

South Tyneside College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130555

Name of lead inspector: Andrew Johnson HMI

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Type of provider: General Further Education College

Address: St George's Avenue, South Shields,
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Information about the college

1. South Tyneside College is located on three sites. The main campus is in South Shields; there is a site in Hebburn six miles away and a centre on the riverside at South Shields. Accommodation at the Marine centre provides residence for 27 learners aged 16 to 18. The college delivers programmes in all 15 subject areas across all levels. Approximately 40% of learners are on engineering programmes and the majority of these are male. The college offers over 30 GCE AS and A-level subjects to learners who are in the main aged 16 to 18 years old. Apprenticeships are offered mainly in hairdressing. Train to Gain programmes are offered in several areas including health and social care, engineering and skills for life. As well as government funded work the college gains significant funding from private businesses, primarily in its Marine college.
2. South Tyneside has a population of around 153,000. It has the fourth highest unemployment rate of local/unitary authorities in England and Wales and nine wards in the borough are amongst the 10% most deprived. The borough's schools reported results in 2009 that are above the national average with 78.9% of pupils gaining five GCSE passes at grades A* to C or equivalent. Those pupils attaining five high grades including the core subjects of English and mathematics rose from 42.7% in 2008 to 47.6% in 2009 which is around the national average.
3. The Principal joined the college at the time of the previous inspection and plans to retire in the next few weeks. A new Principal designate joined the college one week before the inspection. The college had significant plans to redevelop its campus and rebuild much of its accommodation; however, recently the funding for this project has been withdrawn. The college is investigating other sources of funding.

The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:

- Tyne North Training (engineering and key skills)
- Training Development and Resources (engineering and key skills)
- Rolls Royce (engineering)
- North East Chamber of Commerce (engineering)
- North Yorkshire Health Authority (electrical installation)
- Sunderland Engineering Training Association (engineering)
- Information Technology Centre of Sunderland City Council (information technology)
- JTL Training Ltd (electrical installation)

The following organisation provides training on behalf of the provider:

- Lifeskill (Train to Gain programme)

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2008/09
Young learner provision: 14 to 16	587 learners
Further Education (16 to 18)	1,862 full-time learners and 460 part-time learners
Foundation learning	934 full-time learners and 75 part-time learners
Adult learner provision: Further education (19+)	562 full-time learners and 4,763 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	696 learners
Apprenticeships	168 apprentices
Informal adult learning:	87 learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Grade 3
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3

Subject areas	Grade
Health and social care	3
Engineering	2
Hospitality and catering	3
Crafts, creative arts and design	2
Foundations for learning and life	3
Residential accommodation	Satisfactory *

(*) The inspection of residential accommodation has been completed by an Ofsted inspector from the Children's Directorate. The grading scheme used by the Learning and Skills Directorate is not the same as that of Children's Services. In order to avoid any confusion this report has only used a grade descriptor.

Overall effectiveness

- The college's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The college's track record shows that it has a satisfactory capacity to improve outcomes for learners and the quality of provision. The Principal and governors set ambitious targets and the college is making steady progress towards achieving them. The college has taken significant steps in addressing the issues identified as areas for improvement at the last inspection. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in several areas. The college recognises that the pace of change now needs to accelerate if it is to reach its targets. The financial health of the college is good. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory and accommodation has been well maintained. A good curriculum is offered that meets the needs and interests of a very diverse learner population. Outcomes

in two of the subject areas inspected were good and in three satisfactory. The completion of apprenticeship frameworks and key skills has improved and is now satisfactory. Overall qualification success rates have improved and are satisfactory. The rate of improvement in success rates has kept pace with national averages. However, many 16 to 18 year old learners on GCE A-level courses are not making the progress of which they are capable, given their starting points.

Main findings

- Learners develop good skills required for work and further study and make at least satisfactory progress in most lessons. Success rates in key skills have improved and are now satisfactory. Attendance varies between programmes and groups but is good overall. The satisfactory tutorial programme includes a wide range of activities including support for financial, social and health issues.
- The range and diversity of programmes offered by the college is good. It rightly claims to be 'three colleges in one' and meets the needs and interests of very diverse groups of learners.
- Partnerships with schools are well developed and learners aged 14 to 16 are particularly successful. Despite this, only around a half of these younger learners return to the college to study when they leave school.
- Learners make a good positive contribution to their local community by participating in a wide range of charitable and voluntary work. The college makes a significant contribution to the cohesion of its community through its links with many local organisations.
- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates for most groups of learners have improved steadily and are satisfactory. Learners taking two or more GCE A levels make slow progress. Achievement of qualifications by apprentices and learners on Train to Gain programmes is satisfactory and on skills for life programmes is good.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Adequate policies and procedures are in place to ensure staff and learners have a reasonable understanding of equality and diversity issues; however, these are not always applied rigorously in work-based learning settings. Most managers use appropriate methods to identify and support vulnerable groups.
- Most learners feel safe and the college has put in place an effective range of measures to ensure they are well safeguarded. The college works closely with other agencies to ensure that information is shared and vulnerable learners are protected.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most learners enjoy their studies. There is particularly good provision in the Marine College with outstanding resources. The system used to observe teaching arrives at accurate judgements on the quality of lessons; however, the impact this process has on improving teaching and learning is inconsistent. Most teaching accommodation is of a satisfactory standard.

- The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. However, the college does not check sufficiently rigorously how well this work is impacting on outcomes for learners.
- The residential accommodation and welfare of learners aged 16 to 18 who live in college accommodation are satisfactory. There are clear expectations regarding standards of behaviour. The arrangements for meeting learners' health needs are satisfactory and the college promotes health and well-being effectively through tutorials.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Principal has brought about much needed stability and a feeling of renewed confidence amongst staff. Governors are determined to improve outcomes for learners and are aware of the priorities for development.
- Quality assurance arrangements have improved since the last inspection and are well established. A wide range of appropriate evidence is collected. The judgements in the self-assessment report are generally over generous. The link between areas for improvement identified by the self-assessment process, target setting and action planning at operational level are not clear enough.
- Learners who receive additional learning support make satisfactory progress. The college does too little to monitor the progress of those who receive literacy and numeracy support, although the limited evidence available shows that they make satisfactory progress.
- The process to collect learners' and employers' views to shape and influence planning are inadequate. Information is collected but used too superficially to aid improvement. The student association concentrates on organising social and charitable events. Although there are student governors, they have little impact.

What does South Tyneside College need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate and consistency of the improvement in success rates by using more ambitious targets and monitoring progress more critically. In particular improve the progress made by GCE AS and A-level learners.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by enhancing the observation system to focus more closely on the progress made by learners rather than the activity of teachers. Increase the sharing of good practice by teachers to ensure that all learners remain suitably challenged during lessons.
- Become more self-critical in evaluating the effectiveness of the college by improving the systems used to compare itself with similar colleges and national benchmarks. Further develop the systems used to measure the impact of the care, guidance and support on retention and pass rates.
- Ensure that links between self-assessment and action planning at strategic and operational level are better connected. Improve the clarity of the operational planning process, stating more clearly the desired outcomes, actions, timescales and accountabilities. Ensure that targets and milestones are monitored more rigorously and where necessary targets are revised during the year.

- Introduce more effective ways of using users' views to involve them in decision making and improvement. Enhance the effectiveness of learners' and employers' representatives so that they have a more significant impact on the work of the college.
- Improve the arrangements for the promotion of equality of opportunity in work-based learning by ensuring that equality and diversity policies and procedures are adhered to more closely.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the pastoral support they receive from their teachers and tutors
- the feeling of safety and that almost all learners behave in a sensible way
- the friendliness of college support staff and being treated like an adult
- participating in fund raising and charity work
- the good value for money provided by the college refectories
- the subject knowledge of their teachers, particularly in vocational areas
- the wide range of courses and GCE A-level choices.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the quality of some of the accommodation
- the opening times of the library at Hebburn
- timetabling issues in some departments
- the lack of a learner common room
- access to water dispensers
- the quality of the toilet facilities
- the limited feedback they receive from the forums they attend.

What employers like:

- the ready access to programme managers and teachers and general ease of communication with the college
- the range and flexibility of provision
- the generally good quality of the training received by their employees
- the good links between the training and work carried out in employment
- the seamless progression routes from further to higher education provided by the college
- the college's professional links with regulatory and professional authorities
- the support given by the college to initiatives which help the community.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the invoicing processes used by the college
- the quality of some of the accommodation
- the reporting of learners' absence to employers
- the accuracy and timeliness of information on learners' progress.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

5. The college has made satisfactory progress in improving outcomes for learners. Overall success rates have improved consistently in the last three years, keeping pace with the national trend of improvement. Many management processes, absent at the time of the previous inspection, are now well established. The self-assessment process is thorough. Targets for improvement are ambitious and appropriate. Data and other management information are generally accurate. However, the college needs to analyse and interpret data in greater depth to ensure judgements are well founded and accurate. There are some gaps in the strategy for delivering the college's ambition to become outstanding by 2010/11. A high proportion of actions identified in the 2007/08 self-assessment process and development plan have only been partially effective. The lesson observation system, although broadly accurate, is under developed. For example, there is insufficient focus on improving tutorial provision and analysing the quality of learner support. Learner and employer engagement does not have sufficient impact on the college planning and quality improvement processes. Staff are highly committed and supportive of college leaders. The governors and senior leaders have a clear vision for the future and strong partnerships exist with local schools. Financial management is good and the college's serious financial problems at the time of the previous inspection are now a thing of the past.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

6. Learners' attainment of qualifications is satisfactory. The overall success rate for learners on long courses has been close to the national average for similar colleges in the last three years. Long course success rates for both adult learners and those aged 16 to 18 are satisfactory. Success rates for courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level are all satisfactory except for learners aged 16 to 18 on intermediate courses where the rate has improved to good. Learners studying NVQs have mixed success. The GCE A-level success rate is satisfactory; however, the GCE AS success rate has been consistently low. There are no major differences between the attainment of different genders. The proportions of learners from ethnic minority groups are small and the differences in success rates from the college average are not statistically significant. However, the college has taken steps to investigate the reasons why a small number of learners from Bangladeshi origins have relatively low success rates.
7. Most learners make at least satisfactory progress in lessons and many do better than that. Learners aged 16 to 18 who study one GCE A-level subject alongside a vocational courses make broadly satisfactory progress. However, those who take two or more GCE A-level subjects make slow progress and achieve lower grades than they should when taking into account their previous levels of attainment.

8. Overall pass and retention rates are broadly satisfactory. The only significant differences are at intermediate level for learners aged 16 to 18 where the retention rate is high and at foundation level for adults where it is low. Success rates in the different sector subject areas are broadly satisfactory.
9. Success rates on short and very short courses are high. These courses recruit a full-time equivalent learner population which is about 20% of the total full-time population of learners. Success rates on the programmes offered to school pupils aged 14 to 16 are high. Success rates on Train to Gain NVQ programmes are broadly satisfactory and on skills for life programmes are high. On apprenticeship programmes success rates have improved to satisfactory and timely success rates are high.
10. Learners enjoy their studies. They work productively and generally produce work of a good standard. They reported that they feel safe and behaviour is good. The tutorial system has a satisfactory range of mechanisms to ensure learners have an informed choice on healthy living.
11. Learners make good progress in achieving economic and social well-being. Many learners who complete their programmes progress to employment or higher education. The college can cite examples of learners who progress from foundation level to intermediate and advanced programmes; however, it does little to analyse overall trends. A good range of tutorial activities is provided and many learners take part. Attendance is good but with some variation between the different faculties. The tutorial programme includes financial and time management lessons and suitable careers guidance. Key skills success rates have improved and are satisfactory. A number of projects are organised to develop economic awareness. For example, small groups of learners work with employers on careers and a 'Dragons Den' activity. There is no overarching policy on work experience and although most participate a few learners miss opportunities to take part.
12. The student association, supported by college staff, focuses on promoting opportunities for learners to contribute to charitable events. However, it has little impact on influencing wider decisions about college provision. Few learners are active members of the association but many take part in voluntary and charitable work such as 'red nose' day where the college gained a Guinness world record.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

13. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good aspects. Learners enjoy their time at the college and speak highly of their experiences. They particularly enjoy lessons that include practical activities, especially in art and design, hospitality and catering and in engineering. Learners develop good team-working skills, willingly exchange ideas and support each other. However, the progress of individual learners is not always monitored or recorded well by tutors. Learning resources are at least satisfactory for most learners with some outstanding resources in marine engineering. Some accommodation is tired and

in need of refurbishment; for example, in the skills for life area. Art and design learners participate in stimulating projects and assignments which require ingenuity and develop learners' practical and research skills. A common area for improvement identified by inspectors was insufficient challenge in some lessons which results in the interest of some learners waning. Most lessons are well planned and structured to include frequent changes of activity to maintain learners' interest. Learners make good progress in the sessions that contain challenging individualised activities. However, in weaker sessions the planning lacked sufficient focus on ensuring activities are differentiated to meet the different needs of learners. In some sessions learning activities do not interest and inspire learners sufficiently and activities are not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able. For example, some learners spend too much time copying from whiteboards.

14. The college has an accurate system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning which is linked to staff development. Lesson observations lead to detailed action plans which are discussed at tutors' individual performance reviews. A wide programme of staff development activities is available which is focused on improving aspects of teaching. Development sessions are scheduled during non-teaching weeks, at lunchtimes and early evenings. A range of online staff development modules are available. However, very few tutorials have been observed and the system to monitor the impact of support is under developed.
15. The assessment of learners' practical skills and coursework is satisfactory. Assignment briefs are clear and learners usually receive prompt, detailed feedback on their performance which provides good guidance on how they could improve their grade. However, the written feedback on projects and assignments in some GCE A-level subjects varies in depth and quality.
16. Initial assessment is thorough but does not always lead to effective and timely additional learning support. The monitoring and recording of the impact of support on the progress of learners is not well developed. Individual learning plans for many learners are incomplete or insufficiently clear and challenging. They are not used routinely to review learners' achievements.
17. Assessment on apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes is satisfactory. Learners understand how they are assessed against the required criteria and receive constructive feedback. However, arrangements for assessors to visit learners at work lack clarity. Many work-based assessors with responsibility for assessing Train to Gain learners are also timetabled for college-based work and are accountable to different managers. This causes conflict in prioritisation of their duties. Some work-based assessors for hairdressing apprentices have not been observed sufficiently in the workplace and do not receive sufficient support and information from internal verifiers to enable them to improve their performance.
18. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. The range of courses is very wide and provides good opportunities for learners to progress between levels, from foundation level to

higher education. The college has established good links with local schools and universities to develop a cohesive curriculum. The courses offered reflect local employment needs effectively. The number of Train to Gain programmes has increased significantly and they are now offered across seven curriculum areas.

19. The college has a successful employer engagement strategy in engineering and in the finance sector through its 'career academy'. However, in other areas work with employers is under-developed although expanding rapidly. A schedule of breakfast meetings has been successfully introduced in some areas to engage more employers and provide information on factors affecting education and training. Many learners benefit from visiting speakers and educational visits. However, there are insufficient arrangements for work placements or work experience for full-time learners in engineering and hospitality and catering and there are insufficient clients for hairdressing learners.
20. Arrangements for working with schools are good. The college has produced an extensive curriculum for learners aged 14 to 16 which is well co-ordinated. College staff often teach in local schools. The college leads on the development of three new diplomas and is involved in the planning of six other diplomas with local schools and employers. The target for 14 to 16 year old learners progressing into education at the college is identified in the college improvement plan as 64%; however, the current progression rate is low at only 53%.
21. The college provides a satisfactory and expanding programme of additional activities. Learners take part in a wide range of sport and recreational activities as well as additional qualifications to complement their core studies. For example, learners following GCE A-level English qualifications are encouraged to study additional qualifications in old English and Latin. Cross-college activities include a film club, canoe club and scuba diving.
22. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners enjoy coming to the college and feel well cared for. Bullying and racial incidents are very rare. Initial assessment of literacy and numeracy is comprehensive although there is too little monitoring of its impact. Learners with additional learning needs make similar progress to their peers. Induction programmes generally ensure a smooth transition to the college. A broad range of information, advice and guidance is available. The college plays a useful role in reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET); however; there is insufficient analysis of its impact on progression rates to higher education or employment. Links with the community policing service are good and the on-site officer provides valuable support. Learners enjoy having the direct link with the Principal via the "buzz the boss" initiative. There is a good counselling service and a useful multi-faith chaplaincy area.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

23. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Principal, governors and senior managers provide clear strategic direction. Their vision is ambitious and communicated effectively in the strategic plan. The Principal provides open consultative leadership. He has done much to stabilise the college and instil a renewed feeling of confidence amongst staff. A new performance management system has been effectively established. Communication within the college is good and staff support leaders. The college has strong and successful local partnerships with schools and plays a leading role in 14 to 19 provision in the area. Managers set challenging targets for recruitment and learner performance but they are not always met. The links between departmental and programme development plans and the overall college plan lack clarity and the college operational plan lacks detail. It is unclear how some objectives will be achieved and some measures of success are insufficiently precise. Managers do not monitor the progress made against action plans sufficiently frequently.
24. Governance is good and improving. Governors make an important contribution to the strategic development of the college and use their skills and expertise effectively to support the senior team. They provide an appropriate challenge to college managers on most issues and have a particularly good overview of financial management. Governors are appropriately evaluative of their own performance and have taken action to increase their effectiveness. Changes to the committee structure, additional training for governors and closer involvement with some curriculum areas is leading to stronger monitoring of the college's educational provision and outcomes. Many governors are recent appointments selected for their expertise and potential contribution.
25. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The college has a long and successful tradition of recruiting overseas learners to its marine and nautical courses. Around 44% of learners on the marine and nautical courses are from minority ethnic backgrounds; mainly overseas learners. The college celebrates its cultural diversity through a range of events. The proportion of local learners from ethnic minorities is higher than that in the local population. The college has taken positive action often in conjunction with partners to recruit learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at risk of being disengaged in education, employment and training. The marketing team uses positive role models successfully to encourage participation of learners who are under-represented at the college. The college has carried out an impact assessment of its policies and as a result has implemented staff development and extended its multi-faith chaplaincy to meet the needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population.
26. Staff awareness of equality and diversity has improved since the last inspection. The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning is satisfactory and is monitored in the lesson observation process. However, the reinforcement of equality and diversity for work-based learners is weak and assessors do not check whether employers have equality of opportunity policies and procedures.

27. The monitoring of the recruitment and performance of different groups of learners is satisfactory. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities perform in line with other learners.
28. The use of learners' and employers' views to promote improvement is inadequate. The college reviews the learner involvement strategy annually and there are some innovative and successful methods of supporting individual learners. Learners' views are sought through questionnaires and forums. Action is taken to rectify their concerns but learners are not always fully informed of the outcomes. The college does not ensure that the views of learners and employers are used in decision making processes. Learner governors make very limited contribution to meetings. Staff have good and productive relationships with individual employers; however, processes to gather their views more systematically result in only a small proportion responding.
29. The college's quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. The self-assessment process is well-established and inclusive; judgments are based on a wide range of evidence and the process is well managed. The process has led to some improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Action plans intended to rectify areas for improvement are produced at programme, department and whole college level. The monitoring of the impact of these plans is inconsistent. Data are used to set targets and monitor performance but inspectors identified some issues with the accuracy of a minority of learner achievement data.
30. The college provides satisfactory value for money. Financial management is good and the college is reinvesting in resources to benefit learners. The college's ambitious plans for redevelopment and plans for refurbishment and maintenance of its existing buildings were abandoned as a result of withdrawal of funding. The college has a sustainability policy and has made significant savings through monitoring energy and water use.

Subject areas

Health and social care

Grade 3

Context

31. Long and short courses are delivered across two sites, three faculties and five departments. In 2008/09 there were 2,629 enrolments, of which 385 were from learners aged 16 to 18 and 2,244 were from adults over 19 years old. The vast majority of learners aged 16 to 18 are female and follow full-time intermediate and advanced level vocational programmes. Eighteen learners are studying for an AS level in health and social care. About 20% of the adult learners are male. The majority of adults are on part-time courses including access to higher education, health and safety management, counselling and distance learning programmes. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly in line with that of the local community.

Key findings

- Outcomes and success rates on most courses are satisfactory. For example, the BTEC First Diploma in Health & Social Care success rate is consistently around the national average; the BTEC National Diploma in Care had a dip in the success rate in the 2008/09 to just below the 2007/08 national average; the BTEC National in Health Studies has variable success rates, with improvement in the diploma to above national rates in 2009 whereas the certificate course rate, although improved, is still below the national rate. Success rates on access to nursing and counselling courses for adult learners are high. These learners' strong commitment to progress their already established careers in counselling or to gain foundation to higher education ensures good attendance and progress.
- Learners have a good knowledge and understanding of the importance of personal safety, health and well-being and safe-guarding. Learners feel safe.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lesson-planning and schemes of work are good. Most learners are keen to contribute in lessons and express their answers confidently. Teachers are appropriately qualified and have good vocational experience.
- Methods of assessment are satisfactory. In most lessons teachers assess understanding orally. However, some learners' folders contain insufficient written feedback to tell them what it is they need to do to improve.
- Full-time learners are well supported in weekly tutorials to develop good personal, employability and social skills. The individual induction and tutorial programme has too little impact on improving attendance which is low.
- The range of courses is good. Large numbers of learners are successful on short courses in first aid, food and nutrition and health and safety taken as additional qualifications to their main programme of study. Well-organised work placements enhance learning and improve skills and progression opportunities for full-time learners.

- Employers praise the college for its support and monitoring of individual learners on work placements. A good link with a local university has led to the setting up of three foundation degrees in counselling, health and social care and health and safety, thus providing a progression route through from foundation level.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The Head of Faculty took over responsibility for the health and social care courses in August 2009 and has not yet had time to fully assess the work of the area. Data have not been analysed sufficiently and this masks some areas for improvement. The focus on improving the levels of progress made by individual learners in lessons via staff development is limited.
- The large majority of learners who enrol on health care courses are female, while those who enrol on health and safety courses are male. Positive recruitment strategies for the minority gender are being investigated.

What does South Tyneside College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rate on many courses by improving the quality of teaching and learning. Focus the lesson observation system and staff development on improving the progress learners make in lessons rather than teaching techniques.
- Improve the attendance of learners aged 16 to 18 by making the systems used to track learners' attendance and punctuality more effective. Ensure that expectations related to attendance are made clear during induction and that the impact of individual tutorials on increasing attendance is monitored.
- Improve the assessment of learners' work during the year by giving them more detailed and useful written feedback on practice assignments, coursework and their progress in lessons.

Engineering

Grade 2

Context

32. Of the 826 learners enrolled on engineering programmes 494 are aged 16 to 18 with 174 of these following full-time programmes. Thirty five learners are following foundation level programmes, 170 intermediate and 434 advanced level programmes. A further four learners are engineering apprentices and 30 learners are on Train To Gain programmes. Female learners make up 3% of the total and there are 153 learners aged 14 to 16 enrolled on programmes of which 142 are studying at intermediate level. To date, a further 1,020 learners are enrolled on a rolling programme of marine courses. In engineering the proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds is high as recruitment for marine courses takes place on an international basis.

Key findings

- Success rates are good for learners of all ages on long foundation and intermediate level courses and satisfactory at advanced level. Retention rates on advanced level programmes are low. The success rates for marine engineering learners on short courses are very high and for those on long courses, success rates are satisfactory. The key skills success rate for apprentices is very high but for full-time learners is very low. There is no significant difference between the success rate for mainstream learners and those learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups. However, male learners achieve significantly better than the small number of female learners. On marine programmes, the success rate of learners from minority ethnic groups is 7% higher than the college average.
- The standard of learners' work is good. In workshops learners' attainment is well advanced for their time on the programme. They produce work pieces to industry standards. Portfolio and assignment work is generally well presented and of good standard. In lessons learners make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of engineering topics.
- Learners report that they enjoy learning and feel that successfully achieving their courses puts them in a good position for employment and advancement to further education or employment. Marine learners are clearly very well motivated in successfully completing their programmes as their promotion prospects are dependent on the achievement of a range of short and long courses.
- Learners feel safe on the college campuses. Health and safety arrangements meet current government requirements.
- Welding and fabrication learners are involved in community projects. This supports the development of high level skills and an understanding of the requirements of the community. Projects include the construction of a large boat for a local diving club and a pontoon. Full-time engineering learners are offered and encouraged to take up a range of summer placements in local engineering companies to support the development of work-based skills.

- Overall teaching, training and assessment are good. Assessment is frequent and provides good feedback to learners. In teaching sessions learners receive good support in completing their work to a satisfactory or better standard. In some sessions there is poor use of projectors and whiteboards and information and learning technology (ILT) to support learning and maintain the learners' interests. Learners enjoy the activities they are set and work effectively in small groups or individually to complete their tasks. Tasks do not always challenge the more able.
- The curriculum is good and a wide range of courses are available. Marine programmes meet the specific needs of local, national and international learners. Engineering and marine learners have good access to higher education courses. Progression rates between courses and on to higher education are good.
- Employers are confident that their learners are well supported during their time at college. The college has developed training courses for 14 to 16 year olds and have established a workshop with equipment that supports their learning goals.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers encourage and support staff using a comprehensive tracking and recording system to effectively monitor the progress and attainment of learners. Teaching and learning observations are detailed and thorough and used effectively to plan improvement activities identified for individual tutors.
- The department recognises that the percentage of female learners in engineering is low. A female member of staff has been actively involved in visiting schools promoting engineering to groups of females.
- Marine and nautical resources are outstanding and good in engineering. Learning resources include state of the art simulation in ship guidance and control simulation systems, sea survival tank, fire survival unit, large industry standard welding and fabrication facilities and a wide range of well equipped machine workshops and laboratories

What does South Tyneside College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rates in key skills for full-time learners by ensuring that teaching is of a consistently high standard.
- Improve the interest levels of learners in some lessons by sharing good practice in the use of ILT. Ensure more able learners are provided with timely challenging extension activities in teaching and learning sessions.
- Improve induction and support for learners on advanced level courses to raise retention rates.

Hospitality and Catering

Grade 3

Context

33. Of the 185 learners aged 16 to 18, 70 are female and of the 293 adult learners, 130 are female. Very few full-time learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Full-time and part-time NVQ programmes are offered in food preparation and cooking from foundation to advanced level. Food and drink service courses are offered at foundation and intermediate levels. The BTEC National Certificate is offered as a full-time course. Twenty-four learners aged 14 to 16 study courses at the college. A number of short courses, including a door supervisors course, the national certificate for personal licence holders and the intermediate award in food hygiene in catering are offered.

Key findings

- Success rates on long courses are satisfactory and have been close to the national average for the last three years. Pass rates are generally high but too many learners do not complete their courses. The progress of learners in relation to their prior attainment is satisfactory. Success rates on short courses are good and on Train to Gain programmes they are satisfactory. The additional qualifications in food and drink service and food safety have very high success rates.
- Learners demonstrate a high standard of work in practical cookery, food preparation and service production sessions. Learners are set challenging tasks particularly at foundation level and those who enter competitions are often successful.
- Learners enjoy their work and attendance levels are good. Learners particularly enjoy practical sessions; teachers provide good support and encouragement to enable learners with disabilities to participate.
- Learners understand the importance of health and safety and this is reinforced well by teachers in lessons. Learners report that they feel very safe in college. The wearing of protective headwear is not consistently adhered to. One class was too cramped in the timetabled room, which meant learners were working very closely together using knives and raw food and was in close proximity to food being cooked. Two classroom assistants who started work recently have not yet received training in child protection although this is planned to happen this term.
- Teaching and learning are good in practical lessons; teachers are enthusiastic and demonstrated good vocational knowledge. Teachers closely monitor the progress of learners in class. However, in the majority of theory sessions teaching was satisfactory. The planning of activities was not well linked to progress and therefore some activities lacked challenge for the more able. In lesson plans teachers do not always identify the support needs for learners.
- Learners are able to access additional support for literacy and numeracy; however, the college does not measure the impact of this on their success. Additional learning support within the class is not always effective, there are no

individual learning plans and progress is not tracked or evaluated robustly enough. Tutors refer learners to the effective dyslexia support service so that they can have their needs assessed and strategies are put in place to assist with their learning.

- The curriculum generally meets the needs of learners and is satisfactory. Progression routes for 16 to 18 year olds are clear and many learners who complete their courses successfully move on to employment. However, the apprenticeship route and employer responsive provision is under developed. Not all learners routinely undertake work experience outside the college. School link programmes are effective with good success rates.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course management is effective; there is a good team ethos. The lesson observation process is sound and results in some effective staff development being provided. The quality of tutorials, support and key skills is not routinely observed to ensure that this part of the provision is effective.
- Key performance indicators are not used sufficiently to inform quality improvement strategies. Targets set at whole college level are sometimes not realistic or meaningful at subject level when actual learner numbers are taken into account.
- Generally the resources and accommodation are adequate. The bakery kitchen is planned to be refurbished in the near future. The restaurant is somewhat outdated when compared to current industry standards.

What does South Tyneside College need to do to improve further?

- Improve retention rates by analysing the patterns and reasons for learner drop out more critically and systematically to evaluate the effectiveness of support.
- Help learners enjoy their theory sessions by using a wider range of teaching approaches and set more challenging tasks for learners.
- Evaluate the quality of tutorials, key skills and the effectiveness of in-class support. Improve the training and support for staff to ensure that there are appropriate individual learning plans in place for learners that need them.
- Review the process for target setting to ensure targets are challenging but realistic and that the department's work to promote equality and diversity is informed by a more detailed analysis of the performance of different groups.

Crafts, creative arts and design

Grade 2

Context

34. Of the 313 learners on art and design programmes 275 are aged 16 to 18 and almost all attend full time. Most adult learners study part time. The proportion of female learners is significantly higher than males, in common with the national picture. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds is small. Full-time courses in art and design are available from foundation level to advanced level. The college also offers a number of foundation degrees in the subject area in partnership with a local university.

Key findings

- Success rates on foundation and intermediate level courses in art and design are high. The introductory diploma in art and design and first diploma in design are particularly successful. Learners acquire a sound foundation in the creative skills and understanding to equip them for further in-depth study. Progression for these learners to a higher level course is good. At GCE AS level, art and design learners make good progress in fine art. Success rates for GCE AS and A-level art and design are high. Foundation diploma learners in art and design achieve in line with the national average. Success rates on the national diploma in art and design are satisfactory.
- Standards of creative work are good. For example, in the national diploma in art and design, 3D stage design models are used very effectively to demonstrate lighting and staging. In the national diploma in photography, standards are good and some sophisticated imagery has been produced in the Youth Culture Fashion Project.
- Learners at all levels develop the behaviour and attitudes for successful study and raise their aspirations. They show respect for others' opinions and listen and contribute well. Their confidence is developed through making oral presentations and peer evaluations. Learners enjoy their courses and are very positive about their work and rapport with teachers.
- Teaching and learning are good. Learning is well planned and objectives and targets for each lesson are clear. Learners understand what they need to work towards to achieve a particular grade. In a minority of lessons it was difficult for learners to see demonstrations. Occasionally questioning to individuals and small groups was not sustained for long enough to generate a longer discussion and encourage quieter learners to participate.
- Teachers assess the progress of individual learners closely; their verbal and written feedback during personal reviews is constructive and encourages learners to reflect on the context and quality of their work. Written assessment feedback is generally good. However, on individual GCE AS and A-level projects the teachers' feedback varies in depth and quality.
- A good range of courses and creative options are established from foundation level to foundation degree to enable good progression. Learners often progress between levels; several have progressed from introductory diploma in design to higher education.

- Partnership with a local school is well established resulting in a successful bid for the creative and media diploma. Staff from the school and college have attended training together. Partnership working is not as well developed on the national diploma art and design and foundation programmes. A range of foundation degree courses have been established with a local university.
- Learners receive good support from teachers and specialists during their course. In lessons teachers work closely with support staff for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Leadership and management are good. Courses are well managed; there is a good working ethos and communication between staff who work in small teams. The observation of lessons is thorough with a good focus on learning. The action plan identifies appropriate areas for development. The follow-up monitoring of the plan is less systematic particularly when satisfactory grades are awarded to lessons.
- Course teams produce a course self-assessment which informs the department self-assessment report effectively and leads to an effective action plan. The self-assessment has several good features but information is at times not quantified sufficiently or linked to the overall college plan. Staff have undertaken effective on-line training in safeguarding, child protection and in equality and diversity.
- Resources are satisfactory with a good new screen printing studio. Accommodation is adequate overall and there are some excellent studio spaces.

What does South Tyneside College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the written feedback and monitoring of targets on GCE AS and A-level courses.
- Ensure that quality improvement activities are formulated more carefully and linked more closely to departmental and college targets and strategies.
- Widen the range of partners and their impact on national diploma art and design and foundation diploma courses.

Foundations for learning and life

Grade 3

Context

35. The Skills for Life department delivers literacy, numeracy and language programmes for 561 learners across both main college sites and at a range of outreach venues. Of these learners, 194 are aged 16 to 18 and are on other college programmes and 367 are aged over 19. Forty-five learners are on Train to Gain programmes. Around three-quarters of learners are female. Programmes range from foundation to intermediate level. The college provides courses in literacy and numeracy for those aged 16 to 18 on foundation level programmes who are not ready to access key skills. A full-time course provides for learners aged 16 to 18 whose first language is not English. A full-time course for learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties has been developed through close working with a local special school.

Key findings

- Success rates are satisfactory. In 2007/08 success rates for adult learners were low and had declined but this trend was halted in 2009. Success rates on some foundation level courses are low. Success rates on Train to Gain programmes are good. Attendance and punctuality of learners are satisfactory.
- The standard of learners' work and progress is satisfactory. Learners develop confidence in speaking English and using numeracy in their everyday lives. They enjoy their programmes and value the support of their tutors and friends.
- Learners feel safe in the college and understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The use of initial assessment to identify learner's needs and plan learning is effective. Tutors are clear about session aims and objectives and use plenary well to recap on learning outcomes at the end of sessions. Adult learners are well motivated, attentive and work hard in sessions and make good progress. However, learners aged 16 to 18 are often inattentive which impedes their learning. Most teachers manage disruptive and inappropriate behaviour and attitudes well. In some sessions learning is not sufficiently differentiated or challenging to meet the individual needs of learners. Poor and cramped accommodation and insufficient access to ILT impedes the learning experience for some learners.
- The range of additional programmes offered to full-time learners is satisfactory. Learners are encouraged to take part in the college enrichment programme but few take up this offer. Some 16 to 18 year old learners whose first language is not English take up the opportunity for work experience. Some learners who are parents have an increased involvement in their children's schools as a result of their new skills and confidence.
- There is a good range of part-time courses to meet the needs of adult learners and young people across the region. Lessons provided in the morning, afternoon and evening help those that are working to access learning at times and local venues to suit them.

- Good relationships and partnerships with a wide range of partners including schools, Connexions, Early Years centres, voluntary and community organisations and employers. Partners speak highly of the responsiveness and flexibility of the college. The department is working well with 21 local employers on Train to Gain programmes.
- Care, support and guidance are satisfactory. Learners have access to the range of services such as counselling provided through the college student services and are clearly signposted to other courses at the end of the programme.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Courses are well managed with good team work and sharing of practice and resources between staff.
- Staff have undertaken training in equality and diversity and treat learners with respect. Poor attitudes of learners are challenged appropriately and learners treat others respectfully in sessions. Although data on achievement of different groups are collated they are not sufficiently analysed to inform college targets to improve achievement gaps.
- Following some negative learner feedback in 2008, the content and structure of programmes was improved and learners surveyed in 2009 showed a significant improvement in their satisfaction with courses. However, generally too few learners respond to surveys.
- Self-assessment is satisfactory and is used for development planning. However, much of the report is descriptive and does not sufficiently evaluate and recognise the significance of low and declining success rates. The development plan has had insufficient impact and does not link well with the college plan.

What does South Tyneside College need to do to improve further?

- Significantly improve the success rate on foundation level programmes by ensuring that learners are better supported and motivated to learn.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning by improving the range of learning activities and quality of accommodation and resources used to meet the needs of all learners.
- Improve the use of targets and self-assessment systems to improve success rates overall.

Children's services

Residential accommodation

Satisfactory

Context

36. South Tyneside College provides residential accommodation at its Westoe campus. Residential accommodation is available for up to 204 learners. At the time of the inspection, of the 196 resident learners, 27 were aged 16 to 18.

Key findings

- The quality of boarding at the college is satisfactory. The college has made significant improvements to its policies and procedures, the recording of complaints and how it enables learners to contribute to the operation of the residential provision.
- The arrangements for meeting learners' health needs are satisfactory and the college promotes good health and well-being. Learners have access to appropriate personal support. The quality of catering in the refectory is satisfactory but some learners think there is room for improvement.
- Learner safety is promoted and protected. The college takes bullying seriously and learners feel safe. Suitable arrangements are in place for all staff to receive training in safeguarding. Expectations regarding standards of behaviour are clear with a positive approach to learner discipline. Most learners think the rules are fair but some do not agree with the curfew rules. Staff respect learners' privacy and protect them from public intrusion of the residential halls.
- Learners receive good personal support. Communication between staff to support the safeguarding and promotion of learner welfare is effective. The guidance staff receive on the administration of some medicines could be improved.
- Staff are good at consulting learners both formally and informally. Induction arrangements that help learners settle in quickly are good. Parents are encouraged to visit to discuss the residential arrangements. Learners, and their parents, are not informed of how they can contact Ofsted regarding any complaint concerning their welfare.
- The college has a clear statement of principles in relation to the provision of residential accommodation and learner support. This ensures learners and parents have the information they need. Some aspects of the college accommodation are in need of refurbishment. Learners are well supervised and know how to contact staff members at all times. Staff training is satisfactory. Staff are competent and experienced and they have the

information they need to promote the welfare of learners. The recording of some aspects of the college processes could be improved. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

What does South Tyneside College need to do to improve further?

- Provide staff with better written guidance regarding the records they must keep of all medicines and treatment administered to learners.
- Develop the learner protection policy to include all the recommended information.
- Ensure that learners and their parents are informed of how they can contact Ofsted regarding any complaint concerning their welfare.
- Maintain more appropriate records to demonstrate regular testing of fire safety equipment.
- Ensure the college records more meticulously the references given by previous employers and the employment histories of employees.
- Ensure there is a more robust and comprehensive system of risk assessment and risk reduction, with written records.
- Ensure learner accommodation is adequately decorated, furnishings are comfortable and in a satisfactory condition and shower facilities provide appropriate privacy.
- Maintain more appropriate records to demonstrate that members of staff hold current first aid qualifications and are available to learners at all times.

Information about the inspection

37. Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven additional inspectors, assisted by the college's Vice-Principal and Quality Manager as joint nominees, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and other funding bodies, Framework for Excellence indicators, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visit and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
38. Inspectors used group, individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had completed on behalf of the college. They visited learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subjects the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
South Tyneside College

Learning types: 14-16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	4222	0	2796	562	864
Part-time learners	5972	587	535	4763	87
Overall effectiveness	3	2	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3				
Outcomes for learners	3	2	3	3	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do learners attain their learning goals? How well do learners progress?	3 3				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
Do learners feel safe?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
Quality of provision	3	2	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3				
Leadership and management	3	3	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	4				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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