

Nelson and Colne 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. Nelson and Colne College is a tertiary college. The college's two main centres are based at Nelson and at Colne. Students at the college are drawn principally from the Pendle district, but also from Burnley, East Lancashire and a small number from Yorkshire. The college is consolidating its mainstream provision onto a single site in Nelson, with a new building and the refurbishment of existing accommodation. Work is due for completion in August 2008. The college offers academic and vocational provision in 12 of the 15 sector subject areas. The curriculum offer has been extended and ranges from pre-foundation courses to a small number of higher education (HE) qualification courses. General certificate of education advanced level courses (GCE A and AS levels) are available in 32 subjects and vocational courses in 13 areas, with apprenticeships available in eight occupational areas. The college recruits a substantial number of Key Stage 4 school pupils onto its vocational provision. In 2007, the college was part of the Burnley and Pendle Consortium which made a successful gateway bid to deliver the 14-19 diploma in media.
2. The borough of Pendle is composed of industrial towns, small villages and open countryside. The total population is approximately 89,000. There is high deprivation in seven of the Pendle wards. The percentage of adults living in Pendle who have no educational qualifications is 36% compared with 29% nationally. General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) attainment varies between schools but is, overall, considerably lower than the national average. Some 43% of school pupils leaving Key Stage 4 gained five or more A* to C passes in 2007. The large majority of full-time enrolments comprises of students aged 16-18, with adults accounting for over 90% of part-time enrolments. Some 33% of full-time students are from minority ethnic backgrounds compared with 15% in the local population. Some 52% of full-time 16-19 year old students come from disadvantaged communities. Between 2003 and 2007 enrolments increased by 45%. The number of full-time students increased by 30% in the three years up to 2006/07.
3. The college aims, through partnership working, to deliver the highest standards of teaching and learning, offer outstanding and relevant provision to young people, adults and employers, value and support its students so they achieve their full potential and be proactive in removing barriers to learning and progression.

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>Outstanding: Contributory Grade 1</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is outstanding. Achievement and standards are good. The overall long course success rate is high and is increasing in line with the national average. The success rate for students aged 16-18 is high and for adults it is consistently above average. A high proportion of apprentices achieve the full framework, often in the planned period. GCE A level success rates are high; AS success rates are satisfactory. The progress made by A level students is good, for AS students it is satisfactory. Students produce work of high quality.
5. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Assessment is well planned and marking is thorough and helpful. The internal lesson observation system is rigorous and carefully moderated and helps improve the teaching and learning. Staff development is well focused on college priorities.
6. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. The provision meets the diverse needs of its students very well. The range of courses is wide and provides good opportunities for progression. The promotion of equality and diversity and the guidance and support provided for students are outstanding. The college has extensive links with its partners and uses these well to develop its wide ranging Skills for Life work and its substantial work with schools. Work with employers is growing.
7. Leadership and management are outstanding. Strategic leadership is strong. Governors monitor college performance closely and provide a suitable degree of challenge to senior managers. Management information is accurate and readily available to staff. Quality assurance arrangements are rigorously applied and lead to improvement. The quality assurance of a few aspects of student support is still developing. The college's financial position is strong and the college provides outstanding value for money.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

8. The college has an outstanding capacity to improve. The self-assessment report is accurate and useful to the college. Its judgements are clear and supported by a wide range of evidence. Quality improvement plans are comprehensive, their implementation is carefully monitored and they lead to improvement. Management information is accurate. Professional development gives all staff excellent support. The college has a good record of maintaining high standards.

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

9. The college has made outstanding progress since the last inspection. The high quality of the provision has been maintained and most of the areas for improvement have been fully addressed. The financial position is now strong. A

major new build is nearly completed. Links with employers have been strengthened. The use of information and learning technology (ILT) has improved, although its use needs embedding across the college.

Key strengths

- high success rates
- the good progress made by students on GCE A level programmes
- outstanding teaching and learning
- highly effective personal and academic support for students
- strong strategic leadership
- rigorous quality assurance procedures
- the excellent promotion of equality and diversity
- the well focused professional development programme
- outstanding educational and social inclusion.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- the progress made by GCE AS students and their overall success rate, which are currently satisfactory
- the need to continue to develop the use of ILT.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

10. Achievement and standards are good. The overall long course success rate is high and is increasing in line with the national average. In 2006, the rate placed the college in the top decile of general further education (GFE)/tertiary colleges and third highest among GFE/tertiary colleges which recruit extensively from similar areas of high deprivation.
11. The long course success rate for students aged 16-18 is high; consistently well above the top quartile position of GFE/tertiary colleges. The success rates at levels 1, 2 and 3 separately are frequently well above the top quartile rates and all were above this rate in 2007. Retention rates in 2007 were slightly above average and pass rates were high, at or above 90% at all three levels. Key skills success rates are high. A high proportion of apprentices achieve the full framework, many within the planned period.
12. The success rate on GCE A levels is high. It has been above 90% in three of the four years to 2007. In 2006, the rate dipped slightly below 90%. These rates are consistently above the national average for GFE/tertiary colleges. The GCE AS level success rate is satisfactory. The progress made by students on GCE A levels compared with their attainment at Key Stage 4 is good; on GCE AS levels they make satisfactory progress.
13. The long course success rate for adult students is consistently well above average. It was at the top quartile position for GFE/tertiary colleges in both 2006 and 2007. In 2007, the rates were close to the top quartile rates at levels 1 and 2 and above average at level 3. Retention rates in 2007 were slightly above average at levels 1 and 2 but below average at level 3. Pass rates in this year were high, above 90% at all three levels.
14. Many learners make outstanding progress; for example, one young person originally recruited at entry level is now studying mathematics at university; another recruited at this level is presently studying at advanced level.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

15. The quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve since the last inspection and is outstanding. The college has an accurate and detailed view of the many strengths and the few areas for development in teaching and learning which has contributed effectively to the improvements in students' achievement.
16. A rigorous internal observation system judges that around 80% of lessons are good or better. Feedback to teachers is comprehensive and individual development needs are noted and methods of sharing good practice are clearly identified. The system helps implement the college's developmental priorities in teaching and learning by focusing on these during observations. An effective

moderation system is in place. Staff development is comprehensive and a recent 'Ready Steady Teach' day very successfully encouraged staff to share good practice throughout the college.

17. Lessons are planned thoroughly and prioritise students' learning. Teachers engage and motivate students to have ambitious yet realistic aspirations. Starter activities are well thought out and students quickly focus on the lessons' tasks. Teachers use questioning effectively to check on learning and probe students' knowledge and understanding. Students respond well to the very good range of learning activities and contribute enthusiastically to class discussions. They produce work of high quality. Teachers support in and out of lessons is outstanding.
18. The use of ILT to support learning is correctly identified as a college priority. Its use in lessons has improved since the last inspection but is still in the process of development. Intranet resources are currently being transferred to a more structured virtual learning environment (VLE).
19. Assessment is well planned. Marking is thorough; students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Assessment cover sheets give students a very detailed analysis of the quality of their work. Spelling and grammar are given appropriate attention. Students' progress is closely monitored.
20. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is outstanding. The provision is outstanding in the way it meets the diverse needs of its learners, the community and employers. There is a wide range of vocational and academic courses, providing excellent opportunities for progression from entry level to level 3. At entry level, for example, there are four courses which are well matched to the needs of students with different types of disability and/or learning difficulty. Academic provision is extensive and recruits a significant proportion of the college's students aged 16-18. The college is working to increase the range of courses it offers at level 4 which is currently limited. Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment activity.
21. Vocational provision for school pupils has grown and is substantial. Skills for Life provision is extensive. The college works with a wide range of partners including community networks and centres, schools, social services and the primary care trust to promote and deliver this work. It has strong links with the Muslim community. The volume of work undertaken for employers is highly regarded and is growing, but is currently relatively small. The apprenticeship programme is highly successful.
22. Guidance and support are outstanding. Pre-enrolment advice and guidance are of a high quality. Induction enables students to settle quickly. Prompt and thorough procedures are in place to assess and meet the diverse range of learning and personal needs of students. Students' value the inclusive nature of the support offered and the sensitive way in which it is organised and delivered. Students who receive additional support achieve well.

23. 'Progress mentors' were introduced in September 2007 and early reviews indicate they have helped improve in-year retention substantially. Students value the support they provide. They monitor closely students' attendance and performance. Students who are at risk of dropping out of college or underachieving are quickly identified and intervention strategies put in place. Where appropriate, parents are kept informed. The themes of Every Child Matters are covered in group tutorials. Advice and guidance for students wishing to progress to higher education are excellent. The college has an extensive range of links with local community groups and external agencies to support students.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Outstanding: Grade 1

24. Leadership and management are outstanding. They provide a clear vision for the college. The strategic direction is developed in conjunction with staff and is reflected in divisional and service area development plans. Targets are set at all levels, progress towards meeting them is closely monitored, and they are challenging and are largely achieved. The high quality of the provision identified at the last inspection has been maintained and the areas for improvement successfully addressed. The financial position is much improved and the college is now in a strong financial position. Student numbers have increased markedly in recent years. A major new building is shortly to be completed. Links with industry have been strengthened. Management information is accurate and readily available to staff. The college provides outstanding value for money.
25. Governance is excellent. Governors monitor college performance closely and provide a suitable degree of challenge to senior managers. They are appropriately involved in the development of the college's strategic plan and monitor its implementation carefully. Links with a wide range of external partners are well developed and productive. Arrangements to appraise and develop staff are strong.
26. Quality assurance arrangements are clear and comprehensive. They are rigorously applied and lead to improvement. The judgements in the self-assessment report are supported by a wide range of evidence, moderated carefully and are largely accurate. The quality of teaching is monitored closely. Internal inspections of aspects of provision are conducted regularly. Quality improvement plans address areas for improvement; their implementation is carefully monitored. The college has a consistent record of high student achievement in most aspects of its provision. A few aspects of the quality assurance of student support, for example, the observation of tutorials and the monitoring of students' progress, are undergoing redevelopment.
27. The college is socially and educationally inclusive. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The college provides a harmonious yet challenging learning environment for its diverse student population. Students, regardless of ethnicity or background, achieve high success rates. Equality and diversity are

promoted through, for example, tutorial activities and whole college events such as a recent inter-faith exhibition which considered the views of Muslims, Christians and those of a secular background. The college meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2002. Its response to recent legislation on child protection has been good.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 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	03/04	668	79	59	20	1,637	71	59	12
	04/05	751	75	62	13	937	68	61	7
	05/06	321	68	68	0	813	77	67	10
	06/07*	495	82	N/A		824	76	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	21	76	63	13	**			
	04/05	29	52	64	-12	**			
	05/06	20	55	70	-15	**			
	06/07*	**		N/A		**		N/A	
NVQs	03/04	87	59	61	-2	27	78	66	12
	04/05	56	66	66	0	59	69	71	-2
	05/06	79	75	70	5	54	70	72	-2
	06/07*	93	78	N/A		47	60	N/A	
Other	03/04	560	82	59	23	1,610	71	59	12
	04/05	666	77	61	16	877	68	61	7
	05/06	222	66	67	-1	759	77	67	10
	06/07*	402	83	N/A		777	77	N/A	

* college data

** numbers too low to present meaningful success rates

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 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	03/04	612	72	56	16	618	66	54	12
	04/05	547	67	61	6	642	60	60	0
	05/06	946	73	65	8	485	65	66	-1
	06/07*	989	80	N/A		434	75	N/A	
GCSEs	03/04	270	72	64	8	73	68	58	10
	04/05	287	61	66	-5	70	66	64	2
	05/06	650	69	69	0	140	64	67	-3
	06/07*	602	80	N/A		64	70	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	43	74	60	14	**			
	04/05	16	69	67	2	**			
	05/06	29	86	66	20	**			
	06/07*	**		N/A				N/A	
NVQs	03/04	98	64	49	15	54	81	54	27
	04/05	73	86	56	30	82	65	62	3
	05/06	86	79	64	15	90	73	69	4
	06/07*	57	77	N/A		144	70	N/A	
Other	03/04	201	74	53	21	491	64	53	11
	04/05	171	68	59	9	490	58	58	0
	05/06	181	81	63	18	255	63	65	-2
	06/07*	323	82	N/A		226	79	N/A	

* college data

** numbers too low to present meaningful success rates

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 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	03/04	2,367	77	61	16	426	60	53	7
	04/05	2,360	69	66	3	337	55	57	-2
	05/06	2,326	76	68	8	391	69	62	7
	06/07*	2,719	76	N/A		259	69	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	03/04	736	92	84	8	39	72	69	3
	04/05	535	93	85	8	40	90	74	16
	05/06	765	89	86	3	35	69	74	-5
	06/07*	713	92	N/A		56	82	N/A	
AS Levels	03/04	1,377	71	60	11	91	51	50	1
	04/05	1,634	63	64	-1	44	34	53	-19
	05/06	1,412	70	64	6	76	66	57	9
	06/07*	1,804	69	N/A		45	56	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	80	68	51	17	**			
	04/05	56	71	60	11	**			
	05/06	11	82	68	14	**			
	06/07*	**		N/A		**		N/A	
NVQs	03/04	16	69	50	19	59	64	49	15
	04/05	17	71	54	17	52	44	55	-11
	05/06	11	73	66	7	94	79	65	14
	06/07*	21	86	N/A		61	80	N/A	
Other	03/04	158	62	51	11	231	61	54	7
	04/05	118	56	57	-1	197	54	57	-3
	05/06	127	68	62	6	186	65	62	3
	06/07*	181	80	N/A		97	62	N/A	

* college data

** numbers too low to present meaningful success rates

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*	college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	25	64	48	60	34
		timely	27	19	31	19	22
	05/06	overall	32	75	53	59	44
		timely	24	58	34	38	27
	06/07	overall	27	74	64	70	58
		timely	30	57	43	50	37
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	79	61	51	57	39
		timely	78	49	29	45	22
	05/06	overall	84	80	58	74	52
		timely	91	58	38	55	34
	06/07	overall	61	79	65	74	61
		timely	55	64	47	53	44

Note

- * 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'