

Norton Radstock College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130559

Name of lead inspector: Margaret Swift HMI

Last day of inspection: 19 March 2010

Type of provider: General Further Education College
Norton Radstock College
South Hill Park

Address: Radstock
Somerset
BA3 3RW

Telephone number: 01761 433161

Information about the provider

1. Norton Radstock College is a small general further education college with its main base in Radstock. The college serves a wide, mainly rural, community in Bath and North East Somerset. The college has six other sites; two learning shops providing courses in information technology and short courses, a specialist centre for hair and beauty, a construction centre in Norton Radstock, and an animal care centre and a sixth form centre for business studies in Keynsham.
2. The college provides vocational programmes in all 15 subject areas. The largest areas are health and social care and preparation for work and life. The college no longer offers A level courses. Apprenticeships are offered in six subject areas and Train to Gain provision in nine subject areas. The college works with schools and training providers to broaden vocational opportunities for learners aged 14 to 16 and offers foundation degrees and access to higher education courses. Approximately 5% of all learners are from a minority ethnic background.
3. Despite several local areas being classed as affluent, the college draws a significant number of learners from areas of high deprivation. Within the college's main catchment area there are six secondary schools, all of which have sixth forms. Many learners enter the college with low prior attainment; consequently a high proportion of the college's work is at foundation and intermediate level. The area is characterised by small and medium enterprises and links with employers are maintained through a dedicated college unit called Employer Solutions.
4. The inspection took into account all provision offered by the college. Provision in health and social care and in engineering was inspected in depth, as was employer responsive provision across all relevant subject areas.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Weston College (Entry to Employment)
6. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the college:
 - Templegate Training Limited (sport).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2007/08
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	117 part-time learners
Further education (16 to 18)	428 full-time learners 40 part-time learners
Foundation learning, including	122 full-time learners 32 part-time learners
Entry to Employment	22 learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	248 full-time learners 970 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	932 learners 153 apprentices

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	
Health and social care	3
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	3

Overall effectiveness

7. This is a satisfactory college with a good capacity to improve. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory but, as the college recognises, outcomes for adult learners at foundation level have been slow to improve. Work-based learning outcomes have been low, but are improving, and Train to Gain success rates are satisfactory. Learners enjoy their studies and feel safe in the friendly and supportive environment provided by the college. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. The good lessons motivate and challenge learners, but planning to meet the individual needs of all learners in lessons still needs to be improved. Learners benefit from, and value, the good support, care and guidance from staff. Systems for monitoring learners' progress are much improved and these have already had a positive impact on outcomes.
8. The principal and senior managers provide strong leadership and governance of the college is good. The college is genuinely committed to providing an inclusive community and works effectively with a range of key partners to provide a good range of programmes, particularly for challenging and hard to reach learners. The rigour of self-assessment and quality improvement procedures have been improved and the college is accurate in its assessment of the provision.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. For learners of all ages, success rates on advanced level courses are good and success rates on intermediate level courses are satisfactory. At foundation level there has been a significant improvement for learners aged 16 to 18, but the success rate for learners aged over 19 is well below the national rate. Success rates for apprenticeship programmes are improving and success rates on Train to Gain programmes are satisfactory.
- Learners enjoy their studies. They work productively and generally produce work of a good standard. Learners develop relevant skills for employment and those on work-based programmes develop their occupational skills to industry standards. Mature learners on work-based programmes particularly value the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification.
- The college provides a welcoming environment and learners feel safe and secure. Very good attention is paid to health and safety and good anti-bullying policies and strategies are in place. The college provides a wide range of activities through the tutorial and the enrichment programmes to help learners develop their understanding of health and well-being. The development of economic and social well-being is good and learners make a good contribution to the local community.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The most effective lessons include a good range of learning activities that motivate learners and help them develop relevant skills. Planning to meet the needs of individual learners remains an area for development from the last inspection. In many lessons all learners complete the same tasks and additional activities provided for those learners who work more quickly do not provide sufficient challenge.
- The college's arrangements for observing teaching and learning provides a broadly accurate overview of strengths and areas for improvement of teachers' practice in lessons. The arrangements though do not include learners' progress reviews in work-based learning and lesson observation judgements by college observers do not place sufficient emphasis on learning.
- The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of the learners is good. The range of provision is wide and many learners have the opportunity to undertake additional courses including, for example, first aid and health and safety. The college has good provision and support for challenging and hard to reach learners.
- The use of partnerships to develop provision is good. The college is very responsive to employers' needs and staff work well with partners to plan and deliver provision which meets the needs of all learners, particularly disadvantaged learners. The college is responsive to the needs of local schools.
- The college provides good care, guidance and support for learners. Extensive information, advice and guidance help learners make informed choices about their future. Learners benefit from comprehensive welfare advice and counselling. Learning support is effective in helping most learners to achieve.

However, individual learning plans are not always effective in supporting learning and not all learners receive regular individual tutorials.

- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strategic direction and mission of the college as an inclusive community organisation are well understood and supported by staff and governors. Improvements have been secured in success rates for learners aged 16 to 18, but progress has been slower in improving outcomes for adults.
- Target setting is well established at all levels, but not all targets are sufficiently ambitious and challenging. Self-assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and the self-assessment report is mainly accurate and self-critical. At present, managers have insufficient formal opportunities to share good practice and expertise in writing evaluative self-assessments. Data are particularly accurate but not always presented sufficiently clearly.
- Safeguarding is good and learners feel the college is a welcoming and safe environment. The promotion of equality and support for diversity are satisfactory. The college is genuinely inclusive but some key actions, including the analysis of achievement by different groups, have been introduced recently.
- The close monitoring of learners' progress and regular reviews of their progress by courses and at departmental level have been established and these are beginning to have an increased impact on outcomes, particularly with regard to the retention of adults on foundation programmes.

What does Norton Radstock College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the lesson observation scheme focuses more explicitly on what learners learn and include observation of learners' progress reviews in work-based learning.
- Support teachers to develop stimulating and challenging lessons which meet individual learners' needs and to secure consistently good teaching across the college, so that all learners are able to achieve to their full potential.
- Ensure that all learners receive regular individual tutorials in which measurable personal and academic targets are set and reviewed. Ensure that all time-limited, measurable targets are well recorded to help learners achieve their goals.
- Ensure that college target setting takes full account of planned and predicted improvements in order to present a sufficiently high level of challenge across the curriculum to maximize learners' successes.
- Monitor and evaluate closely and systematically the performance of different groups of learners in order to identify quickly any gaps in achievement and take action promptly to remedy them.
- Create formal and systematic opportunities for managers to share expertise and skills in self-assessment in order to share good practice and promote

increasingly rigorous and accurate analysis of strengths and areas for improvement.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- teachers' support, encouragement and constructive feedback on performance in college and in the workplace
- the friendly, welcoming and safe environment
- availability and quality of information on next steps into further education and employment
- the standard of pre-course information
- knowing clearly what is expected of them to improve the quality of their work.

What learners would like to see improved:

- course organisation so that it is of a consistently high standard
- the variety of activities in lessons being consistently good across the range of lessons and courses.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the college's responsiveness to employers' needs and the opportunity to agree programme content and the choice of option units
- flexibility in learning around employers' working patterns
- frequency of communication and quality of support
- strong links between on- and off-the-job training.

What employers would like to see improved:

- greater involvement in the review of learners' progress
- the introduction of an event to celebrate employees' success
- the reduction of documentation and greater use of information transfer by electronic means.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

9. The college has good capacity to improve. Many areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been rectified. Success rates for advanced level courses are now above average, although rates for the smaller number of adults on foundation courses have been slower to show improvement. The progress of individual learners is now monitored closely. Areas for improvement are identified accurately through self-assessment and a good range of detailed data are used critically to analyse all aspects of provision. Target setting is well established, although not all targets are sufficiently challenging. The college demonstrates a clear vision with appropriate priorities well supported by staff and governors. The strategic plan, quality improvement plan and self-assessment report provide a coherent framework for action. As a result, improvements such as the increased retention of adult learners have been secured. Improvements to the observation of teaching and learning have increased the proportion of good or better teaching, but teaching is not yet consistently good across all curriculum areas. Learners' and employers' views are sought regularly and acted upon, although clearer feedback to learners is required to demonstrate how these views have been used. A clear and accountable management structure supports improvements. Managers, staff and governors contribute actively to self-assessment and quality improvement.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

10. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Although the overall success rate for all long courses is still just below the national rate, there have been improvements for learners of all ages. Success rates on advanced level courses for all learners have improved each year for the last three years and are now good. Success rates on intermediate level courses are satisfactory. It is at the foundation level where the college has not performed well for learners aged over 19 and where it needs to make the most improvement. The success rate for this age group is 20 percentage points below the national rate. However, the college has revised the programme which caused the difficulties and the current retention rate is high at 85%. For learners aged 16 to 18 there has been a significant improvement at foundation level and success rates are now 10 percentage points above the national rate. Short course and Key Skills success rates are satisfactory.
11. No significant differences exist between the performance of male and female learners or between learners from different ethnic backgrounds. Learners aged 16 to 18 receiving additional learning support perform as well as their peers, but those aged over 19 have not performed as well.
12. Success rates for apprenticeship programmes have been consistently below national rates for the last three years. However, provisional data for 2009/10 show that success rates have improved considerably in all subject areas and are

now close to national rates. Success rates on Train to Gain programmes have been broadly average over the last three years and show an improvement in 2009/10.

13. Learners make satisfactory progress. They work productively to generally produce work of a good standard. Learners develop relevant skills for employment and learners on work-based programmes develop their occupational skills to industry standards. Mature learners on work-based programmes particularly value the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification. Progress between courses and into employment and higher education is satisfactory overall, but good for work-based learning programmes.
14. Learners report that the college provides a welcoming environment, where they feel safe and secure and where they enjoy their studies. Very good attention is paid to health and safety and good anti-bullying policies and strategies are in place. The college provides a wide range of activities through the tutorial and enrichment programmes to help learners develop their understanding of health and well-being and to help them make positive choices. The college organises themed weeks to involve all learners. Recent topics have covered healthy eating, drug, HIV and contraceptive awareness. Through the enrichment programme many learners develop new skills and take part in sports activities; some learners have developed their coaching skills and now coach learners with disabilities in football and tennis skills. The development of economic and social well-being is good and learners make a good contribution to the local community through a wide range of community projects and charity events. A recent community project involved clearing a local graveyard which had become overgrown.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

15. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The most effective lessons are well planned with a good range of learning activities that motivate learners and help them develop relevant skills. However, as identified in the self-assessment report, planning to meet the needs of individual learners remains an area for improvement. In many lessons all learners complete the same tasks, and additional activities provided for those learners who work more quickly do not provide sufficient challenge. Teachers' lesson plans are detailed but focus on completion of learning activities and tasks rather than on what learners will learn from them. In the less effective lessons learners are not given enough time to complete these activities and teachers do not always check what they have learned from doing them.
16. A significant minority of lessons feature too much input from the teacher. In these lessons teachers are keen to develop points themselves rather than promote discussion. Teachers' use of questioning in lessons to develop and extend learners' learning is underdeveloped. Learners' answers are too often superficial and do no more than demonstrate recall of information. Opportunities to develop and extend learning are missed.

17. Teachers' use of information learning technology (ILT) to enhance learning is satisfactory but teachers do not always make good use of the resources they have selected. The sufficiency of learning materials available on the college's virtual learning environment (VLE) and learners' usage of these materials are uneven across curriculum areas. The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is satisfactory, but in work-based learning there is little promotion of equality and diversity through learners' review sessions.
18. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Learners speak highly of the quality of feedback on their work and they know what they need to do to improve. Assessment is planned well for work-based learners.
19. The college has strengthened its arrangements for lesson observation in the past year, but these are not yet fully embedded. For instance, the progress reviews for learners on work-based learning programmes are not yet included in the college's observation of teaching and learning arrangements. Observation records clearly show the impact of observation and staff development on improving the quality of lessons and on individual teachers' practice. Teachers value the support given by heads of school and the learning coaches in helping them to develop effective teaching and learning strategies. Action points arising from lesson observations are rigorously followed through using a good range of staff development activities. However, arrangements to develop and share good practice in teaching and learning are not yet fully effective across the college. The observations carried out by inspectors alongside members of the college's staff showed a broadly accurate overview of strengths and areas for improvement in teachers' practice. However, college observers did not place sufficient emphasis on the learning taking place.
20. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is good. The college offers a wide range of provision across all 15 subject areas with good progression routes in most areas, although there are a few minor omissions at advanced level in horticulture and in health and social care. The college provides an extensive enrichment programme which is valued by most learners, although some learners would prefer to use the time for private study.
21. Partnership working is good and benefits learners. The college works both strategically and operationally with local partners to plan and deliver provision. The college works closely with heads of local secondary schools to deliver an effective programme for pupils aged 14 to 16. The relationship with the local authority is particularly good and this has resulted in some financial investment for one of the new diplomas. Partnerships supporting learners' health and social well-being are particularly good.
22. Provision for challenging and hard to reach learners is good. The college has worked with the local pupil referral unit to develop programmes for disaffected young people and it has worked closely with the local learning and skills council to provide opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Basic computer skills are provided to help unemployed people back to work and

hard to reach learners have been encouraged back to learning through the college's flexible arrangements with the local partners.

23. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners complete a diagnostic assessment prior to interview and they are guided to a course at a level appropriate to their ability. Learning support needs are identified early and any support required is put in place immediately. Learners report that their teachers are extremely helpful and supportive. Many learners benefit from group tutorials, but the formal individual tutorials in many subject areas are infrequent and individual learning plans are not consistently of a high standard. The reviews undertaken for work-based learners are not sufficiently detailed and they do not always identify clear and precise targets to help learners to progress and improve. Support for learners' welfare needs is good; learners with significant social and medical problems, including alcoholism and financial problems, are supported very effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

24. The principal and senior managers provide strong leadership and a clear strategic direction. The college's mission to serve the local community by providing an inclusive institution dedicated to widening participation and attracting learners from groups historically under-represented in education is well understood and supported by staff and governors. Overall outcomes are satisfactory, with improvements since the last inspection to the success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 but persistently low success rates for the smaller number of adults at foundation level.
25. Many changes, designed to underpin and secure improvements, have been instituted relatively recently. A coherent management structure with clear lines of accountability has been established. Target setting takes place at all levels of the organisation but the quality and challenge of targets is not consistent. For example, at departmental level, targets vary from those well above average and including improvements from the previous year, to modest increases from previous outcomes or below average when compared to similar colleges. The whole college target for 2009/10 fails to take sufficient account of the predicted improvements to adult provision at foundation level.
26. Governance is good. Governors use their wide range of skills and deep local knowledge to support the college well. They maintain a close oversight of financial issues and demonstrate an appropriate knowledge of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors are involved fully in setting and developing the college's strategic direction and they maintain close links with individual curriculum areas. The corporation receives detailed data and information on the progress and outcomes of learners and in most cases provides appropriate challenge to managers on areas for improvement. However, until recently, they were slow to challenge sufficiently the low success rates for adults at foundation level. The governors recognise that the composition of the corporation does not reflect sufficiently the college

community. Whilst some actions have been taken to attract a more diverse membership, governors also recognise that further and more vigorous efforts are required.

27. The promotion of safeguarding and protecting learners is good. Appropriate and comprehensive policies are in place with several well-trained staff designated as initial points of contact for any concerns. Required checks through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) are carried out on all staff employed directly by the college. Records are maintained of the checks carried out by other employers for support and ancillary staff. Governors have undergone voluntary CRB checks. All staff have undergone recent training and they demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding matters. The college has close links with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board through the principal's membership and training activities. Health and safety procedures are thorough and safe practices are well promoted in curriculum areas. The few accidents and incidents which have occurred are well recorded and include points for future action. The 'zero tolerance' policy for any incidents of bullying and harassment is well known and understood by learners. Incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
28. The promotion of equality and support for diversity are satisfactory. The college is genuinely committed to providing an inclusive community and provides courses for many vulnerable groups and learners with low prior attainment. The progression of these groups to education and employment is often good. However, the college has been slow to establish fully some key actions. The analysis of achievement by different groups has been a recent development and impact assessments are at a very early stage. Overall, male and female learners achieve comparable success rates. Learners aged 16 to 18 in receipt of additional learning support achieve broadly in line with their peers, but adults requiring support achieved lower rates than other adults in 2009/10. The college is keenly aware of the reasons for this gap and has instituted a number of actions designed to improve the outcomes. College data suggest that this has had a significant impact on the retention of this group of learners, although it is too early to judge fully the final outcomes. A new single equality scheme has been introduced recently and the equality and diversity forum has been reconvened with the principal as chairperson.
29. The college works well with a range of partners to benefit learners. Links with employers and local schools are strong. Learners' views are sought regularly and frequently acted upon. However, not all learners are aware of the effect of their comments and feedback.
30. The rigour of self-assessment and quality improvement procedures has been improved and the current report presents a generally accurate and mainly self-critical analysis of the college. Staff are involved actively in producing the report but heads of school have insufficient formal opportunities to share expertise and developments in assessing provision. Data are particularly accurate, although significant features are not always presented clearly for a wider audience. Better and more effective systems of monitoring learners' progress are in place, these having been identified as a weakness at the last inspection. Although the

college buildings are old, shabby and inflexible the plans for a new college building were halted due to national financial constraints. Overall the resources and accommodation are satisfactory. Financial management is good and value for money is satisfactory.

Subject areas

Health and social care

Grade 3

Context

31. Of the 564 learners in this area, 48 are aged 16 to 18 years and 516 are adult learners. The college provides full-time programmes from foundation to advanced level in health and social care and child care and education. The majority of learners on these programmes are aged 16 to 18 years. Part-time programmes are available in youth work and counselling skills at advanced level, with first aid and safeguarding provided at intermediate level. Some 430 learners are enrolled on work-based learning programmes, 11 on apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships, and 419 on Train to Gain programmes.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates on most advanced level programmes are now high. Full-time programmes at foundation and intermediate levels had low success rates in 2008/09, but retention rates this year have improved significantly. Success rates for work-based learners have been low but show good improvement in 2009/10. Progression to higher level programmes and employment is satisfactory.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Learners make appropriate and pertinent links between the theory learnt in lessons and their work in practical settings. Work-based learners develop good communication skills to use with clients. Learners on full-time programmes develop good information technology skills and they use these effectively to present their work. A small number of advanced level learners have difficulty reaching the required standards.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a good variety of teaching methods to motivate and engage learners in lessons. These activities are well matched to the learners' preferred learning style. Many lessons have a good mix of practical and theory work. Assessors use a range of technology to support work-based learners, such as email, text and online learning.
- The more able learners are insufficiently challenged in many advanced level lessons. Teachers do not plan effectively to provide a range of different outcomes to meet the needs of all learners. Those who complete tasks and activities are not provided with additional tasks to enable them to further develop their analytical and evaluative skills fully.
- Assessment is satisfactory. Feedback to learners on most assignment and portfolio work is prompt and provides sufficient guidance to help them improve, although this is not consistent across all areas. Assessments of practical skills and competence are accurate, comprehensive and well recorded with clear referencing to the standards of the qualifications.

- Learners benefit from good, well-managed pastoral support. Personal issues are identified early and teachers and managers are able to make referrals to a good range of external support agencies. Work-based learners are able to agree breaks in training when they have personal issues such as family illness.
- Insufficient group tutorials are available to full-time child care learners. Although they do learn about the Every Child Matters themes as part of their course, they are not able to take part in the wider college programme of activities that enables them to apply these themes to their own lives.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good formal and informal communications exist between staff and managers. All staff work closely with Employer Solutions to share good practice in work-based learning and standardise assessment and verification. Staff are well supported and benefit from a good range of continuing professional development.
- The self-assessment process is accurate and evaluative. It identifies the key areas for improvement that impact on learning, and actions to address these are included in the quality improvement plan.
- Staff respond promptly to learners' feedback. Learners are actively encouraged to make their views known through tutorials and learners' review sessions. Action to rectify issues raised and implement improvements is rapid. Changes identified by learners include adaptation of teaching and learning methods, introduction of study support sessions, and review of assessment schedules.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The inclusion of equality and diversity issues in lessons is satisfactory and learners develop a good understanding of how the issues apply to their practical work.
- Safeguarding has a high priority in the area. Staff have completed basic training in equality and diversity and safeguarding.

What does Norton Radstock College need to do to improve further?

- Plan for, and develop lessons with a range of different learning outcomes that will meet the needs of all learners and challenge the most able.
- Develop a detailed approach to providing feedback to learners on written work and assignments that is consistent across all areas.
- Review the arrangements for group tutorials for child care learners to ensure that they can participate in the college-wide tutorial programme and develop a wider understanding of the Every Child Matters themes.

Engineering

Grade 3

Context

32. There are 83 learners aged 16 to 18 years and 105 adult learners studying on a variety of engineering programmes from foundation to advanced levels. Of these, 83 learners study at foundation, 40 learners study at intermediate and 28 at advanced level. Other learners are on full-cost courses. Programmes include vehicle maintenance and repair, welding, performing engineering operations, national awards in engineering and computer-aided design. In addition, 33 learners aged 14 to 16 years, 16 young apprentices, 27 apprentices, 18 advanced apprentices and one person on the Train to Gain programme study on part-time courses.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates are high on performing engineering operations and on the national certificate in engineering and technology. Success rates on other programmes are broadly satisfactory, at or just above national rates for similar colleges. Apprenticeship success rates and achievements within the agreed time are satisfactory; improving for engineering, but declining on motor vehicle programmes.
- Success rates are poor for all key skills, but strategies are well developed to move to functional skills. Progression to higher level courses and into employment is good.
- The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners' practical skills are well developed and most learners make the progress expected of them compared to their level of study. Work-based learners prepare their portfolios to a satisfactory standard.
- Health and safety are well promoted in classrooms and in workshops. Teaching staff ensure all learners wear personal protective equipment in practical lessons and in the workplace. Safe working practices are highlighted in all practical workshop sessions and in many theory lessons. Learners feel safe in the college.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Better lessons are well planned and varied to meet the needs of learners, who are engaged fully and respond positively and purposefully. Individual support for learners is effective in helping learners make progress. The use of information learning technology in the classroom is appropriate. In less effective lessons, more able learners are insufficiently challenged. Questioning is too general with too few checks on learning throughout the lesson. Learning objectives are rarely revisited nor are the key learning points reinforced.
- Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Assessments are planned in the workplace and take place as soon as appropriate evidence becomes available.

- The range of courses provided is satisfactory and being expanded to meet learners' and employers' needs. Specialised courses are offered to increase learners' skills for employment. Employers speak highly of the skills development of their apprentices and the good communications with the college. Good links with local schools have contributed to the success of programmes for learners aged 14 to 16, including young apprenticeships.
- Support for learners is good in college and in the workplace. Learners are assessed for literacy and numeracy levels at enrolment and where additional learning support is identified it is provided by a specialist teacher within the school of engineering. This specialist teacher carries out individual and group tutorials. Extra lessons are provided by staff, outside timetabled hours, providing additional assistance to learners. Apprentices are well supported by their employers, teachers and work-based assessors.
- Resources are satisfactory. The buildings are old but suitably equipped. Some rooms have interactive boards or projection facilities and a dedicated computer suite is available. The motor vehicle workshop has a number of old donated cars, but some newer vehicles are needed for advanced courses. Diagnostic software and equipment are to industrial standards. The engineering workshop has a selection of ageing machines and two new computer numerical control machines. The welding workshop is well equipped.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strategies for improvement and actions taken in the two years since the subject area manager was appointed have yet to impact fully, but some clear indications of improvement are apparent.
- Safeguarding is satisfactory. Appropriate emphasis is placed on maintaining safe working practices at all times. Posters to promote various aspects of healthy and safe living, including lists of telephone helplines, are displayed in classrooms.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory for learners in the college. However, it is insufficiently promoted to work-based learners. Equality issues are introduced at induction but not routinely reinforced or checked at learners' reviews.
- Arrangements for self-assessment are satisfactory. Findings of self-assessment and curriculum team reviews are broadly accurate and self-critical, with issues raised aimed at improving the provision. Inspectors agreed with many of the key findings, but the narrow teaching strategies were not identified by the college.

What does Norton Radstock College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the checking of learners' knowledge and understanding in lessons by the use of more directed and probing questions and the use of a greater variety of assessment methods.
- Ensure that a greater variety of activities in lessons are planned to respond to the needs of all learners to improve their progress and to challenge the more able learners.

- Ensure that learners have met the learning objectives and understand the key learning points of each lesson.
- Increase the promotion of equality and diversity to learners on work-based programmes and ensure all staff are suitably trained to have sufficient confidence to raise awareness of the wider issues.

Information about the inspection

33. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's senior manager for student support services, 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.
34. 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 lessons, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Norton Radstock 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	820	117	644	1,218	1,085
Full-time learners	2,244				
Part-time learners					
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3	4	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
How well do learners progress?	3				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2				
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2				
Quality of provision	3	3	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?	2				
Leadership and management	3	3	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	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?	3				
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

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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St Ann's Square
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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