

Wakefield College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130549

Name of lead inspector: Tim Gardner HMI

Last day of inspection: 21 May 2010

Type of provider: General Further Education College
Wakefield College
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Wakefield
West Yorkshire
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Address:

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Information about the provider

1. Wakefield College is the only general further education college located in and serving the Wakefield Metropolitan District and adjacent communities. Wakefield College has three large campuses: two in Wakefield and one at Glasshoughton in Castleford in the north east of the district. These three campuses cater for 16 to 18 year olds and adult learners, both full and part time. Higher education (HE) programmes are also delivered at all three campuses. The college provides a sixth-form centre specialising in GCE A levels and GCE AS levels and other advanced level and professional programmes for school leavers from across the district, at the two Wakefield campuses.
2. The college has close and productive links with its partner schools, and provides college-based taster and bridge programmes through a number of projects for learners aged 14 to 16. The college also accepts a significant number of 15 year old pupils who are in danger of exclusion from school, on full-time early college transfer programmes, and has considerable success in ensuring their achievement and progression.
3. In 2008/09, the college had 10,921 enrolments compared with 10,580 in 2007/08.
4. Wakefield District has a population of 321,600, of whom 2.3% are from minority ethnic communities, and is ranked the 74th out of 345 most deprived local authority areas in England. It is the second most deprived district in West Yorkshire after Bradford. Twenty-nine of the district's areas are ranked in the 10% most deprived in England, 12 fall within the 5% most deprived and one within the 1% most deprived.
5. Educational achievement in the Wakefield District is improving and GCSE attainment figures for 2008 show that 70.7% of Wakefield school pupils gained 5 GCSE A* to C passes. However, this reduces to 51.3% when English and maths are included. This is the largest discrepancy between headline pass rates and pass rates including English and maths in Yorkshire and the Humber. There remains a significant number of 16 to 18 year olds classified as 'not in education, employment and training' (NEET) at 10.2% compared to 6.7% nationally and 7.9% in West Yorkshire.
6. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Askham Bryan College, York
7. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - Enterprise Solutions Training Ltd
 - Birkwood Plant Training
 - Fleetmaster OSS
 - A&R

- BEST Ltd
- BTCV
- MPC North
- Rathbone
- Chevin Housing

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	26 part-time learners
Further education (16 to 18)	2,313 full-time learners 697 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	288 full-time learners 2,613 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	2,163 learners 361 apprentices

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	1
Equality and diversity	1

Subject Areas	
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	3
Construction, planning and the built environment	2
Information and communication technology	1
Sport, leisure and recreation	2
Business, administration and law	2

Overall effectiveness

8. Wakefield College is a good college with an outstanding approach to working with partners, safeguarding, and equality and diversity. Success rates for learners have improved each year for the last three years for both adults and learners aged 16 to 18. Last year, the success rate for GCE A levels was very high at 95%. Success rates for adults are satisfactory. The quality of the provision, overall, is also good. This includes the quality of teaching and learning, the range of programmes offered, how the college works with partners and the quality of care, guidance and support.

9. The college's capacity to make sustained improvement is good. The college has successfully addressed most of the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.
10. The leadership and governance of the college are particularly strong. The clear strategic objectives enable the college to establish a good position to achieve its key goals and give it a stable position to support future projects and ambitions.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates have improved significantly in nearly all areas of the college provision. For 16 to 18 year old learners the success rates are good. Success rates for adults on long courses are satisfactory. Success rates on AS levels are good and at A level they are outstanding. Apprenticeship programmes for 16 to 18 year olds have improved and are now satisfactory, and they are very good for adults.
- The actions taken to improve learners' economic and social well-being are outstanding. The targeted and focused approach taken by the college is contributing significantly to raising local aspirations. This prepares learners well for employment or progression to further or higher education.
- The result of college actions to make learners feel safe is outstanding. College sites are safe, welcoming and well controlled. All learners report they feel safe and recognise the positive approach taken by the college in this area.
- Teachers are well qualified and benefit from excellent staff development to improve their skills. The college is involved in innovative research and development in teaching and learning and has national recognition for its work in the use of information and learning technology (ILT) to improve teaching. Teachers make excellent use of ILT to enhance the experience of learners.
- The college maintains well-established arrangements for observing teaching and learning. However, the observation records focus too much on what the teacher does without analysing and evaluating sufficiently the impact on learners' progress and standards.
- The range of courses offered by the college is good. All curriculum areas provide well-established progression routes. The college responds well to the needs of employers. It works well with employers to develop bespoke provision and delivers training flexibly to suit business needs.
- Enrichment opportunities are good. A large number of learners benefit from visits and residentials to develop their personal or work-related skills. A particular feature of the college is the scale and quality of the international links it has established to expand the learners' experience.
- Work with partners to develop the curriculum and respond to local needs is outstanding. A good example of this is the work undertaken within the 14-19 partnership to reduce the proportion of young people not in education or

training when they leave school. The college is also highly responsive to, and works well with, partners on regeneration projects within the local area.

- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good information and guidance to ensure they are on the right course. Personal support for learners is good and the specialist support given to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. The setting of targets for learners, against which the college measures their progress, is satisfactory.
- The Principal and governors provide very strong strategic leadership and direction which have ensured that the college is very well positioned to secure its future ambitions.
- The promotion of safeguarding is outstanding. The college rigorously applies all the relevant statutory requirements. All college departments monitor very closely all of the relevant aspects of the comprehensive policies and procedures.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The college is highly socially inclusive, makes all efforts to remove barriers to learning and contributes significantly to local regeneration.

What does Wakefield College need to do to improve further?

- Monitor and evaluate the impact of strategies to improve success rates in order to ensure that they maintain, and further improve, the current rates and to address areas where progress is slower.
- Increase the focus of observations in order to improve further the quality of teaching and learning, especially the impact of teaching on learners' progress and the standards of their work produced.
- Ensure that learners have more specific and challenging targets across all aspects of their learning programme so that staff and tutors can more accurately measure their progress.
- Revise and improve the arrangements for the analysis and evaluation of management information, particularly at course level, to inform actions for improvement. Strengthen the arrangements for monitoring the impact of actions for improvement on learners.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the level of support that they receive
- the friendly atmosphere in the college
- the help they receive from their tutor
- that teachers really listen to them
- the passionate way staff encourage them to do their best.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the cost of food and access to healthy choices
- more space in the locker rooms
- class representatives in all areas
- more space for socialising
- better access to computers.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the working relationship with college staff
- the professionalism of the staff
- the way the college keeps them informed
- the interest the college takes in their business
- the excellent communication.

What employers would like to see improved:

- access to more refreshments during evening sessions
- the parking arrangements on some campuses
- more formal progress reports on learners' progress and performance.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement Grade 2

11. The college's capacity to make sustained improvement is good. The college has successfully addressed most of the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. It has taken effective action that has resulted in good improvements in attendance and retention rates. Overall success rates have improved for both young people and adults.
12. Self-assessment is satisfactory. The college's assessment of its strengths and areas for improvement are broadly accurate. The observation of teaching and learning is well managed. A focused observation programme, supported by targeted staff development, has reduced the number of unsatisfactory lessons.
13. The governors and Principal have set ambitious but realistic targets for further improvements, and progress towards meeting them is closely monitored. The college has significantly increased its partnerships with employers and enhanced its reputation by providing flexible and responsive training. It continues to improve the opportunities for learners to give their views and influence the college's priorities.

Outcomes for learners Grade 2

14. Over the last three years, success rates have improved in nearly all aspects of the college's provision. On full-time provision for 16 to 18 year olds on long courses these have improved and are now high. On short courses for 16 to 18 year olds, they are outstanding. The success rates on long courses for adults are now satisfactory. On adult short courses, the college has maintained the high success rates. The success rates for AS levels have improved and these are now high. Success rates for A levels are outstanding in 2008/09.
15. The success rate for 16 to 18 year old apprentices has improved and is satisfactory. The rate of those who achieve within the planned timescales is high. For the adult learners, the apprenticeship success rates have improved and are very high. The adult apprentice success rate within the planned timescales have also improved each year. These are outstanding.
16. On Train to Gain programmes, success rates for Skills for Life intermediate and advanced level courses are good. The key skills success rates are satisfactory across all three key skills areas. In all areas, portfolio completion rates are very high regardless of the success rate in the final examination component.
17. Retention is improving in many areas, but in some it remains below the national average. Learners develop a good range of vocational, academic and life skills that prepare them well for progression to further education, higher education and employment.

18. Learners enjoy their classes and participate well in both individual and group activities. They are making good progress in their studies at the college. Behaviour in all observed classes was excellent. Many tutors in vocational areas have industrial experience and develop good levels of workplace skills.
19. Learners achieve broadly in line with their expected level based on their starting point on joining the college. In some subjects students make better than expected progress whilst in others they make slightly less progress than might be expected. Value added scores place the college broadly in the average range with some areas performing higher, such as sociology, and some slightly lower.
20. The college is outstanding at supporting learners to improve their economic and social well-being. It takes highly effective action to prepare learners for employment and progression to higher education. Learners on intermediate level programmes follow a preparation for working life course with high success rates. Performing arts learners present their performances in external venues and publicise their work to high professional standards.
21. The college is outstanding at ensuring learners feel safe at college. Extensive policies and procedures are followed meticulously to make sure learners are not put at unnecessary risk. Well-controlled premises are welcoming but kept safe by the effective systems to prevent unauthorised entry.
22. Learners receive good support to help them make informed choices about healthy eating, sexual health and substance abuse. Managers have established effective partnerships with the NHS to set up a well-being clinic at the Wakefield campus which will be staffed by NHS specialists. The counsellor and the college chaplain provide emotional support for learners in need. College staff are provided with a wide range of staff development to promote their well-being.
23. Working with the local authority, the college employs four youth workers who are increasing learners' participation in student union and local authority democratic groups. College learners are involved in the youth parliament and youth council and through these organise joint trips for learners and members of the community. A number of subject areas, including hairdressing, health and social care, and catering, support learners to raise funds for charity. Learners on the NEET programme developed a project to raise funds for 'help for heroes'.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

24. Teaching and learning are good. They are outstanding in ICT, good in business and sport, and satisfactory in engineering and construction. In the better lessons, teachers use a good range of activities and learning materials that challenge learners. In these lessons learners are attentive and motivated, and they make good progress. In ICT lessons they make very good progress. Teachers use ILT exceptionally well in a number of subject areas, including sport, construction, ICT and business. The college is involved in innovative

- research and development to support improvements in teaching and learning and has national recognition for its work on using ILT to enhance teaching and learning.
25. In the less effective lessons, as the college identifies in its self-assessment report, teachers' use of questioning techniques is not sufficiently effective in checking that all learners are making sufficient progress. Well-planned staff development is in place to resolve this.
 26. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgements relating to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Arrangements for observing teaching and learning are well established and lead to improvement. Significant resources are dedicated to the process, which is appropriately risk-based, giving higher priority to improving satisfactory and lower performing teachers. However, teachers judged to be good or better do not have a formal action plan to improve. Observations do not provide sufficient evaluation of the impact of teaching on learners' progress and standards.
 27. Teachers are well qualified and receive very well-planned support to continue to develop their skills. Professional development is linked to the college's strategic objectives and is focused appropriately on improving teaching and learning. Teachers are well supported to achieve teaching qualifications and higher level degrees relating to the development of the curriculum. Good support is provided by advanced practitioners and subject learning coaches to help teachers to improve and the college provides a highly effective guidance manual for teachers that includes common formats for schemes of work and lesson plans. However, not all teachers use these fully to record strategies to promote equality and diversity.
 28. Initial assessment is carried out promptly and leads to timely support to help learners improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Support is provided in learning centres for individual learners and small groups. Outcomes from initial assessment are used well to ensure that learners enrol on an appropriate level main programme and key skills. However, more needs to be done to ensure that all teachers use this information effectively to plan learning activities that motivate and challenge all learners.
 29. Assessment of marked work is generally good, providing learners with clear guidance on what they need to do to develop their skills. Detailed assessment of written work and correction of spelling and grammar help most learners, including those on key skills courses, to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Arrangements for internal verification are robust. Progress reviews and assessment on work-based learning courses are mostly well planned; however, in hairdressing, assessment is not sufficiently regular.
 30. The range of courses offered by the college is good. Progression routes are well established to ensure learners can enter the college at a level appropriate to their needs and move on to intermediate and advanced work in all curriculum

areas. The college also offers higher education programmes in many curriculum areas. Provision is delivered within local communities as well as on main college sites.

31. The college responds well to the needs of employers. It has gained national awards for its work with employers, especially its work within the logistics sector. In addition to the Train to Gain and apprentice programmes it delivers, it also works effectively with employers to devise bespoke provision to meet specific needs. The range of provision within the apprentice programme is satisfactory and the college has identified this as an area for further growth.
32. Enrichment opportunities are good. A large number of learners benefit from visits, residentials and other opportunities to develop their personal or work-related skills. A particular feature of the college is the extent and quality of the international links it has established, which are used well to expand learners' experience. An interesting range of sports activities is well promoted throughout the college.
33. The college's work with external partners to review its curriculum and deliver courses that meet local need is outstanding. It is a key participant in developing strategies to meet the needs of learners aged 14 to 19, and in regeneration projects within the local area. It works successfully with partners to target communities in areas of social or economic disadvantage. An example of this is the significant work undertaken to reduce the number of young people not in education or training after leaving school.
34. Learners receive good information, advice and guidance before they start at college. There are effective systems to monitor attendance. Learners have regular individual meetings with their tutor and personal and welfare support is good. The setting of targets for learners, against which their progress is monitored, is satisfactory. Attendance at group tutorials has improved as a result of work to improve them by better engaging learners' interest. Specialist support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. Learners receive effective careers education and guidance and learners wishing to progress to higher education speak highly of the help they receive. In some work-based learning provision, where reviews take place every 10 weeks, there is less opportunity for ongoing guidance and support.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

35. The Principal provides strong strategic leadership and direction. She has set out a clear vision, well understood and supported by governors, managers and staff, with five strategic aims that focus on high aspirations for learners that contribute to the regeneration and prosperity of the city and region. The Principal and senior managers make a considerable contribution to key local and regional strategic partnerships which is beginning to ensure that the college's provision is recognised as responding to local and national priorities. The college has developed a positive relationship with the local authority and metropolitan

- district council. The Principal holds regular staff briefings and staff appreciate her open, consultative and supportive management style.
36. Overall success rates have shown a trend of improvements. Where previous performance was poor, senior curriculum managers have taken swift action to implement changes based on rigorous operational plans that have led to significant improvements in learners' outcomes. Progress towards achieving key curriculum targets is closely monitored by the executive team and reported to governors.
 37. Curriculum management is good. The management of work-based learning has recently been reorganised and is broadly satisfactory, with the exception of the small programme in hairdressing where the poor coordination of assessment is impacting on learners' learning.
 38. The college values its staff. Opportunities for staff development are excellent. To support the college's aim for excellence, senior leaders have established a development programme for aspiring and senior managers so that they can perform their roles more effectively. Staff have the opportunity to take part in health and well-being activities.
 39. Governors are highly effective. They have good local knowledge, a wide range of professional experience and are committed to supporting the college to succeed. They fully understand the demarcation between governance and management. Governors are fully involved in strategic planning and set challenging targets which they scrutinise through a pertinent set of performance indicators. They are fully supportive of the college's commitment to its local communities and employers and recognise the challenges that this can bring. Governors are provided with clear monitoring reports, briefings and regular training sessions that keep them abreast of national and local priorities, the range of college provision and its role in the community. They pay particular attention to learners' experiences and their success. The Board has taken steps to be more representative of the learner body and the local community.
 40. The college's approach to safeguarding is outstanding. The college fully complies with all statutory requirements regarding safeguarding. The human resources (HR) department controls all recruitment activity. All relevant staff have undergone 'safe recruitment' training. A trained HR representative participates on all interview panels. All employment offers are subject to checks of all relevant documents and no staff start work until all relevant checks are completed and recorded.
 41. Staff complete appropriate risk-assessments for all relevant roles. The HR department maintains the college Single Central Register and this contains all the required and relevant details regarding CRB and list 99 checks as well as all risk-assessment requirements. All staff inductions cover safeguarding and the policy and safe working practice guidance. All staff complete level 1 basic awareness training and all staff must pass this. Named responsible staff have

completed higher level training. The local safeguarding board monitors and endorses all training. Governors receive annual training and all governors accept responsibility for safeguarding.

42. The college's approach to equality and diversity is outstanding; the college is highly inclusive. Equality and diversity are extremely well promoted and embedded throughout the college. The Principal chairs the equality and diversity committee. This committee monitors the single equality scheme and action plan, which covers the legislative requirements for race gender and disability. The college has prioritised impact assessment for those policies that affect learners.
43. Senior managers provide strong leadership in ensuring the college provides an inclusive and harmonious organisation. The college aims to raise the aspirations and achievement of all learners, including those from areas of high economic deprivation, through strong partnerships and improving learners' economic well-being. A trend of improving success rates indicates that the college is making good progress with this aim. There are now no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of learners.
44. Equality and diversity are not always highlighted in all session planning or in lessons. However, the college has strategies to address this. An advanced practitioner for equality and diversity works with teaching staff in promoting effective learning strategies and managing challenging behaviour. Learners value the positive role models of successful former students who are invited as visiting lecturers and guest speakers at award ceremonies. In sports, the equal representation of men and women teachers and the introduction of women's football and wheelchair rugby have been positive developments.
45. The college makes good use of learners' views when seeking ways to improve the provision. Learners provide their views through surveys, for which there is a high response rate, consultative committees and through the Student Union. In a number of curriculum areas, course team representatives attend course team meetings to feed back the views of learners. However, this is not yet fully embedded in all areas of the college.
46. At course level, management information relating to learner performance is not analysed effectively and targets are not sufficiently challenging or clear about how they will bring about improvements in the provision or learner outcomes.
47. Financial management is very strong. The college monitors costs carefully and provides robust financial monitoring reports that enable the Principal and governors to make sound decisions. Staff appreciate the open and fair allocation of resources that focuses on benefits to learners. Given the improving success rates, sound investment in resources and its sound financial management, the college gives good value for money.

Subject areas

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 3

Context

48. Currently there are 262 full-time learners and 317 part-time learners on programmes in engineering, of whom 13% are female. The inspection focused only on the employer-responsive programmes. These consist of 110 learners who are work-based learning apprentices. Of the work-based learners, 69 are in engineering manufacturing and 41 in motor vehicle. All learners are working towards recognised industry qualifications. The college also provides a schools programme for 14 to 16 year olds in motor vehicle which has 45 learners.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. However, the success rates for the apprenticeship framework in motor vehicle and advanced apprenticeship in engineering are low. The success rate within agreed timescales for the apprenticeship framework in engineering is high. Timely success rates for other programmes are satisfactory and improving. Apprentices' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.
- Apprentices develop effective industry standard skills and knowledge, taught by teachers who are ex-practitioners with direct industry experience.
- Teachers embed health and safety in all engineering activities, from initial briefings to best practice procedures for different processes, tools and equipment. Learners say they feel safe and the college is a safe and supportive environment. However, there is insufficient health and safety signage in the motor vehicle workshops, especially on entering the area from outside.
- The quality of provision overall is satisfactory. In a good lesson, the teacher used a range of teaching techniques to engage and motivate learners. Effective use was made of ILT with interactive software supported by clear handouts. However, some lessons are less engaging and the teachers do not use directed questions to check learners' understanding.
- The sharing of good practice between teachers is insufficiently developed. Assessment and verification are accurate and fair. Work is clearly marked and returned promptly and supports learners to improve their work.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Initial advice and guidance ensure that new entrants are on the right course and also determine the appropriate levels of support. However, as personal tutorials are not a part of an apprenticeship programme, there is insufficient opportunity to provide for continued advice and guidance.

- The range of provision is satisfactory, offering apprenticeship National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and a range of technical certificates, with the opportunity to progress to HE.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Meetings and communication are effective and managers and staff use management information routinely in planning and in progress reviews. There is a comprehensive programme of staff development with examples of teaching staff updating their skills in industry. The staff have confidence in their managers.
- The area has strong and effective links with industry. Employers with apprentices appreciate the good communication and continuity of contacts and they have trust in Wakefield College. The college is responsive and flexible, adjusting schedules to meet business demands. Staff feed back individually to employers, but the college does not provide a formal forum for employers to meet and provide input into programmes.
- Engineering manufacturing is well equipped with computerised manufacturing machines and a wide range of manual lathes and millers. The motor vehicle and motor cycle sections are equipped with an MOT suite and an appropriate range of equipment located in a purpose built centre. However, for some activities, there is limited space and areas become cramped.
- Learners work well together regardless of their background or ethnicity; teachers actively promote this through paired and team working. Learners show respect for each other and support each other. However, teachers do not plan sufficiently to meet the needs of individual learners in the classroom.

What does Wakefield College need to do to improve further?

- Revise and develop systems to review more regularly the progress made by apprentices in engineering and motor vehicle in order to ensure that learners succeed within the agreed timescale.
- Ensure there is appropriate health and safety signage in the motor vehicle and motor cycle workshops, both on entry and throughout, so that everyone entering is aware of the potential hazards and activities are better controlled.
- Develop systems to provide apprentices with more frequent opportunities to have access to guidance and support to include both pastoral and course issues.
- Develop strategies to ensure teachers meet the needs of all individuals during taught sessions.
- Review systems to engage with employers and consider a dedicated forum for them to input into course and programme development at curriculum level and to ensure provision continues to meet local business needs.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Grade 2

Context

49. The college offers construction craft courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 in bricklaying, electrical installation, plumbing and wood occupations. It also offers Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national certificates and diplomas in construction and civil engineering. Of the 383 learners, 202 are full time, 122 are adults and 48 are aged 14 to 16. There are 110 learners on work-based programmes.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high on most significant courses, the in-year retention rate has improved, and it is now high. The timely framework completion rates for apprentices and for advanced apprentices are satisfactory.
- The standard of learners' work is satisfactory and sometimes good. In one practical lesson in bricklaying, learners were able to fully interpret drawings correctly and construct a good one-brick thick walling using English bond. Others produced well-structured reports that have good technical content, accurate calculations and good diagrams and there is evidence of effective use of ILT.
- Although teaching and learning overall are satisfactory, the better teachers use a good range of activities to engage learners and sustain their interest. Learning technologies effectively support teaching and learning. In a lesson on moments of area, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard well to introduce the concept and to apply it to the design of structural members.
- A small number of teachers do not use every opportunity to check on learners' understanding and they do not engage all learners. Some give insufficient attention to extend the knowledge of the most able learners and to support the less able.
- Assessment and internal verification are good. Assessment is fair and accurate. Teachers' feedback on learners' written work is mostly detailed and constructive and identifies the ways in which learners can make progress. For apprentices, on-site assessments are thorough, regular and carried out by qualified college-based assessors. Internal verification processes and record keeping are good.
- The range of enrichment activities is good. For example, learners on the national diploma in construction delivered a presentation on environmentally friendly technologies to learners at a construction college in Kazakhstan. Construction learners have also been involved with the design, costing and the building of a ramp for disabled access at a local school.

- Support and guidance provided for learners are good. Teachers provide good support to learners in class. College-based co-ordinators also provide good support to the apprentices at their workplace.
- Leadership and management are good. Curriculum managers introduced a BTEC national diploma in civil engineering to run in parallel with the current national diploma in construction. They introduced a higher national certificate to provide learners on national certificate and national diploma courses with a progression route within the college.
- Managers set challenging targets for success and retention rates. Success rates improved significantly in 2008/09. Communication is improving and meetings are productive, although staff do not discuss performance indicators at team meetings. The curriculum self-assessment report is broadly accurate in identifying most strengths and areas for improvement. Action plans for improvement are comprehensive.
- The co-ordination and management of work-based learning are good. Operational plans to monitor the progress of work-based learners are good.
- Safeguarding is good. Health and safety are strongly emphasised during induction programmes, in college workshops and in the workplace.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

What does Wakefield College need to do to improve further?

- Create strategies and systems to improve the quality and standard of learners' practical and written work by further developing a more rigorous monitoring system and improving the range of feedback provided.
- Ensure that teachers engage all learners in the lessons to check their understanding and pay sufficient attention to extending the knowledge of the more able and supporting the less able.

Information and communication technology

Grade 1

Context

50. The subject area has 360, mainly 16 to 18 year old, learners enrolled on full-time programmes; these include Foundation Diploma for IT Users, Diploma in Digital Applications, first and national diplomas in ICT, Advanced Level Diploma and GCE AS and A levels in ICT and applied ICT. In addition, 240 adult learners are enrolled on part-time courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Qualifications for these learners include Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT), European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) and college certificates. Around 150 of the part-time learners are on distance-learning courses. Fifteen 14 to 16 year old pupils from one school study a 'StepUp ICT' qualification at the college.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Success rates have improved in nearly all courses, particularly those with the higher learner numbers, and are now extremely high. On full-time GCE A-level and AS-level ICT courses, success rates are high and learners make the progress expected of them from their GCSE results.
- Teachers ensure that learners have a good understanding of theoretical and practical aspects of their courses. Learners value their key skills lessons and, in particular, the skills developed in their communication lessons support their written assignment work. Tutors assist learners who have English as their second language by correcting their spelling mistakes and use of language.
- Learners are increasingly developing relevant knowledge and understanding of the computer industry. Some foundation level learners are working in groups on an enterprise unit designed to raise money for a charity of their choice. Other learners use the 'Blog' facility on the college's virtual learning environment Blackboard in an innovative way to provide feedback to the learners.
- Teaching and learning are very good. In lessons, tutors support learners to make very good progress but do not always sufficiently direct or focus their questioning to check or improve learners' understanding. During one-to-one support sessions, tutor questioning is more effective. In workshop sessions there is insufficient use of specific targets to stretch or challenge individual learners.
- Staff make innovative use of ILT to support learning. One example is by the connection of a video camera to the interactive white board. This effectively demonstrates the installation of hardware components into a computer to large groups of learners. Tutors use very good monitoring software well to keep learners on task and to aid communication with individuals. They use the college's virtual learning environment extensively.

- Tutors plan the vocational assessments well to encourage and help learners to achieve higher grades. They use a good progress tracking system on vocational courses to monitor learners' achievement of criteria and their current grades. Tutors give good clear feedback to learners, telling them what they must do in order to improve that piece of work.
- The college offers a very wide range of appropriate courses, including new diplomas at both foundation and advanced level. The curriculum provides progression and a choice of courses with different content and type of assessment. Courses for 14 to 16 year olds provide a smooth progression route from school to college.
- Care, guidance and support are good. In many lessons, very good planning for the use of in-class support workers allows learners with specific support requirements to make good progress. Tutors frequently provide additional support sessions for learners. These include sessions to help learners to catch up following absences or improve their grades.
- Leadership and management are good. Staff take up very wide ranging and appropriate continuing professional development opportunities and they share new skills with other staff effectively. These include information on examination board requirements to support learners to achieve and the effective use of the latest software packages that will equip learners with up-to-date skills and enhance their employment prospects.
- Course teams are actively involved in the course review process and the monitoring of action plans. However, many targets for improvement in course and programme quality improvement plans are non-specific or insufficiently challenging.
- Staff are trained and aware of child protection requirements. The learners make good and appropriate use of the internet for research. There are on-screen reminders regarding acceptable usage of the computers. Tutors use very good software effectively to monitor and block inappropriate use of the internet.
- Overall, the area self-assessment report is accurate but quality improvement plans are not sufficiently detailed. Staff have implemented actions from the plan and there have already been improvements in some areas.

What does Wakefield College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure individual learner targets are set for each workshop style lesson and that subject tutors regularly monitor these against learners' target grades to increase the number of high grades and check that learners are making progress relative to their starting point.
- Continue to emphasise the development of tutors' questioning techniques to ensure that all learners' understanding is checked, and that teachers use the answers given to develop further questions and discussion in order to achieve the stated learning goal effectively.
- Ensure targets in quality improvement plans are specific and challenging to continue to improve the performance in this area.

Sport, leisure and recreation

Grade 2

Context

51. At the time of the inspection, 263 learners were enrolled on full-time courses. Of these, 253 are 16 to 18 year olds and 10 are adults. Twenty three learners are enrolled on part-time courses, most of whom are adults. A range of sport-related pathways is available. These include: sport and exercise science, sports development, coaching and fitness, outdoor activity, performance and excellence and exercise and fitness. Of the current cohort, 81% are male and only 5% are from minority ethnic groups.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. They make good progress in their learning. Success rates are high on the introductory certificate in sport and the national diploma in sport. On the intermediate certificate in sport, they are outstanding.
- Learners make good progress in lessons. They develop the practical skills and knowledge that contribute towards the development of their economic and social well-being. Second year learners on national diploma in sport and exercise science courses are achieving high grades and progressing well in terms of meeting university requirements.
- Learners on the NVQ2 exercise and fitness course are developing the skills required for employment in the fitness industry. The assessment of learners' work is generally thorough and detailed and provides effective feedback to support learners in improving their work.
- Success rates, however, are low on the NVQ level 2 instructing exercise and fitness, the advanced national certificate in sport, and GCE AS-level physical education.
- Learners feel safe and their compliance with health and safety working practices is good. Health and safety and risk-assessment are prominent features within the curriculum. Teachers reinforce this particularly well in lessons and improve the learners' understanding. They make learners very aware of the required industry safety standards.
- Learners develop an increased awareness and understanding of issues that relate to their own health and well-being. The athlete's lifestyle, personal fitness and nutrition are key elements within the curriculum and teachers promote these well. The tutorial system provides opportunities to explore wider issues such as alcohol and substance abuse, body image and sexual and mental health.
- Teaching and learning are good and develop an excellent rapport between teachers and learners. Good questioning techniques to check learners' understanding are a feature of many lessons. Learners are generally attentive and hard working in lessons, producing a good standard of work. The less

successful lessons are characterised by poor planning and preparation, particularly in terms of meeting the individual needs of learners.

- Teachers use information technology well to both support and enhance learning and to monitor and record learners' progress. Some staff have developed excellent resources for use through interactive whiteboards but do not systematically share these. Staff and learners have access to an excellent range of laboratory and technical equipment to support their learning.
- Assessment is fair and rigorous. Learners benefit from thorough feedback on assignment work, with clear indications of what they need to do to improve grades. The tutors' detailed annotations to learners' work provide specific guidance on areas for improvement. However, they do not identify and correct all instances of poor spelling or grammar.
- The range of provision to meet the needs of learners is outstanding. The newly introduced Athlete Development Programme has clearly had a significant impact on attracting highly motivated sportsmen and women to the college. Additional programmes provide opportunities to achieve qualifications valued within the industry, such as the National Pool Lifeguard qualification and the Community Sports Leader award.
- Industry links are strong and improving. Staff have developed effective partnerships with clubs in football and rugby league and with gyms, fitness clubs, schools and the local authority. These have both facilitated work-experience opportunities and significantly enhanced the curriculum.
- Support for learners is good. Individual tutorials are regular and significantly help learners progress. Learners value the fact that tutors are supportive and always easily accessible. Individual learning plans are poor, with weak target setting and inconsistent reviewing of targets. Additional learning support is not well planned and coordinated within lessons.
- The academy director and programme manager make good use of management information to identify gaps in achievement. Data show that steps taken to narrow the gap between genders have been effective. Summer booster sessions prepare learners better for the challenge of particular courses. New pathways within the level 3 National Certificate now attract more highly motivated learners.
- Staff promote the safeguarding of learners very effectively. All staff have undertaken basic safeguarding training. The college has fostered a welcoming and non-threatening environment at Thornes Park Campus.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good and tutors embed these factors in many lessons, even though they do not always make it explicit in their lesson plan. The profile of staff promotes good gender role models. A range of successful strategies promotes activities to under-represented groups.

What does Wakefield College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates on programmes identified as performing less well and ensure that learners continue to make better progress in terms of their starting point.
- Ensure there is better sharing of good practice in relation to lesson planning and the use of the technology resources to support both teaching and learning as well as to ensure that staff meet the needs of all learners.

Business, administration and law

Grade 2

Context

52. Some 256 learners follow full-time vocational courses in business, administration, accounting and law at foundation to advanced level. Almost all of these learners are aged 16 to 18 years. Another 357 learners, mostly adults, are studying part-time vocational courses, including accounting, management and marketing. Some 257 learners are undertaking work-based learning, 19 on apprenticeships and 238 on Train to Gain programmes.

Key findings

- Success rates on full-time courses have risen steadily and they are now satisfactory. Train to Gain and NVQ success rates are high, particularly in customer service and administration. Success rates on management and professional courses are satisfactory. Retention and attendance are good.
- Learners enjoy their courses and speak highly of the tutors. They are gaining good skills and developing increased confidence. Those on vocational courses speak of increased job satisfaction and understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- Progression rates for full-time learners to further and higher education and employment are good. They now receive improved careers advice. There is good progression to higher levels within NVQ and management and professional programmes.
- Learners feel safe at the various college sites. Schemes of work and lessons develop and reinforce positive attitudes to equality, diversity and safeguarding issues. Some observed lessons were particularly successful, with one demonstrating the impact that poorly constructed application forms can have on discrimination in terms of equality and disability.
- Teaching and learning are good. In the better lessons, tutors challenge learners, who contribute very well by sharing experiences and drawing from up-to-date, interesting examples and enjoyable activities. In one session, intermediate level learners made excellent, well-prepared presentations to fellow learners, demonstrating good IT and personal skills.
- The less good lessons fail to capture positive learner contributions during group discussion and poor use is made of the available technology such as interactive whiteboards. Assessment procedures are good; tutors return work promptly and with appropriate comments.
- The range of provision in full-time administration and professional, NVQ and Train to Gain programmes is good. The work-based learning assessors are particularly responsive to the needs of both employers and employees. Learners enjoy excellent relationships with tutors who maintain contact through email

and telephone. Partnerships with employers have contributed to improving progression opportunities.

- Guidance and support are good, ensuring that learners are placed on the most appropriate programme. Tutors support learners who are absent through the college Blackboard system. Specialist support staff and tutors provide good support to learners in meeting their additional learning needs. The college has successfully integrated a profoundly deaf learner into its programmes and she enjoys her studies.
- Leadership and management are good. Curriculum managers use comprehensive course reviews to create action plans to improve provision. They hold regular and constructive staff meetings. Staff feel well supported, have good access to professional development opportunities, and have had good training in a range of equality and diversity issues.
- Action plans are effective in improving provision, raising attendance and developing new courses and systems; for example, by introducing business and finance to replace the BTEC business course and the introduction of the use of IT-based learner tracking and monitoring systems. However, some action plans do not set measurable, time-bound targets

What does Wakefield College need to do to improve further?

- Develop the skills and techniques of staff to ensure that they make most effective use of group discussion during lessons and are able to make full use of available technology in classrooms.
- Review the system used to develop quality improvement action plans at subject and course level to ensure that managers and staff are able to monitor, track and record progress towards achieving their targets.

Information about the inspection

53. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven additional inspectors, assisted by the provider'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.
54. 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)

Wakefield 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	9868	0	6872	2996	0
Part-time learners	3009	398	0	0	2611
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	3	2
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?	1				
How safe do learners feel?	1				
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	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				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	1				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	1				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	1				
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?	3				
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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