been strengthened further by the very good work of the QuISSMs. The very few curriculum areas graded as satisfactory in the college's self-assessment report for 2006/07 have improved significantly. Management of work-based learning has been recently reorganised and is good.

23. The arrangements for quality assurance are outstanding. A culture of continuous improvement is firmly established across the college. Systems and processes have been revised to focus on key performance indicators. Excellent management information supports the monitoring of progress in meeting challenging targets. The lesson observation system is continuously improving and is effective in helping to improve quality.
24. Inspectors found the college's self-assessment to be accurate and thorough. Action plans clearly indicate areas for improvement and how the many significant strengths will be maintained. Progress in implementing actions for improvement is closely monitored at course and senior management level. An annual risk assessment of curriculum areas ensures that resources are targeted appropriately. Regular reporting and reviews of vulnerable and under-performing courses has had a significant impact in improving standards.
25. Governance is outstanding. Governors make a valuable contribution to the college's strategic direction. They are carefully selected and bring a range of relevant skills and expertise. A robust standards committee carefully scrutinises all aspects of the college's performance.
26. Accommodation and facilities have improved substantially and are outstanding in some areas, including construction, sport and performing arts. Sustainable development is a high priority. The impact on the environment and economy is considered in all college decisions. The college recognises some buildings will not meet future needs and is submitting plans for a substantial building programme. Staff are well qualified, highly valued and supported well by managers; morale is high.
27. Community and employer partnerships at local, national and international level are exceptional. The college goes the extra mile to be inclusive, to widen participation and provide access for all learners. Innovative work with local schools includes extensive vocational provision, new diploma developments and the sponsorship of an academy in the west of the city.
28. Equality and diversity are outstanding. Equality of opportunity features prominently in all aspects of the college's work. Learners' understanding is promoted very well and is reinforced through participation in local events such as the bicentenary William Wilberforce celebrations and community projects on the abolition of slavery. Social and educational inclusion are outstanding. The college's response to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is thorough. It complies with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2002 (SENDA). Policies are clear and the

progress against action plans is monitored closely. Financial management is very strong. The college provides outstanding value for money.

## Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with 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	04/05	2,713	75	65	10	1,928	67	62	5
	05/06	3,030	74	69	5	2,144	72	65	7
	06/07*	3,117	76	N/A		1,957	81	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	24	88	68	20	...	...	...	...
	05/06	11	91	72	19	...	...	...	...
	06/07*	...	...	N/A		...	...	N/A	
NVQs	04/05	247	71	68	3	142	72	66	6
	05/06	234	76	72	4	168	82	74	8
	06/07*	264	77	N/A		223	78	N/A	
Other	04/05	2,442	75	64	11	1,786	67	62	5
	05/06	2,785	74	69	5	1,976	71	65	6
	06/07*	2,844	76	N/A		1,732	81	N/A	

\* college data (produced using proprietary software)

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with 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	04/05	1,828	63	61	2	2,931	66	60	6
	05/06	1,616	66	66	0	3,025	66	66	0
	06/07*	1,450	70	N/A		3,687	75	N/A	
GCSEs	04/05	367	54	64	-10	401	57	63	-6
	05/06	386	72	68	4	438	71	67	4
	06/07*	171	76	N/A		371	79	N/A	
GNVQs and Precursors	04/05	111	44	67	-23	15	73	75	-2
	05/06	79	43	69	-26	11	82	68	14
	06/07*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	04/05	461	59	57	2	1,258	65	60	5
	05/06	294	65	65	0	1,196	64	67	-3
	06/07*	357	68	N/A		1,572	72	N/A	
Other	04/05	889	71	61	10	1,257	71	59	12
	05/06	857	65	66	-1	1,380	67	65	2
	06/07*	892	69	N/A		1,743	76	N/A	

\* college data (produced using proprietary software)

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with 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	04/05	1,788	67	68	-1	3,051	59	58	1
	05/06	1,560	67	70	-3	2,102	64	63	1
	06/07*	1,696	74	N/A		1,744	69	N/A	
A/A2 levels	04/05	214	77	86	-9	121	68	69	-1
	05/06	173	83	87	-4	114	64	72	-8
	06/07*	135	84	N/A		71	82	N/A	
AS Levels	04/05	547	62	66	-4	316	52	52	0
	05/06	490	57	67	-10	242	50	55	-5
	06/07*	384	65	N/A		213	56	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	186	68	61	7	62	68	54	14
	05/06	85	64	66	-2	31	71	57	14
	06/07*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	04/05	108	72	63	9	394	47	56	-9
	05/06	85	79	71	8	470	59	63	-4
	06/07*	82	77	N/A		438	67	N/A	
Other	04/05	733	68	60	8	2,158	61	59	2
	05/06	727	69	65	4	1,245	68	64	4
	06/07*	1,075	76	N/A		1,000	72	N/A	

\* college data (produced using proprietary software)

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	146	45.0	49.5	40.4	35.2
		timely	157	26.1	31.2	22.3	21.7
	05/06	overall	190	59.5	54.2	50.0	44.4
		timely	181	40.9	34.1	35.4	27.2
	06/07	overall	148	71.6	64.2	66.9	57.7
		timely	172	34.9	42.7	34.9	37.4
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	255	51.6	51.7	49.4	39.9
		timely	233	31.4	29.3	31.7	22.7
	05/06	overall	268	60.8	58.7	51.5	53.1
		timely	300	45.0	38.0	37.7	34.4
	06/07	overall	306	71.2	65.1	64.7	61.3
		timely	277	64.6	46.9	57.8	43.9

Note 'At the time of the inspection - LSC data for 2006/07 had yet to be fully validated'

- \* 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/provider 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 college 2006 to 2008.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2006/07	overall	250	93%
		timely	250	91%
	2007/08 (8 months)	overall	935	81%
		timely	930	80%

Note: 2007-08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first 8 months or greater of the LSC contract year

- \* 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/provider 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 Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the college 2006 to 2008.

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
2005/06	154	20%	43%
2006/07	100	20%	36%
2007/08 (8 months)	80	50%	66%

Note: 2007-08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the 8 months or greater of the LSC contract year

- \* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme
- \*\* Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period