

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: North Lindsey  
Date of visit: 23 January 2008

### Context

North Lindsey College is a general further education college established in 1953 as a technical college, with a main campus in Scunthorpe. Outreach centres are located in Barton and Ashby and a further five within local manufacturing industries. The college was last inspected in 2007. The college's overall effectiveness was judged to be good as were leadership and management, teaching and learning and guidance and support. Provision for learners aged 14-16 was judged to be outstanding. Achievements and standards were judged to be satisfactory. The core business of the college is providing vocational and higher education to **1,798 full-time learners**, of whom 1,554 are aged 16-18 and 245 are aged 19+. In addition there are 470 work based learners, 2,057 part-time learners, 500 14-16 learners, 1102 Train to Gain learners on NVQ programmes, and 626 learners on higher education programmes.

### Achievement and standards

What progress has been made in improving underperforming courses?	Reasonable progress
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At the last inspection in March 2007, achievement and standards were judged to be satisfactory overall. The most recent self-assessment report grades achievement and standards as satisfactory. Success rates for learners aged 16-18 show an improving trend. Success rates for adults on long programmes at all levels remain slightly below or at sector averages. Adult retention rates at all levels are below sector averages. The college has appointed dedicated staff to follow up student absences. Success rates of key skills for all age groups have improved significantly over three years and are now high. Success rates on Train to Gain programmes are good at 71%. Work based learning success rates and timely success rates have improved

significantly over three years and are now good. The college has established rigorous procedures to identify and improve under-performing courses. Course teams and curriculum managers are required to provide regular reports to senior managers on course performance. Good interventions support programme areas to improve. The Governing Body receives regular reports on performance.

### Quality of provision

What progress has been made in developing a robust lesson observation process and sharing good practice?	Reasonable progress
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Teaching and learning were identified as good at the last inspection with the management of teaching exemplary. Since then improvements have been made in the mentoring system that supports new staff. There are now 92 trained mentors with clarified roles and responsibilities, which includes undertaking lesson observations. Mentors are appointed for all new staff, for staff who move to new roles, staff with identified professional development needs and any staff returning following long term illness. As this is a new development, it is too early to judge its impact on teaching and learning. All staff have peer observations once a year to develop their practice and in addition one graded observation is completed by the observation team in the college which includes the principal and senior staff. Learning support staff (co-workers) are now included. Staff graded as satisfactory or less are provided with an individual staff development plan and re-observed as part of the quality assurance process. The range and amount of continuing professional development offered to staff has increased since the last inspection and opportunities continue to be in place for staff to link with other curriculum areas.

At the last inspection the use of information and learning technology (ILT) was identified as good. The college continues to improve its use of ILT, and in particular e-learning, through the appointment of 'moodlers' staff to further develop on-line provision and good practice including distance learning, chat rooms and on-line feedback to learners. As yet on-line provision remains aspirational for most programmes, except in computing where the use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) is well embedded

What progress has been made in delivering and evaluating the impact of additional learning support?	Significant progress
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While additional learning support was judged to be good at the last inspection, specialist support for dyslexia was not available at the college. This remains the case. However, significant progress has been made in developing staff expertise and initial assessment for all learners now includes dyslexia screening to identify those learners early in their programmes. For more specialist support, including support for learners with specific behavioural difficulties, the college continues to rely on the expertise of the local authority.

With the introduction of a new management information system, the college now carries out very good analysis of the impact of learning support by curriculum area, by entry level and by identified disability. This clearly demonstrates that additional support improves outcomes for those learners that receive it. Opportunities for adult learners to access additional support are now advertised and signposted throughout the college and take up is increasing. For those learners on work based learning programmes a dedicated link Tutor is available.

#### Leadership and management

What progress has been made in ensuring the college is responsive to learner views and how have these impacted on college activities?	Significant progress
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The college has made significant progress in reviewing and developing methods to record learner feedback. They use a range of methods to accurately record learner views on their experiences at the college. There are some innovative approaches to capture this information. For example, a diary room emulating a popular TV reality show, where learners record their views, is used along with more traditional surveys and focus groups. Group representatives record their groups' views in a useful booklet, which they report to course teams at meetings. Good account is taken of the views of different types of learners and surveys have been adapted to more appropriately focus on specific aspects of their programmes. The college responds well to learner opinion and rigorously reports back to learners on actions to improve via their course representatives and through displaying results around the college. Examples of positive changes are the introduction

of recycling bins, improvement to the canteen, the quality and quantity of healthy food options and more flexible timetabling to meet the needs of learners who travel some distance to the college.

What progress has been made in ensuring the college continues to be responsive to the needs of local employers?	Significant progress
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Significant progress has been made in maintaining the strength identified at inspection of established and extensive employer links. The college engages well with employers through a variety of innovative practices. Good support is given to employers to identify the training needs of organisations. The college works with Hull University to deliver and accredit leadership and management programmes at undergraduate and graduate level and a Masters degree is being developed. The college was nominated and shortlisted for a Star Award for outstanding employer engagement. Through Train to Gain, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has identified them as a good provider and the college has significant provision in this area.

What progress has been made in ensuring that self assessment is rigorous and accurately reflects the views of learners, employers and staff?	Reasonable progress
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At the last inspection self assessment was judged to be thorough. The process remains thorough and there is good internal and external validation, including the use of colleagues from two other colleges and an outside consultant acting as critical friend. Staff, learner and employer views inform the judgements within the report. A well developed quality improvement plan ensures effective monitoring of actions through the quality group. Judgements in relation to key questions are accurate and self critical. With the new self assessment provided to inspectors for the monitoring visit, a significant train to gain contract was not effectively reported and graded as part of the work based provision for the college.