

Franklin 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 on 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. Franklin Sixth Form College (Franklin) was established in 1990 as part of the reorganisation of secondary education in Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire. The college offers provision from a main campus close to Grimsby town centre with additional adult and community programmes accessed at a number of local schools and learning centres. Franklin provides programmes in 10 of the 15 sector subject areas. The most popular subjects being art and design, psychology, mathematics, media studies, English language, law, biology and business studies. Of the 2,588 learners during 2006/07, 48% were adults. However, this reduced to 9.7% when calculated as full-time equivalent learners. The highest proportion of enrolments are for long programmes, some 83% are at level 3, 10% at level 2 and 3% at level 1.
2. North East Lincolnshire is an urban local authority based around Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham with a population of 159,000. The unemployment levels are slightly higher than the national average with unemployment hot spots centred in Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham. Minority heritage groups make up 1.4% of the residents with Indian being the largest minority group.
3. Of the 11 secondary schools in North East Lincolnshire, one has an active school sixth form and three opened as academies in September 2007. The Year 12 provision previously provided by two schools based in Cleethorpes transferred to Franklin at the start of the academic year 2007/08. Together with Grimsby Institute and Hereford Technology School, Franklin College is a key partner in the creation of a learning village planned for 2010. The development is planned as a collaborative approach to planning provision from age 11 to university level on a purpose built campus. In 2006/07, 52% of Year 11 school leavers in North East Lincolnshire obtained five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) passes at grades A* to C, which is lower than the Humberside average of 58% and the national average of 62%. Franklin's mission is 'to provide education and training of quality and purpose'.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
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

4. Franklin's overall effectiveness is good. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates are consistently at or above the national average at all levels for all ages. Long programmes success rates have improved at all levels and ages, apart from learners aged 16-18 at level 3. The progress made by learners at Franklin is very good with many learners achieving beyond their predicted grades at entry. GCE A level success rates are high at 90%. Success rates for adults have demonstrated marked improvements and are currently significantly above the national average at all levels.
5. Teaching and learning are good. Well qualified teachers provide good levels of support, engaging learners through the use of good and varied learning resources. Much emphasis is placed on informal strategies to continually improve the quality of teaching but formal observations only occur biannually.
6. Educational and social inclusion are outstanding. The college's approach to eliminating learners' barriers to education is exceptional. The very strong partnership with local primary and secondary schools raises the aspirations of their youngsters. The college currently provides purposeful academic support to 50% of all Key Stage 4 pupils in the North Lincolnshire area. Franklin takes excellent account of learners' academic and cultural needs. Learners benefit from the wide range of courses and well designed curriculum. An excellent enrichment programme enables learners from all backgrounds to enhance their academic and personal development. Information, advice and guidance are good, providing learners with effective support and a clear guidance to help them achieve. Leadership and management are good. Senior managers provide good clear strategic direction and good financial management. Partnership working within the schools sector is particularly good, as is the college's involvement with 14-19 collaborative initiatives and the new diplomas.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

7. The self-assessment process is inclusive, well embedded and thorough. The college has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for improvement based on reliable and effective interrogation of data and reports. Although thorough, some curriculum area judgements are overly focused on achievement and standards, with limited judgements on the quality of provision or operational management. Internal moderation is robust with senior managers, governors and independent specialists or stakeholders providing impartiality to the moderation panel. The college summary self-assessment report is good, detailed and generally evaluative with a clear focus on improvement. Inspectors agreed with the majority of judgements. Comprehensive quality improvement plans contain realistic targets and lines of responsibility that are monitored effectively by curriculum directors.

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

7. The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection is good. The college has maintained the strengths identified at the last inspection and most areas for improvement are fully resolved. Retention rates, initial assessment arrangements and the quality of tutorials are all much improved. The areas still to be resolved are based on accommodation and learners' access to specialist resources. However, Franklin's property strategy includes a new purpose built college.

Key strengths

- high success rates in GCE A levels
- very good progress made by learners
- high success rates for adults
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of provision that meets a variety of learners' needs
- outstanding social and educational inclusion
- outstanding enrichment opportunities
- good strategic planning
- extensive and successful 14-19 partnership work
- good financial management.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- success rates for 16-18 year olds in some courses, particularly at AS level
- the frequency of teaching and learning observations
- some poor and ageing accommodation.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

9. Achievement and standards are good which is in agreement with Franklin's self-assessment report. Many learners enter Franklin with low or average prior attainment levels. Franklin has high expectations of these learners, setting challenging targets as they support them towards achievement beyond their original targets. The vast majority of learners make better progress than expected based on their entry qualifications. Success rates for 16-18-year-old learners on long programmes are currently similar to national rates, having made marked improvements over the last three years. Success rates at GCE A level are consistently high at about 90%. However, GCE AS level provision has remained 10% below the national average for two consecutive years. Inspectors agreed with the college that low AS general studies achievement of 53% are a contributory factor. However, AS success rates remain some 4% below national rates with general studies removed. The college has taken very appropriate intervention strategies and early indications are that AS achievement is improving. Many learners achieve very well, allowing more options and choice for the high proportion of learners who progress into higher education.
10. The college has been particularly successful in the integration of its adult learning provision. Marked improvements to success rates during 2006/07 places adult long programmes some 21% above the national average at level 1, 9% at level 2 and 16% at level 3. The percentage of high grades at GCE A level was particularly good for adults during 2005/06 at 68% and 61% during 2006/07 which is some 18% above the national average.
11. Retention rates, an area for improvement at the last inspection, have improved year on year and currently stand at a very good 94%. Attendance rates have improved from 86% at the last inspection, through to the present in year figure of 90%. Learners' work is good, files are well organised, notes are neat and legible and the standard of work is appropriate for the level of programme. Learners enjoy their studies and actively participate in class responding knowledgeably and enthusiastically to questions and activities.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

12. Inspectors agreed with the college's own self-assessment that the quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Well planned lessons use a variety of activities to engage and interest learners. Learners' additional needs and learning styles are well considered. Teachers place good emphasis on ensuring that all learners make progress, although providing sufficient challenge for more able learners is an area for improvement as identified in the self-assessment. Good use of information and learning technology (ILT) makes lessons interesting and adds variety to activities. Assessment is thorough and learners' work is marked promptly with detailed comments on how they can improve.

13. The observation of teaching and learning process includes formal lesson observation, peer and tutorial observation. Observations are regular and detailed but some identified strengths are no more than standard practice. Feedback after lesson observations is very detailed and teachers accurately evaluate where improvements would benefit their own performance. Outcomes are summarised by curriculum area and effectively inform the staff development programme. However, the frequency of observations at every two years is insufficient to effectively monitor the quality of provision. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that some teaching lacked challenge and failed to engage all learners.
14. Teachers are well qualified and learning resources are good. Learners appreciate the high level of academic support they receive from teachers. Many curriculum areas have populated the college virtual learning environment (VLE) and learners value the materials, particularly the revision guides. Parents and carers are well informed about learners' progress and performance.
15. The range of provision is particularly good, taking excellent account of the needs of learners in achieving their aspirational targets. Advanced level provision is broad and for adults, programmes are available from entry level to level 3. Highly committed staff work productively with regional primary and secondary schools providing additional enrichment to their pupils. Franklin learners are very successful mentors at local schools, providing good role models for school pupils. Undergraduates return to Franklin and offer learning support and guidance to level 3 learners. Programmes are offered at 24 external venues and include vocational training for single young mums, offenders and training on employer's premises.
16. Enrichment opportunities are outstanding and take up is very good. Learners benefit from a variety of activities and teaching sessions at regional universities. Learners enjoy a wide range of sports. Staff are very successful at attracting well known speakers to the college; for example, the artist David Hockney recently visited the college to hold a master class for students. Learners can participate in a wide range of trips in England and abroad that develops their academic skills and broadens their life experience and personal skills. Very good financial support enables learners with limited financial resource to access the trips.
17. The range and quality of educational and pastoral support is very good and effectively enables learners to achieve their potential. The self-assessment report correctly identifies that initial assessment is effective in identifying learning support needs. Support is timely and very appropriate to learners' needs. A varied tutorial programme effectively focuses on issues of learner health, safety and well-being. Staff provide good information, advice and guidance. At entry, learners' receive good guidance to ensure their programme choices are appropriate. A range of taster days give learners the opportunity to sample programmes before enrolling. A college nursery provides childcare facilities for learners.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

18. Leadership and management are good. Rigorous development of local links together with thorough research and an active role in the 14-19 partnership effectively inform strategic direction. The college has a very clear understanding of local and national opportunities, and challenges and uses this to good effect when planning the direction and culture of the college. Franklin is an active member of a tripartite agreement with a school and general further education college, that will provide a learning campus for secondary through to further and higher education. Proficient governance effectively supports strategic management. Governors make productive links with curriculum areas and participate in quality improvement strategies and staff training. Although governors receive all significant documentation, many are without summaries or information to help them in their evaluations and judgements.
19. The college has a strong commitment to extending the choice and improving the attainment levels of Key Stage 4 and sixth form pupils in schools. Sixth form learners benefit from additional AS and A level subjects provided by Franklin. Good support for Key Stage 4 learners include Franklins very experienced staff teaching in schools, running out-of-school workshops and providing a consultancy service. The college offered a very responsive and empathic approach to parents and learners as they transferred to Franklin during the closure of two school sixth forms. The college works extensively with learners who are at risk of leaving or who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
20. Financial planning is good. The college prioritises its financial planning to take good account of the cultural and academic needs of its learners. Financial monitoring is thorough and robust. Franklin has effectively managed to improve and extend some of the college accommodation. However, inspectors agreed with Franklin's accommodation analysis that some areas are in need of refurbishment and increased learner numbers produce some difficulties when timetabling specialist areas.
21. Quality assurance processes effectively inform self-assessment and quality improvement plans. However, formal observations of teaching and learning are insufficiently frequent. Improvement targets negotiated with curriculum managers are suitably challenging, realistic and effectively monitored during line manager meetings. Staff development is well planned taking good account of organisational needs whilst providing good professional development. The college's use of data, an area for improvement at the last inspection, is much improved. Staff are able to access reliable data at individual learner or curriculum level.
22. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. A senior manager is one of the three child protection officers. The college has an appropriate policy, a schedule of continual training and good links with external groups and agencies.

23. The college's promotion of equality of opportunity is good and evident in its approach to and support of learners. Academic and social inclusion is outstanding as is the colleges focus on extending learners' experience and opportunities. Participation rates of learners from minority heritage groups are good at 7% where the general population is 2%. The college complies with the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 (SENDA). Learners take an active part in decision making with Franklin taking good account of, and acting on their views.

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	141	55	64	-9	780	58	56	2
	05/06	153	48	71	-23	739	52	56	-4
	06/07*	90	76			308	78		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	16	69	71	-2	N/A			
	05/06								
	06/07*	6	100					N/A	
NVQs	04/05	N/A				N/A			
	05/06	N/A				N/A			
	06/07*	N/A				N/A			
Other	04/05	125	53	63	-10	780	58	56	2
	05/06	153	48	71	-23	739	52	56	-4
	06/07*	84	74			308	78		

* college data (use where complete, validated and 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	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	04/05	511	66	73	-7	313	53	56	-3
	05/06	425	74	78	-4	412	57	64	-7
	06/07*	418	77			207	75		
GCSEs	04/05	391	68	78	-10	96	59	65	-6
	05/06	344	77	80	-3	84	70	66	4
	06/07*	311	80			51	76		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	70	64	74	-10	N/A			
	05/06	36	78	77	1	N/A			
	06/07*	18	72			N/A			
NVQs	04/05	N/A				N/A			
	05/06	N/A				38	42	68	-26
	06/07*	4	50			26	73		
Other	04/05	50	50	62	-12	217	51	52	-1
	05/06	45	42	70	-28	290	55	61	-6
	06/07*	85	68			130	75		

* college data (use where complete, validated and 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	4,543	77	82	-5	118	59	59	0
	05/06	4,953	77	83	-6	117	60	60	0
	06/07*	4,865	78			132	79		
A/A2 levels	04/05	1,432	89	92	-3	36	89	76	13
	05/06	1,680	90	93	-3	27	78	78	0
	06/07*	1,599	90			31	100		
AS Levels	04/05	2,964	72	78	-6	63	46	54	8
	05/06	3,087	69	79	-10	63	51	58	7
	06/07*	3,091	71			59	83		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	102	80	74	6	3	100		
	05/06	43	84	74	10	1	100		
	06/07*	29	90			1	100		
NVQs	04/05	N/A				N/A			
	05/06	N/A				N/A			
	06/07*	1	100			11	64		0
Other	04/05	45	62	72	-10	16	38	56	-18
	05/06	143	78	75	3	26	62	62	0
	06/07*	145	88			30	53		

* college data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)