

Carlisle College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130634

Name of lead inspector: Sue Harrison HMI

Last day of inspection: 11 December 2009

Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Carlisle College is a small general further education college, serving the post-16 education and training needs of North Cumbria. It is the only further education college within a 35 mile radius of Carlisle. The college provides mainly vocational programmes and offers provision in 11 subject areas. It offers apprenticeships, mainly in engineering and construction, and Train to Gain programmes across a number of subject areas. Some college provision is delivered through franchise partnerships as a means of reaching communities with limited access to further education. The college also runs a small programme of higher education courses.
2. Carlisle is the most northerly of Cumbria's six districts. The economy is diverse, with food production, retail, services and tourism being among the key sectors. Unemployment is below the national average and currently stands at 3.2%. However, a significant proportion of employment is characterised by low wages. Six wards within Carlisle are within the most deprived 20% of wards in England.
3. Within the college's main catchment area there are five secondary schools, all of which have sixth forms, and two new academies. Educational attainment at age 16 is in line with the national average as measured by the proportion of students who achieve five or more GCSE's at grade A* to C including English and mathematics. The college works with schools and training providers to broaden vocational opportunities for learners aged 14 to 16 and to develop provision to meet the needs of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
4. All provision funded by the Learning and Skills Council was covered by the inspection and three subject areas were inspected in depth.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - CSkills (construction)
 - JTL (engineering)
 - Gen II (engineering)
6. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - Rose Bank Sawmills (construction)
 - Cumbria Deaf Association (British Sign Language)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	596 part-time learners
Further education (16 to 18)	895 full-time learners 145 part-time learners
Foundation learning	318 full-time learners 23 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	371 full-time learners 818 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	809 learners
Apprenticeships	366 apprentices
Full-cost programmes	548 part-time learners

Summary report

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

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

Subject Areas	
Construction	2
Engineering	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2

Overall effectiveness

7. Carlisle College has improved since the last inspection and its overall effectiveness is good. It listens carefully to the views of learners and employers and makes changes as a result of these findings. The majority of learners make good progress and examination pass rates are good. Learners enjoy their time at college as a result of good teaching and learning and the wide range of activities they participate in. Learners on travel and tourism courses particularly enjoy the work placements in England and abroad, that help them to secure employment in the industry. There is a culture of respect for the individual and support for learners is good. Learners feel very safe in the college, reflecting the good promotion of safeguarding. A significant strength of the college is how it works in partnership with other organisations to benefit its learners. Managers provide a clear strategic direction and they understand well what the college does well and areas where it can improve further. Staff development has a high priority and inspectors judge that the college is in a good position to make further improvements. The college makes the best possible use of its accommodation but some of this is in need of upgrading. Initial plans to achieve

this have been affected by national funding constraints and further plans are currently under consideration.

Main findings

- Learners make good progress on the majority of courses. They enjoy college and acquire a good range of skills to help them gain employment or progress to further study. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and develop skills that would help them to live and work independently.
- Examination pass rates, and the retention rates of learners on courses, have risen significantly in recent years and are now good, particularly on foundation level courses and for adults on advanced courses. Results on intermediate courses are just above the national average. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Most trainees on apprenticeship programmes achieve well but on some advanced apprentice, and some Train to Gain programmes, trainees are not achieving their qualification as quickly as possible.
- Learners make positive choices about their health and well-being as a result of the college's well-tailored provision to promote awareness and understanding. For example, road safety understanding is good, following a very impressive project to raise awareness of young drivers.
- Learners make a significant contribution to the college and to the local community. A great many of them are involved in charity fund raising and community projects. Hairdressing students carry out voluntary work in elderly persons' homes and construction students are involved in environmental projects. Learners' involvement in the decision-making processes of the college is good. The college prepares learners well for the next stage in their career. Progression rates into employment are good and an increasing number of learners enter higher education.
- Teaching and learning are good, as a result of successful actions to bring about improvements since the last inspection. Teachers use learning objectives effectively in lessons to inform learners of what they need to do to make progress. Teachers use a variety of tasks to make lessons interesting and to meet the needs of different learners. However, they do not always use questioning effectively to deepen learners' understanding.
- The current range of courses meets the needs and interests of learners well. The college offers a range of courses from entry to advanced level in most curriculum areas. There are plenty of additional activities that learners take part in to enrich their studies.
- The use of partnerships by the college is excellent and contributes very effectively to the courses on offer for learners aged 14 to 19 in the area. The college is actively involved in local learning networks and works highly effectively with the Connexions service to reduce the number of young people

not in education, employment or training. A large number of partners contribute to the college's tutorial programme.

- Care, guidance and support for learners in helping them to reach their learning goals are good. All foundation level classes have a support worker present. This provides an effective system to help these learners. All learners benefit from well-delivered individual tutorials, as well as group tutorials that cover a good range of relevant topics.
- The college is well led and managed. The principal and other leaders provide clear direction and staff are committed to a culture of constant improvement within the college aim of 'Being Brilliant'. The experience of the learner is at the centre of the performance management systems, which are bringing about effective change. Curriculum areas are well managed and there is good communication across the college.
- The college actively promotes and celebrates equality and diversity and inspectors saw many examples of this in lessons. The culture of the college is one of mutual respect and tolerance. There is good checking on how well different groups of learners are achieving and this shows that the proportion of male students achieving their qualifications is not quite as good as that of females.
- Arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of learners are very thorough. The college places a strong emphasis on their health, safety and well-being. Learners feel very safe in college and are clear about the actions to take in the small number of cases where they feel there has been bullying or discrimination. A useful restorative practice approach brings together all involved in order to resolve matters, where possible, through reconciliation.
- The college assesses itself accurately and reviews at course level are generally very effective in bringing about improvements. There is an improved use of data to identify individual learners or courses at risk of not achieving their targets so that prompt action can be taken. Self-assessment in support areas is less well developed than in curriculum areas.

What does Carlisle College need to do to improve further?

- Use information on trainees' progress more effectively to ensure they achieve their qualification within the planned timeframe. Extend the best practice in curriculum areas where this is working well to other subjects.
- Improve further the retention and pass rates on intermediate courses by ensuring learners progressing from foundation level courses are able to cope with the increased level of challenge on these courses.
- To improve attendance further, continue to develop the culture of high expectations that is starting to have an impact in the college and ensure staff apply this approach rigorously across all courses.

- Identify the reasons for the gap in performance between male and female learners in 2009, put in place an action plan to address this, and check that it is effective.
- Improve the questioning techniques teachers use in lessons so that they extend the understanding of learners more effectively.
- Further develop self-assessment within support areas by extending the good practice that has developed in curriculum areas.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the friendly atmosphere of the college
- the support they get from teachers and other staff to help them learn
- the way the college involves them in monitoring their progress
- the extra visits and activities that make courses interesting
- the strong anti-bullying culture
- the way the college listens to their views and acts on their suggestions
- the skills the college helps them to develop to get jobs
- the help given to those wanting to go to university.

What learners would like to see improved:

- some rooms are too small for the size of the group
- having to walk between buildings to get to the learning resource centre and the refectory
- the lack of sports facilities on campus.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the quick response of the college to requests for provision and flexibility in how it is delivered
- the good communication between college staff and the employer to deal with any queries quickly
- the increase in employees' skills and confidence as a result of college courses.

What employers would like to see improved:

- no areas for improvement were identified in the responses received from employers.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement Grade 2

8. Based on the rate of improvement since the last inspection, and the rigour of self-assessment, the college has good capacity to make further improvements. The college has tackled all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. It has made good progress in most areas, including retention and pass rates, teaching and learning and the promotion of diversity. It has made satisfactory progress to improve attendance and the achievement of key skills. The college sets ambitious but realistic targets and progress towards meeting them is well monitored. This is informed by a self-assessment process that is well developed in most areas of the college and is very well informed by the views of learners and employers.

Outcomes for learners Grade 2

9. Learners achieve well and enjoy their time at college. Examination pass rates, and the retention of learners on courses, have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good overall. Students on foundation level courses achieve particularly well as a result of the high level of additional support they receive. Success rates are also high on many advanced courses, especially for adults. Learners on intermediate level courses achieve rates of success that are slightly above the national average. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory.
10. The college has been successful in identifying courses where learners were not doing as well as expected and putting in place actions to narrow the gap between success rates in different curriculum areas. Female learners aged 16 to 18 achieve slightly better than males. The gap narrowed in 2007/08 but this was not sustained in 2008/09 and the college is investigating the reasons for this.
11. Learners make good progress against their starting points. The standard of their work is good and they acquire a range of skills that effectively prepares them for work or further study. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in developing their levels of independence. Young people aged 14 to 16 who attend college for part of their education gain significant interpersonal, as well as vocational, skills.
12. Progression rates for learners from foundation to intermediate courses are good. Over half the learners on intermediate courses continue onto advanced study and many of the others are successful at finding employment. The number of learners from advanced courses who gain places at university has increased significantly in recent years.

13. Trainees on apprentice programmes achieve well overall. However, on some advanced apprentice and Train to Gain programmes, trainees are not gaining their qualifications within the planned timescale. Adults attending courses as part of the college's 'response to redundancy' initiative are making good progress in developing new skills, which are helping them to secure alternative employment.
14. Learners feel the college provides a welcoming environment, where they are very safe and secure. The tutorial programme covers aspects of safety extremely well. Students feel they have someone they can talk to who will help them with any problems. The college has placed a very strong focus on anti-bullying, introducing a restorative practice scheme and student mentors. Learners are clear that bullying and harassment are not tolerated, reporting that incidents occur rarely and are dealt with quickly and effectively. They understand about internet safety and cyber bullying. They show very good awareness of health and safety in college workshops and on employers' premises.
15. Learners generally make positive choices about their health and well-being. A wide range of strategies and activities help to develop their understanding, including tutorial sessions and an annual health fair. Learners show good awareness of healthy food options and the range of services in college to promote healthy living, including sexual health clinics. Learners are canvassed regularly for their views on health promotion and their responses are acted upon, helping to improve provision.
16. Learners make a significant contribution to the college and the local community. There are examples in many curriculum areas of learners supporting the community, such as construction learners building footpaths. Learners' involvement in the decision-making processes of the college is good. Course representatives are clear about their role and give examples of suggestions they have made that have been acted upon. They speak positively about the role of the student council and student governors in making the learners' voice heard. A great many learners are involved in fund-raising activities.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

17. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers set clear learning objectives and share them well with learners. The atmosphere within lessons is productive, with learners enjoying their studies and fully engaging with the tasks set for them. Staff use their good subject knowledge effectively to motivate and engage learners. They help learners to see the links between theory and practical work, which improves their overall understanding.
18. Teachers use a variety of tasks to meet the differing needs of learners within the group. Learners generally make good progress in lessons; they know how well they are doing and are keen to do better. However, the use of questioning to develop and extend learners' understanding is not well used in some lessons.

19. Equality and diversity are promoted well in lessons and also through assessor visits to trainees in the workplace. Assessment of learners' work takes place regularly. Feedback to learners is usually clear and helpful, with constructive comments to help learners to improve. However, some feedback is less detailed and lacks rigour.
20. The college has well-organised procedures for assessing learners' literacy and numeracy skills and any additional learning needs they may have. Once needs are identified, effective support is provided. Support staff work well within vocational areas. This has helped to improve success rates, particularly for key skills. Staff offer support in a number of ways to meet the needs of individuals and groups. There is dedicated in-class support for all foundation-level classes. Learners have a very positive view of support and how it helps them understand assignments, check their learning and plan their work. Those receiving additional support do as well or better than their peers.
21. Information technology (IT) is used increasingly well to support learning. The college has invested in new technology and staff development to support its use. Many teachers use IT very well, for example in construction and counselling, but in a few areas teachers use it on a more limited scale. The virtual learning environment is highly effective and user friendly. Students use it well and they are able to access a wide range of information that supports them effectively in their learning.
22. Arrangements to assure the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous. The judgements made are clear and informative and feedback is used well to support staff development. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgements on the quality of lessons. The introduction of advanced teaching practitioners and the development of the role of subject learning coaches have proved highly beneficial. Staff find the observation process and the associated staff development very supportive and this has played a key role in improving teaching and learning.
23. The college offers a good range of provision from foundation to advanced level. The curriculum effectively focuses on meeting the North West region's identified priority areas. The college contributes to a number of local provider groups to develop complementary provision in the region. The college has extended the induction process for new students to ensure they are on the right course and at the right level, and this has helped to improve retention. There are gaps in provision in a small number of subject areas, such as construction. The college uses effective strategies to ensure that learners can access provision. These strategies include timetabling lessons to suit the needs of adult learners and flexible assessment practices to meet trainee work patterns.
24. A popular enrichment programme provides a wide range of activities, projects and events to extend the experience of learners. The programme maintains a good focus on health and safety and equality and diversity themes. The college

does not have its own sporting facilities but has made good use of partnerships with local schools to provide access to sports facilities and coaching expertise.

25. The use of partnerships is outstanding. The college works with a large number of schools in developing diplomas for learners aged 14 to 19 and leads on the delivery of three of them. It works very effectively with the Connexions service on projects and programmes designed to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training. A large number of partners support the delivery of the college's tutorial programme. For example, the local emergency services provide education and training on the impact of poor driving and organisers regard these as instrumental in lowering the death rate for young drivers in the area by 45%.
26. Extensive links with employers help to provide good opportunities for work-based learning and also to provide learners on other courses with work placements. In partnership with others, the college has taken a leading role in responding to changes in the local economy, including the impact of redundancy on employees.
27. The care, guidance and support for learners in helping them reach their learning goals are good. There have been effective improvements to the tutorial system since the last inspection and both group and individual tutorials are now of a good quality. The group sessions include compulsory activities on a range of topics and learners' interest is maintained by the effective use of outside speakers. Individual tutorials successfully monitor learners' progress and set targets for subsequent reviews. Learners speak highly of this process.
28. Learners have access to, and make good use of, a wide range of student support services, including counselling, sexual health clinics, finance and welfare advice. There is effective working with external agencies and a good level of support for vulnerable learners. Students benefit from well-organised careers advice to help them progress to employment or further study.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

29. The principal and senior leaders provide a clear vision and strategic direction for the college. They have been successful in developing a set of values based on the learner experience and a positive culture of continuous improvement. Communication across the college is very good. Teams work well together. The management of subject areas has improved and is now good. The college works well with external agencies to develop the provision for learners. The principal has been proactive and innovative in seeking ways to provide alternative funding for new accommodation, following the withdrawal of the previous scheme due to national funding constraints.
30. Governors are committed and enthusiastic and have a good range of appropriate skills and experience. They are involved well in setting the mission and strategic objectives of the college. They monitor closely its performance

and challenge senior managers appropriately. In carrying out this task, governors benefit from robust data and information from managers on college finances and learners' outcomes. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities well and are helped in this by effective clerking arrangements.

31. The promotion of safeguarding is good. Procedures for safeguarding young learners and vulnerable adults are clear and appropriate. The designated senior manager and safeguarding support team ensure that all appropriate policies and procedures are in place and are actively promoted with staff and learners. The college carries out competently its legal duties with regard to criminal record checks and it maintains a single record for all staff employed by the college. There are also appropriate arrangements for governors and those students, such as those on care courses, who come into contact with young learners and vulnerable adults.
32. The approach to safeguarding benefits from a systematic three-stage approach. The first is the creation of a safe environment, including a robust system of risk assessments. The second focuses well on all aspects of staff recruitment. The third prioritises learners' awareness through a range of materials, activities, tutorials, counselling and other support. There is regular safeguarding training for staff and governors.
33. The promotion of equality and diversity is good because it now permeates all aspects of the college's work. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place in relation to race, gender and disability, and the college's single equality scheme brings together effectively all the individual responsibilities. These are well promoted, policies are reviewed regularly and action plans monitored. The strongest impact of this is the work carried out with learners within curriculum areas, both in teaching and learning, and within tutorials. In addition, the range of activities to promote equality and diversity across the college engage learners very effectively. For example, a competition to celebrate diversity was entered into enthusiastically by learners from all areas of the college. Equality and diversity themes are also promoted during assessors' visits to apprentices within the workplace. The equality and diversity committee is effective at driving and supporting these developments. It also monitors well the performance of different groups of learners and takes appropriate action. The college recognises that the narrowing of the gap in achievement between male and female learners that occurred in 2007/08 was not sustained in 2008/09 and reasons for this are being explored.
34. There is a clear and effective strategy for encouraging users to help to plan and improve provision. Those involved include learners, employers, parents and other stakeholders. Student governors and the student council contribute well to this process. Learners told inspectors how the college values their views and takes action on them.

35. The college has effective processes for evaluating performance and tackling weaknesses. It has considerably strengthened arrangements for quality improvement since the last inspection. The system for self-assessment is rigorous and now covers all aspects of the college, although it is less well developed for support than for curriculum areas. Inspectors found the college's self-assessment judgements to be in line with their findings. Quality improvement plans are detailed and well monitored for impact. Analysis of data is much improved and is used effectively to improve performance.
36. As a result of these processes, the college has reorganised its management arrangements for employer responsiveness provision. Inspectors found the quality of provision and management arrangements to be good but it is too early to see the full impact on outcomes for trainees.
37. Resources are well used and value for money is good. The excellent learning resource centre provides good support for students. Staff development focuses particularly well on support for new teachers and those who need to improve their teaching. Financial management is good. Accommodation is well maintained and there are good vocational training facilities. There is some overcrowding and facilities for learners are spread across a number of buildings, pending progress on the college's revised capital project. There is strong commitment to value for money and work is taking place with other colleges to secure cost-effective purchasing and to investigate the potential for shared services.

Subject areas

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Context

38. The college offers full- and part-time courses at levels 1 to 3. Of the 201 full-time learners, the majority are aged 16 to 18. In addition, there are currently 115 learners aged 14 to 16, a small number of learners on Train to Gain provision and 97 trainees on apprenticeships.

Key findings

- Learners make good progress towards their learning goals and produce high standards of work. Staff track learners' progress well and are quick to respond to students who need support. Tracking mechanisms are displayed clearly on notice boards and learners find this helpful in checking their progress. Learners demonstrate high levels of attainment in both practical and theory sessions and in the work they produce.
- Pass rates on the majority of courses are good. Retention on some courses was below the national average in previous years. Effective action has been taken to address this and retention is now good on most courses. Success rates on apprenticeships are good. For most advanced apprentices the timely success rate is satisfactory but it is low for the small number of learners on the electro-technical programme.
- Provision for learners aged 14 to 16 is outstanding. The overall success rate for these learners was 87% in 2008/09 and the young apprenticeship scheme achieved a success rate of 88%. Almost all of these learners progressed into engineering apprenticeships or training, or to sixth form study at school.
- Learners enjoy their courses and feel safe. They are developing a good range of skills for their future careers. Learners contribute well to how the provision is developed and they particularly like the way theory and practical sessions are mixed together to help reinforce their learning. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety issues in the workshops.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use an effective and varied range of techniques to interest learners, who participate enthusiastically in lessons. Learning outcomes are clearly displayed and discussed with learners. Learners receive a lot of constructive feedback during lessons, which helps to maintain their interest and concentration. They are highly motivated to produce work of a good standard.
- Assessment of learners' work is generally helpful and informative, allowing them to understand clearly what is needed to improve work. There is good use of technology to provide feedback to learners electronically on some courses.

- The college offers a good range of provision, which meets the needs of learners. The extensive programme for learners aged 14 to 16 is delivered in conjunction with other providers. Progression between levels of provision is good.
- Enrichment activities extend learners' knowledge and understanding within and outside the specialism of the curriculum area. The comprehensive range of activities includes raising awareness of equality and diversity, team building and educational visits. Learners have enjoyed in particular the 'Planet Environmental' competition, the 'Kick Racism out of Football' six-a-side competition and visits to a major manufacturer and the motorcycle museum.
- Leadership and management are good. The self-assessment report is largely accurate. It has identified the main issues and there are clear action plans to secure improvements, many of which can already be seen. The management of work-based learning has been reorganised to secure improvements in timely success rates. The quality of this provision is now good.
- Staff development is strong and has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the promotion of equality and diversity since the last inspection. Data on learner outcomes are well understood and are used well to set targets for further improvements.

What does name of Carlisle College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the improvements in the management and quality of provision for work-based learning lead to higher timely success rates on advanced apprentice programmes.
- Continue to implement and monitor the strategy to improve retention on all courses.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Grade 2

Context

39. The college offers construction diplomas at levels 1 to 3 in bricklaying, plastering and wood occupations; plumbing certificates levels 2 and 3; BTEC first diploma; national certificate in civil engineering; and foundation certificate in building craft occupations. Of the 396 learners, 206 are full-time, 167 are aged 14 to 16 and 61 are adults. There are 100 work-based learners and a further 28 learners on Train to Gain programmes.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high on most courses. Success rates for key skills have improved significantly over the last two years and are now high. The timely completion rates for apprentices also improved over the last two years and are now good. For advanced apprentices, the rates are in line with the national averages.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Learners make good progress in lessons. They develop appropriate vocational skills in college workshops with many working on tasks that mirror what takes place in industry. For example, in a carpentry and joinery practical session, level 1 learners were able to construct good timber frames with multi-joints such as mortice and tenon.
- The safeguarding of learners is given a high priority. Learners feel safe in the college and in the workplace. They systematically carry out risk assessments prior to undertaking practical activities.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers set specific and achievable learning outcomes in their lessons and share them with learners. They use a variety of methods to inspire and motivate learners. Teachers make regular links between theory and practice, for example in a lesson where trigonometry was used to calculate the lengths of rafters in a roof truss. Learning technologies are used effectively to support teaching and learning.
- Teachers do not use sufficiently focused and probing questions to engage all learners. Although teachers adequately support the least able learners and extend the knowledge of the most able in some lessons, this is not planned for in all lessons.
- Assessment of learners' work and internal verification to check standards are satisfactory. Teachers' feedback on written work includes some that is detailed and constructive and identifies ways in which learners can make progress but not all marking is sufficiently thorough. For work-based learners, on-site assessments and reviews are carried out regularly.
- The range of courses on offer is satisfactory but there are gaps in the provision, including the lack of any level 4 courses, which limit the learners' progression opportunities within the college. Links with schools and employers are strong. A

large number of learners aged 14 to 16 are enrolled on courses and in 2008/09 almost half progressed to further study at the college. Links with employers through work-based learning inform curriculum development.

- Support and guidance for learners are good. Learners are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants, who inspire and motivate them to do their best.
- Leadership and management are good. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection. Managers have introduced effective actions to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. Managers seek the views of learners to improve the provision. Course teams use data well and set challenging but realistic targets to monitor learners' performance. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There are effective strategies to break down barriers for learners. The college has been successful at enrolling female learners onto some of the construction courses. A blind learner enrolled on a plumbing course receives effective support. Learners report that they have not experienced any incidents of bullying or discrimination.

What does Carlisle College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers sufficiently challenge learners by using probing and focused questions. State in lesson plans how the knowledge of the most able learners will be extended and how the least able will be supported.
- Further spread good practice in the assessment of learners' work.
- Carry out needs analysis and consider introducing courses in painting and decorating, interior design and level 4 site management.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Grade 2

Context

40. Currently 361 learners attend a range of full-time courses from foundation to advanced level in hairdressing and beauty therapy. There are 10 apprentices. The majority of learners are aged 16 to 18.

Key findings

- Learners' achievement is good. Success rates are high on most courses. Learners make good progress at NVQ levels 1 and 2 in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. The standard of learners' practical skills is particularly good at level 1. Assignments are well presented and learners take pride in their work.
- Learners aged 14 to 16, who attend the college from local schools, enjoy their time in college. The standard of practical work at this level is good. A number of disaffected learners with very low school attendance have made good progress and attend college regularly.
- The standard of learners' practical skills in hairdressing at advanced level is satisfactory. However, these learners are insufficiently challenged to work creatively in ways which reflect advanced hairdressing techniques.
- Teaching and learning are good. Learning includes an effective mix of theory and practical activities. Lessons are delivered at a good pace and challenge learners with a variety of enjoyable activities. Lessons start with a quick warm-up fun activity to check previous learning. At the end of a task, learners are well involved in evaluating their work. For example, completed block hair styles are examined and discussed, and learners share ideas for developing styles further in the next session.
- Learners participate well in most lessons. However, there is insufficient use of questions that extend learners' thinking. In practical lessons there are occasions when a few learners are inactive for too long a period of time, particularly when there are not enough clients for the number of learners in the group.
- Key skills are well integrated in lessons and most learners are ahead of target completion. Progress is effectively planned and monitored using a good tracking system. Results from diagnostic testing are used effectively to encourage learners to aim for higher levels.
- Learners' safety is well promoted in all practical lessons. In addition, learners are closely monitored whilst using computers and there are short periods of other learning activities to provide regular breaks.
- Support for learners is good. Additional learning support is used effectively to help students understand the work. The effective use of individual learning targets has improved attainment. Learners take ownership for tracking their progress in units of the course. Individual tutorials focus on the setting and

monitoring of targets. However, target setting is less well developed for work-based learners.

- The department has been very successful at developing partnerships which provide a wide range of enrichment activities for learners. Links with industry provide good advice and support for curriculum development. Employers provide learners with experience within a real work setting. A wide range of enrichment helps learners to understand different cultures.
- Leadership and management are good. Communications are effective and data are used effectively to monitor performance. Internal verification to ensure standardised marking of assessments is good. Staff development has had a very positive impact on improvements in teaching and learning.
- Equality and diversity are well promoted and embedded in lesson activities. Most learners can relate how they would modify communication and treatments to meet the needs of different clients.

What does Carlisle College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching on the advanced hairdressing course is planned to develop learners' practical skills to the standard required by industry. Further increase the client base in hairdressing, in particular to allow learners to practice advanced techniques and service.
- Develop questioning techniques to provide more challenge to learners and ensure learners in practical lessons are fully engaged throughout the lesson by providing extension activities.
- Develop the expertise of work-based staff in hairdressing to provide effective reviews and target setting.

Information about the inspection

41. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the college's vice-principal, as nominee, 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), the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
42. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Carlisle College

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, 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	1312		937	375	
Part-time learners	1815	483	206	534	592
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	3
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	1				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
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?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
<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?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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