

# Kirklees College

## Reinspection report

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## Introduction

Huddersfield Technical College was inspected in May 2008. Inspectors carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in the curriculum area of information and communications technology (ICT) which was found to be inadequate. Since then the college has merged with Dewsbury College to form the new Kirklees College. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is inadequate.

The less than satisfactory curriculum area in Huddersfield Technical College was re-inspected on the 19 and 20 May 2009 as part of the inspection of all the information and communications technology provision in the new college. The outcomes of the reinspection are as follows.

Curriculum area	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Information and communications technology	4	3

## Information and communication technology

### Context

The college offers full-time and part-time courses in ICT from entry level to level 3. These are available at the two main college sites or through community-based initiatives. Nearly 1,600 students are enrolled on ICT programmes with equal numbers of males and females. About a quarter of the students are aged 16 to 18 and nearly three-quarters study part-time. Just over 40% are from minority ethnic groups.

### Strengths

- much improved in-year retention in 2008/09
- the wide range of programmes

### Areas for improvement

- low success rates on some full-time courses
- the low proportion of good or better teaching
- insufficiently evaluative course reviews

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. In-year retention in 2008/09 has improved significantly. It is good on long courses at levels 1 and 2 and satisfactory on level 3 courses. Retention on courses delivered at the Dewsbury site, whilst improved in 2008/09 from that in the previous year, remains unsatisfactory on too much of the provision. During 2007/08 the overall success rate on part-time courses was satisfactory. However, success rates on some full-time courses were unsatisfactory. The standards of students' work, progress and attendance in class are satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Not enough teaching is good or better. Significant attention has been given to improving the teaching since the previous inspection. A detailed process for the observation of teaching and learning, which includes a contribution from external observers, has been developed and implemented. The process is rigorously validated. The grade profile derived from this process is in line with other evidence of quality, such as the curriculum area success rates, and accords with the findings of reinspection. In the better lessons, a good variety of teaching methods is used and students work well on their own. Teaching is sometimes not matched appropriately to the needs of all the students with the result that, in a few lessons, some students make slow progress.

The programmes meet the needs and interests of students satisfactorily. The curriculum area continues to offer a wide range of programmes which provide good progression opportunities. Course provision for full-time students has been revised in order to offer more vocationally relevant courses. At the previous inspection students had insufficient opportunity to explore the world of work. Some improvement has been made but more needs to be done.

Support for students is satisfactory. The college has revised the criteria for entry to courses and improved initial assessment. Students' support needs are identified early and appropriate individualised support is offered to those who need it by specialist practitioners.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The reliability and connectivity of IT equipment on the Huddersfield site has been improved recently. Students at Dewsbury do not benefit from access to a virtual learning environment. Staff re-organisation has resulted in teachers being better supported and has helped improve student retention. Quality assurance procedures have been strengthened but course evaluation is not sufficiently rigorous or evaluative.

## Monitoring Visit: Main findings

Name of college: Kirklees college  
Date of visit: 19 and 20 May 2009

### Context

The inspection of Huddersfield Technical college took place in March 2008, that of Dewsbury college in April 2006. The two colleges merged in the summer of 2008 and a major management restructuring process undertaken. This is not yet complete, with about half the operational managers, that is curriculum areas managers, not yet appointed.

### Achievement and standards

What progress has been made to raise retention and pass rates so that success rates are improved?	Reasonable progress
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Learner data for 2007/08 show that success rates in both the two previous colleges had lost ground to the national average and were low in that year. Low learner retention was the reason for these low success rates. Since the merger, the college has implemented a raft of appropriate measures which are designed to improve retention and pass rates. In-year data show that the overall long course retention rate for 2008/09 has improved markedly compared with the rate at the same time in the previous year. Early pass rate data for courses already completed are high.

### Quality of provision

What improvements have been made to the management of Skills for Life and key skills provision?	Reasonable Progress
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Previous inspection reports have judged key skills and Skills for Life provision as areas for improvement. Inconsistent management of key skills and under-developed arrangements to provide additional learning support were the main findings.

A key skills strategy is now in place, as is a clear drive to improve key skills success rates. There is an appropriate focus on ensuring all students have level 2 qualifications. Similarly, staff are being up-skilled to ensure they have the appropriate level of skills to deliver courses. Each curriculum area now has a member of staff responsible for key skills. Key skills is embedded well in some curriculum areas but less so in others. It is too early to judge the full impact of the changes to key skills provision and, although success rates are still low, the data over a 2 year period shows an upward trend across all three levels.

A Skills for Life strategy and action plan is in place which now requires further embedding across the college. Support teams are more integrated and working towards providing a more consistent approach across the two centres. Taking the best practice from each centre, a new model of both in-class and individual support is now the focus. There is better analysis of the impact of additional learning support.

Also analysed are the reasons why some students do not take up the support. Support is now been provided more promptly and more students are attending support lessons.

### Leadership and management

What progress has the college made in establishing a robust new management structure and implementing quality improvement processes?	Reasonable progress
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New management structures have been established. Managers at tiers one to three have been appointed, broadly to schedule and with approximately an equal number of internal and external appointments. Half the management posts at tier four, the curriculum area manager level, have been filled. Significant savings in the staffing budget are likely to be made due to the reduction in the overall number of posts in the new structure. The structure is designed, appropriately, to devolve responsibility and authority down to curriculum area level and take advantage of the efficiency savings possible due to the increased size of the merged college. Staff contracts for the new college are still to be finalised and a new management information system still to be established for the new college. Managers and teachers say that the process has been open and well managed.

A major review of the college's quality systems and management procedures has taken place, although some, such as the new tutorial framework, are yet to be fully implemented. Course and curriculum area self-assessment reports are now more rigorously completed and judgements better aligned to student success rate data. The grade profiles derived from internal observation of teaching also reflect more realistically the college's success rates. More use is being made of external consultants to bring a greater realism to the judgements being made. Quality assurance procedures are more closely linked to quality improvement plans, the implementation of which is more closely monitored. There is scope to increase the clarity of action plans, evaluate success rates more concisely and reduce the length of some of the annual reports.

What actions have been introduced to further assess and promote equality and diversity?	Reasonable progress.
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Previous inspections have judged equality of opportunity to be good at both centres. The college is continuing to introduce actions that will better embed equality of opportunity across all areas of provision. Policies and procedures for the new college are in place and effectively promote appropriate values and behaviour by both staff and learners. Training takes place for staff, for example, on how to deal with challenging behaviour. Student understanding is promoted well through induction and tutorials which are structured around the five 'Every Child Matters' themes. The college works well with external organisations and makes best use of the differing skills of those involved. Success rates are analysed against ethnicity, disability, age and gender. A draft single equality plan has been prepared since the merger. The plan appropriately addresses key issues such as leadership, governance, staff development, teaching, learning and support.

How has the college developed its arrangements for safeguarding?	Reasonable Progress
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Previous inspections judged safeguarding arrangements as good at Huddersfield but identified an issue around staff training at Dewsbury. A unified procedure is now in place supported by clear guidance and a flow chart that makes the process clear to staff. There is an appropriate focus on ensuring staff understanding, responsibility and ability to make referrals to external organisations. Induction provides child protection training for new staff and some staff at the Dewsbury centre have completed an on-line child protection awareness course. A staged and appropriately prioritised training programme for existing staff is due for completion by August 2009. The college is continuing to develop its recording and analysis of referrals and is using this information to prioritise additional training and support. The college is preparing well for the additional safeguarding regulations and is currently considering establishing a steering group to plan their responses to the forthcoming changes.