

Walford and North Shropshire College

Inspection report

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Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Walford and North Shropshire is a small general further education college with two main sites. Its main campus is in Oswestry and its second site, the Walford campus, at Baschurch some 15 miles from Oswestry, specialises in land-based education and training. The college also has a site at Shipley, on the south east Shropshire border specialising in information and communication technology (ICT) and childcare, and a centre near Ludlow, the Aspire centre, which specialises in engineering, motor vehicle, agriculture and ICT courses. The majority of the college's learners come from Shropshire with a small proportion from neighbouring counties and Wales. The college offers courses in all subject areas, but has small numbers in several of them. Most of the provision offered by the college is government-funded.
2. Shropshire is a rural and sparsely populated county. Almost all of the population is of White British heritage and a high proportion is aged over 50. The service sector is a major employer and agriculture accounts for a higher than average proportion of total employment. Shropshire's socio-economic environment is generally favourable, although pockets of deprivation exist in the more rural areas. Unemployment is below regional and national levels. The percentage of pupils leaving school with more than five GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, is notably higher than the national or regional average. The percentage of 16 to 18 year olds not in employment, education or training is relatively low overall, but is highest in Oswestry and Market Drayton. The college is the main provider of adult and community education in the county based in over 50 external venues.
3. Inspectors collected evidence from courses in the majority of the subject areas the college offers and inspected two subjects and the college's adult and community education courses and Train to Gain courses in depth. College-based provision was graded in leisure, travel and tourism; and both employment and college-based provision were graded in animal care and equine studies.
4. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Shropshire County Training
 - Ludlow College
5. The following organisations provides training on behalf of the college:
 - Shropshire Football Association
 - Willowdene Rehabilitation Centre

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	4 full-time learners 390 part-time learners
Further education (16 to 18)	986 full-time learners 268 part-time learners
Foundation learning, including Entry to Employment	197 full-time learners 81 part-time learners 96 learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	186 full-time learners 2,972 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	653 learners 182 apprentices
Adult safeguarded learning (adult community education)	1,920 learners

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 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	4
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	Grade
Animal and equine management	2
Leisure, travel and tourism	3

Overall effectiveness

6. The college has undergone recent and significant changes in both its management and focus. It has recovered from a significant decline in performance as well as major challenges to its financial viability and has satisfactory capacity to improve further. Learners' achievements have improved significantly and examination results are now just below the average for similar colleges. Achievement is best for younger learners, particularly in some land-based subjects, but remains below average for adults. Achievement for learners on employment-based courses and on adult and community education provision is satisfactory. School pupils attending one day a week are highly successful. Learners feel safe, attend well and enjoy their studies. Most learners progress well through levels of study.
7. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and an increasing number of lessons are good. Assessment is satisfactory, although feedback on a minority of assessed work is insufficient. The range of courses provided is good, particularly in land-based subjects. Partnership work is extensive and outstanding in its contribution to learners' experiences at college. Personal care is good; however, support and guidance to promote learning and progress is satisfactory. Some aspects of the

monitoring of learners' progress and target setting are at an early stage of development.

8. Managers, led strongly by the principal, have brought about many organisational changes successfully and are in the process of implementing new quality assurance processes. Self-assessment and improvement planning at college level are effective and accurate, but less effective and consistent at curriculum level. Safeguarding arrangements are inadequate; most aspects of safeguarding are satisfactory but vetting checks on a few teachers have not been completed. The college's approach to equality and diversity is satisfactory but its promotion within the curriculum is too limited. Promotion of sustainability is a strong feature of the college's work.

Main findings

- Long course success rates are just below average having increased significantly between 2006/07 and 2008/09. Rates are average for learners aged 16 to 18 but are below average for adults. Most learners make satisfactory progress and often make good progress on vocational courses. Achievement of key skills is too low. School pupils achieve well on part-time courses.
- Learners enjoy their work, have good attitudes to learning and are mutually respectful. They feel safe and most are aware of the need to use safe practices at work. Many progress well through different levels and are successful in seeking employment or further study options. They develop well socially and personally, and are beginning to make their voice heard in order to influence college decisions.
- Apprentices are increasingly successful in achieving their qualification aims within the allocated time. Success rates are above the average for similar colleges and are high on agriculture apprenticeships. Achievement within the time allocated for learners on Train to Gain courses has been very low between 2006/07 and 2008/09 with little improvement. In the current year, learners are making much better progress.
- Lessons are satisfactory. The best lessons include a variety of activities with effective planning to meet learners' needs; consequently learners make good progress. However, in too many lessons, teaching and learning strategies are not well matched to learners' needs and lack challenge. A minority of lessons are dominated by the teacher. Equality and diversity are insufficiently promoted in lessons.
- Arrangements for the observation of lessons have improved significantly over the past 18 months. Feedback from observations to teachers is generally detailed and accurate. However, some lessons are awarded too high a grade and feedback does not always contain sufficient helpful evaluation of learning and of learners' progress.
- Staff use initial and diagnostic assessment well to identify learners' individual support needs. Learners who receive additional learning support make similar progress compared to their peers. The assessment of learners' performance and

progress is satisfactory overall, although the quality of assessment is inconsistent across the college.

- Learners on adult and community education courses benefit from a broad curriculum offered at a wide range of community venues. Courses support their personal, social and skill development well. Quality assurance of this provision, however, is inadequate and the assessment and recording of achievement is often superficial.
- The outstanding partnership and collaborative arrangements benefit learners and increase opportunities for participation, including from hard-to-reach groups. The wide and responsive range of courses provides good progression opportunities. Very strong links with employers and other stakeholders ensure the college meets many local and national priorities. Formal evaluation of provision by employers, however, is underdeveloped.
- Good information, advice and guidance are available to learners from their first contact with the college. Personal care and support are good. Revised arrangements for the monitoring of progress and target setting using electronically held individual learning plans are at an early stage of implementation.
- This is an improving college with a clear focus on learning. Staff value the open and informative style of the principal and his team. The college's financial position is much improved. It makes a significant contribution to local and national education strategies. Strategic objectives are appropriate and clear, but there is no longer term strategic plan.
- Most safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. A full review of safeguarding arrangements was instigated recently which identified serious gaps in a very few records of teachers' Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. Checks were requested promptly and risk assessments put in place, although these were insufficiently reinforced. At the time of inspection, the gaps remained but risk assessments had been implemented fully. Health and safety arrangements at the college are good.
- New and comprehensive quality assurance arrangements have been implemented. Internal inspections provide a useful health check on the quality of provision, but some aspects are too formulaic to ensure sufficiently precise and reliable judgements. Self-assessment is good at college level; but the quality and reliability of curriculum management, self-assessment and action planning remains too variable.
- The college demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability. An active sustainability group has made marked improvements in waste recycling. Energy saving systems are well established. The college's carbon footprint is reduced considerably by generating electricity from slurry, solar panels and a wind turbine. The animal care and horticulture building uses ground source heat pumps as its primary energy source. The grounds maintenance plan promotes wildlife friendly practices well.

What does Walford and North Shropshire College need to do to improve further?

- Monitor the progress of learners, particularly adults and those on GCE A and AS level courses, frequently and rigorously. Continue to pay special attention to progress on courses with a history of poor performance. Ensure that prompt action is taken to intervene and support learners at risk of underperformance.
- Embed arrangements to teach functional skills across all subject areas and ensure that learners are made fully aware of the value of these additional qualification aims. Monitor both progress and attendance at functional skills lessons rigorously.
- Develop teachers' skills in lesson planning and become proficient in providing learning opportunities that are sufficiently challenging, engaging and which meet the individual needs of learners fully. Use peer group meetings to aid this process.
- Ensure all teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding about the promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum. Support teachers to improve lessons by maximising opportunities to develop equality and diversity themes.
- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of assessment by increasing the rigour of internal verification. Improve the quality of assessment of adult and community education by reinforcing the importance of rigorous assessment of course and personal objectives for all non-accredited courses.
- Continue to develop and strengthen the use of individual learning plans including the setting of short and longer term targets as well as target grades; monitoring learners' progress in completing assessed work and identifying underperformance, particularly on GCE A and AS level courses.
- Ensure that arrangements for vetting of teachers and other staff who have frequent contact with younger learners or vulnerable adults before they take up their post, are robust and reviewed regularly by senior managers and governors.
- Undertake comprehensive strategic planning which evaluates the college's strategic options, identifies where the college wants to be in the medium and longer term and maps out the route the college intends to take.
- Ensure greater consistency, rigour and reliability in internal lesson observations, curriculum self-assessment and internal inspections. Strengthen the self-assessment validation process. Ensure that quality assurance arrangements encompass fully adult and community education courses.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the professional approach within the college
- really friendly staff who want to help you

- good support for moving on to higher education
- college accommodation
- high levels of personal support
- social aspects of college life
- practical lessons.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more consistency in staffing of a few subjects
- prompt return of marked work in a few subjects
- more emphasis on advice for progressing to employment or other areas of further education
- an increase in good value healthy food choices in the refectory
- some repetition in subjects studied from year to year
- some dull teaching.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- regular and reliable support provided by assessors
- employees' improved motivation and health and safety awareness
- responsiveness to employers' training needs
- good communication at all levels
- considerably improved provision with historical issues fully resolved.

What employers would like to see improved:

- no substantial areas for improvement were identified by the small sample of employers from whom responses were received.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

9. The college has made satisfactory progress in rectifying the main areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Significant improvements have been achieved in the recruitment of learners, success rates and the quality and impact of external partnerships. Decisive action has been taken to strengthen senior and middle management and the governing body; but the quality of curriculum management remains too inconsistent. While provision has improved in many areas, the college is finding it difficult to improve pockets of underperformance. Inspectors did not agree that teaching and learning have improved to the same extent the college believed.
10. Key elements of the quality assurance arrangements are still at an early stage of development. The internal inspection process provides an effective health check on curriculum provision but needs further refinement to become fully effective. At college level, self-assessment is accurate and action planning is reliable. In contrast, curriculum self-assessment reports are not yet sufficiently self-critical, nor action plans sufficiently robust, to provide reliable quality improvement tools. However, staff demonstrate a strong commitment to continued improvement.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

11. Learners' success rates on long courses are just below the average for similar colleges, having increased significantly between 2006/07 and 2008/09 from a low base. Long course success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 have increased to the average for similar colleges and are particularly high at intermediate level, but are below at foundation level. The rate for adults, whilst improving strongly, is still below average, markedly at advanced level. Retention rates have increased notably; college data show a further increase in the current year. Below average pass rates have been a key factor in the lower success rates for adults, along with low retention at advanced level. In 2008/09, long course success rates increased in the majority of curriculum areas; but a minority remain below average. Success rates in vocational subjects are often higher than in GCE courses, where success rates have declined over time, particularly at AS level, from a previously stronger position.
12. The gap between the success rates for female and male learners has narrowed considerably. Learners with additional learning needs succeed at least as well as their peers. Groups of learners of minority ethnic heritage are too small to allow for a robust statistical analysis of their performance compared to other groups. School pupils on part-time courses for accredited qualifications achieve very high success rates. A high percentage progress onto full-time further education courses on leaving school.

13. Learners make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. On vocational courses, the majority make better than expected progress compared to their prior attainment. Learners on GCE A and AS level courses do not always fulfil their potential and under-perform, particularly in certain subjects. The college is keenly aware of this and has increased its focus on ensuring learners are challenged to meet or exceed expectations although it is too early to judge the success of actions taken for improvement.
14. Learners' achievement of key skills qualifications is too low. In 2008/09, too few completed their courses successfully, particularly at foundation level. Learners in the current year are making better progress in developing functional skills. Learners on vocational courses develop useful employability skills through working in areas such as the college's farm, stables or in the hairdressing and beauty salons. Most of these learners undertake work experience placements; however, very few learners on academic courses have similar opportunities available to them.
15. Success rates within the time allocated on Train to Gain courses have been too low, with little sign of improvement. In the current year, learners are making considerably improved progress and most are on track for a successful and timely completion of their qualifications. Apprentices achieve well and the majority complete their studies within the time allowed. Success rates have improved markedly over the last three years and are above the average for similar colleges. Rates are high on agriculture apprenticeships.
16. Most learners enjoy their studies, as shown by their satisfactory and often high attendance levels. They particularly enjoy the opportunities the college provides for personal and social development and appreciate the modern aspects of the college's accommodation. They feel safe and value the mutual respect that exists between staff and learners. Most learners show satisfactory awareness of the importance of using safe practices within work areas. Learners demonstrate particularly good health and safety practice in high risk areas, such as in animal care and equine studies.
17. Learners' knowledge of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles is increasing but is not always well supported by the availability in college of good value healthy food. They participate well in sports and fitness extra-curricular activities. Learners' role in contributing to the college and wider community takes various forms from promoting physical education in primary schools to numerous charitable events. It is strongest at the Walford campus. Learners' contribution to college life is not yet maximised through the student council or through learners' involvement in other decision-making forums.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

18. Almost all lessons are satisfactory and a minority are good or outstanding. The quality of teaching and learning varies across different subjects. Teaching is most effective in several vocational subjects but has been affected by unsettled staffing in a few other subjects. In the most effective lessons, teachers use a wide variety of creative teaching and learning methods and resources, which include the effective use of technology and the college's virtual learning environment. Theory lessons and practical learning are linked particularly well. Learners are highly motivated, participate actively in lessons, work to high standards and make good progress.
19. The college's self-assessment report identifies accurately areas for improvement in lessons including planning to meet individual learner's needs and in the use of learning methods and resources that challenge and engage all learners. In less effective lessons, learners often all work on the same tasks, using the same resources, regardless of their ability. These lessons are often too dominated by the teacher, with insufficient checking of learners' understanding and progress. The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons, particularly cultural diversity, is insufficient.
20. Arrangements for observing lessons to assure their quality have improved significantly and are comprehensive. Arrangements to observe part-time teachers of adult and community education are not yet fully in place. Feedback following observation to teachers is mostly accurate. However, some lessons are given too high a grade and feedback does not always contain sufficient evaluation of learning. Arrangements to ensure that teachers use action points from feedback to improve their practice are not yet well established. New peer group meetings, focused on teaching and learning, are providing regular and good opportunities for teachers to share good practice. Observers' feedback on the promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is too limited.
21. The quality of assessment varies considerably. Initial and diagnostic assessment of learners on full-time courses is comprehensive and identifies learners' support needs effectively. Good and accurate assessment is in place across the majority of courses and on employment-based courses. On other courses, however, assessment practice is satisfactory and in a minority of cases teachers do not pay sufficient attention to marking learners' work on time or in sufficient detail. The use of an on-line assessment recording system to record and monitor assessment is still at an early stage of development and is not yet used effectively.
22. The good curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners well. Provision for school pupils is particularly effective. The range of courses from entry to advanced level is broad, particularly in land-based subjects, and offers appropriate and well-used progression routes. Employment-based provision including distance learning courses is substantial. It serves employers' needs well, although their involvement in the formal evaluation of the provision is

underdeveloped. Adult and community provision is widespread across the north of the county.

23. Joint work with the Connexions service, schools and the local authority to reduce the number of disengaged young people is effective. The college offers good provision for learners with complex needs. Development of the functional skills curriculum is ongoing; but it is too early to judge its effectiveness. Enrichment provision for full-time learners is satisfactory. Work experience and educational visits are not available equally for all learners. Useful additional qualifications are offered for a few groups of learners. Careers guidance for the significant number of learners not seeking university places is underdeveloped.
24. The college's partnership work is highly effective, wide-ranging and central to its strategy. Examples include outstanding collaborative work with schools, very successful Diploma development, strong partnerships with community organisations and a local football league club. Learners' gain considerable benefits from collaborative activities, with staff at all levels contributing to their success.
25. Good information, advice and guidance are available to learners from their first contact with the college. Extensive effort, including careers advice events and taster days, ensures that learners are on a course which meets their needs and interests. Participation rates from local schools have increased significantly in the last two years.
26. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Full-time learners benefit from good personal care. However, support and guidance to help them achieve their full potential is insufficient. The new system for monitoring learners' progress is developing in usefulness, but is at an early stage of implementation. Its use and effectiveness in improving learners' performance are inconsistent. Target setting is often ineffective.
27. The provision of additional learning support is managed effectively, although evaluation of its impact is underdeveloped. Good specialist support, including the use of external agencies, meets a wide variety of learners' complex needs. Tutorial provision is well organised. The generic group tutorial programme covers personal and social development needs effectively, although it has limited inclusion of content to promote cultural diversity. Services such as financial support and counselling, are well publicised and their impact is monitored effectively. Support for work-based learners is good.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

28. The college has emerged from a demanding period of change during which difficult financial decisions have been made and many new systems introduced. Staff are starting to see the benefits, they speak highly of the open and informative style of management and morale is mostly high. The college has improved considerably following a steep decline in its effectiveness. Senior and

middle management have been strengthened; success rates have increased significantly; a much stronger focus on teaching and learning has been established and the college has become central to 14 to 19 strategies in Shropshire. The college is well managed within a challenging rural environment, balancing the conflicting demands of responsiveness and viability well.

29. The college has clear and appropriate strategic objectives which are reviewed annually, although not all of them have measurable targets. However, the lack of an overarching strategic plan makes medium and long term planning difficult. The quality of curriculum management remains too variable. Good curriculum management is reflected in the high outcomes for school pupils and the rapid improvements in Train to Gain provision. It is less effective in several curriculum areas which the college is finding more difficult to improve, and in adult and community education.
30. The governing body has been strengthened by the recent appointment of several new governors. Governors understand the college well and bring a good range of skills and experience, although the board lacks human resource expertise. They provide college managers with a good balance of support and challenge. Individual governors have constructive links with one or more areas of the college, though not all areas are covered. They complete a self-assessment, but this does not require them to evaluate their own contribution sufficiently. Learners' outcomes are reported to governors, but only at a high level of aggregation. Governors acknowledge fully their role in ensuring appropriate safeguarding checks are in place and have taken prompt action to rectify the previous errors and ensure that they are fulfilling their statutory role effectively.
31. The college's arrangements for protecting younger learners and vulnerable adults are inadequate. Learners' safety has a high profile within the college; the single central record is fully comprehensive and up-to-date. However, in a recent and much-needed review of safeguarding arrangements, the college identified that a small number of teachers had not been appropriately vetted. Although prompt action to undertake checks has taken place and interim supervision arrangements following risk assessment have been reinforced, at the time of inspection the college did not meet government requirements. Health and safety arrangements have improved significantly and are now good in almost all areas. Risk assessments are mostly thorough with learners increasingly involved in their completion; although one area has been slow to meet its responsibilities in relation to risk assessing work placements. Detailed records of complaints, health and safety incidents and safeguarding referrals provide a clear indication of effective action.
32. The college's monitoring of outcomes for different groups of learners shows no significant gaps in achievement. The college is inclusive and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities integrate well into the college community. Extensive transport provision ensures equal access to the land-based curriculum for learners living a considerable distance away. The single equality scheme is

supported by good action plans, although progress against these action plans is not reported to governors formally. Equality impact assessments have been completed recently but their findings are too superficial. Inspectors observed examples of learners' understanding of equality and diversity issues being promoted well within lessons. However, this is not yet typical and remains an area for development. The appointment of a senior manager to lead on equality and diversity is too recent to have had an impact.

33. Learners feel the college has become more interested in and responsive to their views. Learners have a variety of channels for making their views known, but not all are well used and learners receive insufficient feedback about the results of surveys of their views. Learners' views have influenced improvements to the food and prices in the canteen and some resource improvements to their courses. Mechanisms for obtaining feedback from employers are less well developed and neither learners nor external stakeholders have any formal input into the self-assessment process.
34. Comprehensive quality assurance arrangements have been developed and implemented. The college has improved the reliability of its performance data significantly and this is being used to better effect in self-assessment and performance monitoring. Internal inspections provide a rigorous examination of key aspects of course quality and inform the self-assessment process. However, the approach is too formulaic to produce entirely reliable judgements, particularly for areas with several GCE A and AS level subjects, and this year the subsequent action plans have not all been completed. Managers are unaware of some weaknesses in adult and community provision because it is not quality assured to the same extent as other college provision.
35. The quality of self-assessment varies. The college's self-assessment report is comprehensive, self-critical and reasonably accurate; although inspectors awarded a lower grade than the college for two aspects. Curriculum self-assessment reports are much less reliable due to under-developed evaluation skills; a tendency to over-state strengths and under-state weaknesses and action plans that are not always well matched to the identified areas for improvement.
36. Strong financial management has resolved the college's historic deficits. A detailed course costing mechanism has strengthened curriculum managers' appreciation of the financial implications of their decisions. Accommodation is good at the Oswestry campus. At Walford, current capital projects are remedying the areas most in need of improvement. Learning resources are generally good. The college has an active sustainability group comprising staff and learners. An extensive range of initiatives on the Walford campus for renewable energy and environmental conservation have won awards and the college has a strong focus on reducing energy consumption across the college. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Subject areas

Animal and equine management

Grade 2

Context

37. Courses are offered from foundation to advanced level. Of 367 learners, over half are studying full time, with the large majority on animal care courses. Just over half of learners are aged 16 to 18. Approximately 121 school pupils aged 14 to 16 attend the college for one day a week. Over three quarters of learners are female. Very few learners are from a minority ethnic group. Some 16 learners study employment-based courses.

Key findings

- Success rates are high on the national diploma in animal care, first diploma in horse care and on courses for in animal care for school pupils. Achievement by apprentices is satisfactory, although the timeliness of completion of qualifications for learners on equine courses is low. Attendance is very high, particularly as many learners have to travel considerable distances to get to college.
- Learners' awareness of health and safety is good. They use safe working practices consistently both in lessons and practical work, including routine duties. Risk assessments of work experience placements are thorough.
- Most lessons are good and develop learners' practical skills well. Teachers use a wide variety of creative learning activities. They promote a productive and enjoyable learning environment in which learners participate well and which promotes their confidence and self-esteem. Lessons are well prepared and, along with highly effective questioning techniques, reinforce learning and understanding effectively.
- Assessment is well planned and linked to teaching and learning effectively. Assessment tasks include a wide range of different activities supported by clear criteria for success. Feedback following assessment is prompt with spelling and grammatical errors corrected; however, a minority is lacking in detail and clear guidance on how learners can improve their work.
- Courses for school pupils promote excellent progression and help develop pupils' personal and social well-being. Teaching is particularly effective for school pupils. Learners are engaged fully in learning supported by excellent use of the resources.
- Teachers provide effective guidance and support. They are fully aware of individual learner's learning and personal needs and use this knowledge effectively in planning lessons and giving support. The use of learning support assistants and specialist equipment, such as hearing loops, are appreciated by learners with additional learning needs, and are highly effective in aiding their progress.

- A broad range of courses from foundation to advanced level offer good and well-used progression routes. The numbers of learners on courses has increased markedly, including those attending 14 to 16 courses. Animal care teachers promote employability skills effectively; however, the numbers of learners moving on to employment in the animal care industry on completion are decreasing.
- The promotion and use of sustainable practices through the curriculum are good, particularly on animal care courses. The animal centre is an excellent example of sustainable energy practices in action. Learners manage a successful breeding programme to replace livestock along with sustainable and cost effective management of feeding resources in the aviaries and stables.
- Strong curriculum management has resulted in a considerable improvement to success rates. Teachers appreciate the easy access to relevant data to help them to improve learners' retention and progression. Monthly meetings are used effectively to target those learners at risk of underperformance and ensure that extra support is put into place.
- Animal care resources are mostly of high quality; equine resources have been improved where possible but some are in need of replacement. Opportunities for learners to observe horses working in the indoor school are restricted by the lack of a viewing gallery. The insufficient number of paddocks for large animals in the animal care centre does not allow sufficient rotation arrangements.
- Staff contribute appropriately to the accurate self-assessment report and useful internal reviews of course performance. Quality assurance arrangements are effective. The focus of staff development on improving teaching and learning and, in particular, promoting equality and diversity in lessons is proving successful.

What does Walford and North Shropshire college need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of written feedback on assessed work by ensuring that it is detailed and contains helpful guidance on how learners can improve their work.
- Monitor the progress of apprentices rigorously, particularly related to completion of assessments within the planned timescale.
- Work with industry contacts to promote employment opportunities in animal care. Ensure that tutorials cover comprehensively career opportunities in animal care.
- Provide safe viewing facilities for learners on equine courses to observe horses working in the indoor school. Increase the number of paddocks available for large animal grazing to allow for a higher rate of rotation.

Leisure, travel and tourism

Grade 3

Context

38. Approximately 400 learners study full-time courses from foundation to advanced level. Around half of learners study full time. The majority of learners study courses in sport. Over three quarters of the learners are male. Very few learners are from minority ethnic groups. Additional qualifications, such as cabin crew and resort representative certificates, are offered for full-time learners. GCE qualifications are offered in physical education.

Key findings

- Learners' success rates are in line with the average for similar colleges. Success rates are high on the first diploma in travel and tourism and the national certificate in sport. Success rates are average on the national diploma in sport, largely because of below average retention rates. College data suggest that strategies to improve retention are beginning to prove effective.
- Lessons are at least satisfactory and some are good. In the best lessons, planning is detailed using a wide range of activities and good use of questions to develop knowledge and skills. Teachers are enthusiastic and have high expectations. Learners are motivated, engaged and make good progress. Most learning is supported by high quality resources.
- In less effective lessons, the planning and teaching of learning activities does not engage or interest learners effectively. Questioning often fails to stretch and challenge learners. Learners often make insufficient progress. Too many lessons are based solely on assignment work with too little variety of alternative teaching methods.
- Assessment is satisfactory. Some second year sports studies learners demonstrate high standards in their assessed work. Most teachers make effective comments on learners' work so that learners know what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. However, teachers often pay insufficient attention to the correction of learners' grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Monitoring the progress of learners varies in effectiveness. A new monitoring system has been introduced but not all teachers use it effectively. It has not yet had sufficient impact in ensuring that learners are making consistently good progress.
- The range of full-time courses is satisfactory. Learners have the opportunity to study a wide range of additional qualifications which strengthens their employability skills.
- Links with employers and schools are strong and productive. Education and guidance for progression opportunities and future careers are covered well in tutorials. Guidance is most comprehensive for learners wishing to move on to

higher education, although numbers progressing are low. Guidance is less effective for other options including employment.

- Learners receive good support and guidance, particularly through one-to-one tutorials. Learners say they feel safe and speak highly of the support they receive from staff. Reinforcement of health and safety in lessons is too limited. Risk assessments for trips and visits are adequate but work placements are not routinely risk assessed in advance of learners undertaking a placement.
- Judgements in the 2008/09 self-assessment report are overgenerous and do not match or take sufficient account of the evidence base.
- Inconsistencies exist in the extent of embedding of new quality assurance processes and monitoring systems across the staff team. The level of enthusiasm, energy and aspiration within teaching teams is mixed. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations for all their learners.
- The promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum is satisfactory. Learners and teachers are mutually respectful. The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is underdeveloped.

What does Walford and North Shropshire college need to do to improve further?

- Improve the retention of learners, particularly on two year courses, by monitoring their progress rigorously and taking prompt action to intervene to support learners at risk of underperformance or withdrawal.
- Improve lesson planning; increase the variety of activities; reinforce arrangements for regular checking of learning and raise the level of challenge and interest in order to engage and interest learners fully. Ensure that spelling, grammar and punctuation are corrected in marked work.
- Establish rigorous self-assessment and ensure that judgements are based on the objective evaluation of evidence. Ensure that systems and processes are applied across the area consistently and rigorously.
- Support teachers through training and the sharing of good practice, to maximise opportunities to promote equality and diversity in lessons.
- Ensure that rigorous arrangements are in place for the risk assessment of all work placements.

Information about the inspection

39. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the college's deputy 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) or other funding bodies, 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.
40. 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 across the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Walford and North Shropshire 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; ASL: adult safeguarded learning.

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	ASL
Approximate number of enrolled learners						
Full-time learners	1,376		1,091	284		
Part-time learners	4,230	360	153	1,456	1,041	1,220
Overall effectiveness	3	-	3	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3					
Outcomes for learners	3	1	3	3	3	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?	3					
How safe do learners feel?	2					
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3					
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	3					
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?	1					
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3					
Leadership and management	3	-	3	3	2	4
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2					
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	3					
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	4					
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

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