

Leeds College of Building

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130542

Name of lead inspector: Bob Busby HMI

Last day of inspection: 12 November 2010

Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Leeds College of Building is a medium-sized general further education college that specialises in construction education and training. It is the only specialist construction college in England. It is based on seven main sites including satellite sites with Leeds City Council plus delivery on local school sites. Most learners are white males. The highest proportion of learners come from the Leeds area, but the remainder come from a much broader catchment area. Many of the learners come from inner city wards, which are amongst the 10% most deprived wards in the country.
2. Provision is offered from entry level through to higher education, with the majority of learners on programmes at foundation and intermediate levels. The college offers courses for full-time and part-time learners in engineering and manufacturing technologies, construction, planning and the built environment, information and communication technology and preparing for life and work. The largest number of enrolments is in construction, planning and built environment.
3. The Skills Funding Agency funds the training which includes apprenticeships and programmes funded through Train to Gain. Funding for 16-18 year olds is through the Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA – Education Leeds). The college also delivers its own bespoke specialist training courses. Government funding represents approximately 71% of the college's business.
4. The inspection took into account all of the college's provision. Courses in construction planning and the built environment, engineering and manufacturing technologies and in preparation for life and work were inspected in depth. Information and communication technology programmes were not directly inspected; evidence from these programmes contributed to the leadership and management judgements.
5. The locality includes areas which are disadvantaged, and the unemployment rate at 9.4% is slightly higher than that for Yorkshire and Humber (9.0%) and the national rate of 7.9%. In 2009, approximately 45.9% of pupils achieved five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, below the 50.7% national average. The area has high levels of ethnic diversity. According to the 2001 Census, 89.2% of residents are White British, compared with 91.7% for Yorkshire and Humber, and 87% for England. The next largest ethnic groups are Asian or Asian British (4.5%).
6. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - ASSETSkills (Facilities Management Apprenticeships, Surveying & Maintenance Apprenticeships and Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) (Certificate/Diploma in Facilities Management)
 - Building Engineering Services Training (BEST) (Apprenticeships in Building Services Engineering)

- Calderdale College (ESF Upskilling, short courses and NVO's Level 3 to 5)
- City Training Services (Construction and Building Services Engineering Apprenticeships)
- Construction Skills (Construction Apprenticeships)
- Education Leeds (support funding for school provision)
- Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) (Diploma in Maintenance Management for Estates teams)
- Joint Training Limited (JTL) (Electrical & Plumbing Apprenticeships)
- Leeds City Council (Construction training for unemployed young people and adults)
- Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) (support for unemployed young people and adults)
- Local schools (for 14-16 young apprentices and BTEC programmes)
- Skills Funding Agency (SFA) (Offender Learning for adults)
- Wakefield Metropolitan District Council (Construction & Building Services Engineering Apprenticeships)
- Warwickshire College (Construction Apprentices)
- West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network (progression to HE and support for learners with threat of redundancy)

7. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:

- Accent Housing (Offender learning)
- Build, Huddersfield (Offender Learning)
- Groundworks Leeds (Offender Learning)
- Groundworks Wakefield (Offender Learning)
- Joseph Priestley College (Offender Learning)
- Leeds re-build (Offender Learning)
- Wakefield & District Housing (Offender Learning)
- West Yorkshire Probation Service (Offender Learning)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	388 part-time learners
Further education (16 to18)	1,005 full-time learners 475 part-time learners

Foundation learning	477 full-time learners 380 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	127 full-time learners 1,857 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	1,363 learners 770 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	2
Equality and diversity	2

Subject Areas	Grade
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	2
Construction, planning and the built environment (Learner Responsive provision)	2
Construction, planning and the built environment (Employer Responsive provision)	2
Preparation for life and work	2

Overall effectiveness

8. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Leeds College of Building (LCB) provides good quality education and support for its learners. Outcomes for learners are good, with rising trends in success rates until 2009/10 when they declined. Pass rates for most courses are above national rates, although there are variations in performance across different areas. Success rates on long qualifications excluding A level (AS and A2 qualifications), have improved slightly over three years and are just above national rates for learners aged 16 to 18 and well above national rates for adults. Following a recessionary period in the construction industry retention rates at the college are low. However, the college has recognised this and has introduced effective strategies to support learners who are 'at risk'. It is now making good progress in improving retention rates.
9. Both the quality of provision and leadership and management are good. LCB has shown that it has good capacity to improve. The provision in all curriculum areas inspected was judged to be good. Teaching and learning are good but the

arrangements to quality assure teaching and learning are insufficiently robust. The monitoring of action plans following observations of teaching and learning is an area for improvement. Teaching in practical workshop lessons is particularly good and there is a strong emphasis on successful skills development. The promotion of equality and diversity is good, as are arrangements for ensuring that learners are safe. Self-assessment processes are comprehensive and result in a detailed and accurate self-assessment report. However, there is still insufficient participation by learners in the self-assessment process. The quality of accommodation and specialist resources to support teaching and learning is outstanding. Learners have good access to information learning technology (ILT) to support their learning. Partnership working is particularly strong throughout the organisation.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Pass rates are very high on most courses. The college is aware that retention rates are an area of concern and has taken some positive actions to help address this issue. In-year retention in 2010/11 has improved when compared to the same period in 2009/10. Learners produce good practical work and develop high levels of skill and competence.
- Learners feel safe and value the arrangements in place to ensure their safety. Tutors and support staff work extremely well together to promote and reinforce health and safety in workshops and to ensure that learners work safely. Safeguarding practices are good. Learners are well informed about safe use of the internet and cyber bullying.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is particularly good in practical workshop sessions. In the better lessons, teachers use a good range of strategies, techniques and practical activities that challenge learners and promote high standards of work. Learners are attentive and motivated, and they make good progress. Many teachers use ILT well.
- A small number of less effective theory sessions takes place where the pace is slow and teachers do not use questioning sufficiently to check learning and to ensure that students fully understand the topics. Some classes are too teacher focused and do not sufficiently engage the learners in managing their own learning. Some miss opportunities to make full use of the available ILT.
- Well-established arrangements for observing teaching and learning generally support the college's drive to improve the quality of teaching. Systems and processes are in place to moderate and standardise the judgements and grades from observation. However, the college over grades some teaching sessions and does not sufficiently ensure that post-observation actions are completed.
- The college completes initial and diagnostic assessments promptly leading to timely support for learners. It works closely and effectively with learners, their parents and specialist agencies to arrange specialist support. The college makes a significant investment in providing learning support workers, particularly in workshops with larger groups.

- Assessment of marked work is generally good, providing learners with clear guidance on what they need to do to develop their skills. Assessment of vocational work is rigorous and meets all awarding body requirements. Arrangements for internal verification are robust. Assessment on work-based learning is good and progress reviews support learners effectively.
- The college is excellent at meeting the needs and interests of users. The range of courses is wide and provides very good opportunities for learners to progress between levels, from foundation level to higher education. The college offers a broad provision, with many specialist trades, and has established excellent links with schools and more recently with universities to develop a cohesive curriculum.
- Partnership arrangements are excellent. Many learners benefit from visiting speakers who deliver inspiring sessions and testimonials through their own experiences as former learners. Partnerships with employers are very strong and bring many benefits including specialist equipment, availability of work experience, educational visits, sponsorship for award events and joint project working.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Initial assessment of literacy and numeracy is good. Learners with additional learning needs make similar progress to their peers. Support and teaching staff work well as a team to provide very good pastoral support for learners and to reinforce health and safety in workshops and to help maintain classroom discipline.
- Governance is outstanding. Governors provide excellent support and a good level of scrutiny and challenge to senior managers. They have a wide range of expertise and knowledge of industry and they monitor college performance well. They are highly committed to the college's success and are fully involved in setting and monitoring strategic targets. The college is working towards improving the influence of student governors on strategic planning.
- Operational plans and quality improvement measures are aligned closely to the strategic plan and business planning processes are thorough. Strategic planning is good and clearly guided by the need to meet the needs of employers and the local community. Curriculum and programme management are good. Planning has resulted in improved progression routes for learners.
- High quality resources and accommodation are managed and used well to ensure maximum benefit to learners. Workshop and specialist equipment available to learners in engineering and construction are outstanding.
- Arrangements for the promotion of equality and diversity are good. The college has successfully taken action to reduce the differences in outcomes between different groups of learners and to increase participation by under-represented groups including women, students from minority ethnic communities and young people not in education, employment or training. However, there is insufficient promotion of equality and diversity during teaching and learning sessions in some curriculum areas.

What does Leeds College of Building need to do to improve further?

- Continue to rigorously monitor the college's retention improvement plan and closely monitor attendance and punctuality to ensure that more learners remain and succeed on their programme.
- Revise the observation of teaching policy to include standardised procedures to ensure that areas for improvement identified during the process are effectively monitored and evaluated so that the quality of teaching continues to improve. Ensure that moderation and standardisation activities that form judgements on the quality of teaching and learning are realistic and accurate.
- Strengthen methods to gather and analyse the views of students, particularly students from sites other than the main site. Further encourage student contributions to focus groups and liaison committees and ensure more effective completion, analysis and use of questionnaires.
- Extend the promotion of equality and diversity through teaching and learning to ensure more contextualisation in lessons so that all curriculum areas promote equality and diversity more effectively.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- making friends
- that the course is what was expected
- the friendly and very helpful tutors
- being treated like an adult
- the chance to return to learning and improve work skills
- understanding how functional skills help with vocational courses and contribute to employability
- understanding the need for restrictions on access to the internet
- the strong focus on health and safety at induction and throughout the course
- high levels of support in classes and workshops.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the level of stimulation and interest provided in theory lessons
- the organisation at the start of courses
- difficulties with the intranet
- the range and availability of healthy eating options in some canteens
- the promotion of external support available on some courses/sites.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the high level of responsiveness of the college to employers' needs
- professional and experienced staff who understand the industry
- the excellent advice and guidance given by staff
- the way the college looks after learners.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the amount of formal communication on learners' progress.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

10. The college has demonstrated good capacity to improve. Challenging but realistic targets are set for planned improvements. Success rates have improved and they are good for apprentices and Train to Gain learners. The subject inspection grades awarded show that the college has maintained its good provision since the last inspection. The college has made good progress in rectifying key areas for improvement. Target setting for learners, the promotion of enrichment, the use of management information at all levels, the promotion of equal opportunities and the inconsistent divisional performance, are all improved. Governors and senior managers have given high priority to accelerating the rate of improvement to learners' retention. The clear vision of how this is to be achieved is supported by a detailed plan.
11. Quality improvement is good. Self-assessment is rigorous, largely accurate and inclusive of the views of staff, governors and employers. Regular and challenging performance reviews of subject areas by managers have resulted in several improvements and quality improvement actions are effective.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

12. Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates on long courses for 16 to 18 year olds improved steadily and are now comparable with national rates at foundation and intermediate levels. Advanced level success rates for 16 to 18 year olds are above national rates. For adults on long courses, success rates have improved steadily over the last three years and are above national rates at intermediate and advanced levels, and comparable with national rates at foundation level. Pass rates are above national rates at all levels and for all ages.
13. Retention rates on long courses for students aged 16 to 18 have declined over the last three years and are below national rates. They are low at foundation and intermediate levels, but above national rates at advanced level. The retention rates for adults on long courses improved slightly over three years and are comparable with national rates. The rate is low at foundation level but is above national rates at intermediate and advanced levels. College data for 2010/11 indicate that the in-year retention of current learners has improved when compared to the same period in 2009/10.
14. Success rates for female learners are slightly lower than those for male learners aged 16 to 18 but are comparable for adults. Success rates for learners from Asian or Asian British backgrounds are good for both age groups. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 from Black British backgrounds are below national rates.

15. Success rates for learners who have declared a learning difficulty or disability are slightly lower than for those who have not declared a learning difficulty or disability in both age groups.
16. Success rates are high on Train to Gain programmes for both male and female learners and the performance of learners with a learning difficulty or disability is similar to that of their peers.
17. Overall success rates for apprentices are above national rates, including for apprentices completing within the agreed timescale. College data indicate that these improved further in 2009/10.
18. Learners develop good practical skills and progress well through their practical tasks as they gain in confidence. The quality and standard of learners' work in construction is very good. Learners apply and demonstrate good work related skills. Train to Gain learners build on their good occupational skills. Apprentices extend their background knowledge and practical skills well. However, the quality of learners' written work is variable. Some learners have achieved notable individual success in regional and national skills-based competitions.
19. Learners, including vulnerable adults, feel extremely safe and secure in college and appreciate the college's arrangements to ensure their safety and well-being. A very high priority is given to health and safety and as a result all learners have excellent awareness and consistently adopt safe working practices. All learners and staff are aware of College expectations and understanding of abuse, discrimination, bullying and harassment and what action should be taken.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

20. The quality of provision is good. Overall, teaching and learning are good in all the subject areas inspected. Teaching is particularly good in practical workshops. In the better lessons, teachers use a good range of strategies and techniques that challenge learners and promote high standards of work. Learners are attentive and motivated, and make good progress. Workshops are well equipped with industry standard tools, and specialist workshops in engineering are outstanding. Many teachers use ILT well. In some workshops they use interactive boards and the college virtual learning environment (VLE) to display videos of the activity that learners are completing. The VLE is comprehensive and provides excellent resources to support teaching. An increasing number of learners make good use of the system to access course work and resources. Teachers are well qualified and the college provides a range of training and development events to continue to develop their skills.
21. Relationships between staff and learners are good and contribute significantly to the productive atmosphere that pervades the college. Support for learners is readily available from teachers, tutors and support workers.

22. The small amount of less effective teaching is mostly in classroom theory sessions where the pace is too slow and the use of questions does not sufficiently check learning. Lesson plans occasionally lack detail and do not cater for more able learners. A few teachers miss opportunities to make full use of the available ILT.
23. LCB has well-established arrangements for observing teaching and learning which generally support the college's drive to improve the quality of teaching. They include systems and processes to moderate and standardise the judgements and grades. However, the college did not identify over grading of some teaching sessions. Procedures for the initial stages of the process are comprehensive but do not sufficiently cover post-observation activities to ensure that managers systematically manage the agreed areas for improvement. Currently, faculties take a wide range of actions for improvement but these are not sufficiently co-ordinated and consistent across all departments.
24. The college completes initial and diagnostic assessments promptly, leading to timely support to help learners improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Support needs are identified early, in many cases well before the start of the programme. This enables the college to work closely and effectively with learners, their parents and specialist agencies to arrange for appropriate support to be in place. The college makes a significant investment in providing in-class learning support workers.
25. Assessment of marked work is generally good, providing learners with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. Assessment of vocational work is rigorous and internal verification is robust. Assessment on work-based learning programmes is good and progress reviews support learners effectively.
26. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers is excellent. The range of courses is wide and provides very good opportunities for learners to progress from foundation level to higher education. The college offers very broad provision across many specialist trades. The college has well established excellent links with local schools and Leeds Metropolitan University and more recently with other local universities to develop a cohesive curriculum. Courses offered reflect local employment needs very effectively. The college is responsive to the needs of employers and learners, especially when learners are at risk of redundancy.
27. LCB plays a leading role working with schools across Leeds and has expanded the curriculum for learners aged 14 to 16. The provision is well co-ordinated and flexible to meet the needs and interests of schools and learners. LCB recognises that the number of learners progressing onto higher level programmes, although improving, is low and it has introduced a wide range of appropriate initiatives.
28. The college provides a good and expanding programme of additional activities. Learners participate in a range of sport, recreational and other cross-college activities. Participation in enrichment activities within the college has increased

significantly. Good use is made of external partners to enable learners to access high quality facilities, for example fitness clubs and rugby grounds. Learners are encouraged to suggest new activities.

29. The college has excellent partnership arrangements through its successful employer engagement strategy. Many learners benefit from educational visits to employers' premises, work experience opportunities and visiting speakers who, as former learners, deliver inspiring testimonials. The college's partnerships with employers and local and national companies are very strong and bring many benefits including donations of specialist equipment and excellent materials for practical activities. Some employers have supported the refurbishment of two classrooms at Millwright Street as part of partnership programmes. Classrooms and workshops contain many examples of visual displays and trade literature which contribute to a stimulating learning environment.
30. The college plays a prominent role in reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training. It has also developed effective partnerships with industry sector lead bodies and a wide range of local institutions involved in adult education. LCB is effectively working with Leeds City Council and the Leeds Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) at sites located in or near areas of social deprivation. Since 2009, the college has worked effectively with 255 individuals from the Leeds area, who were either not in education, employment or training or on Job Seeker's Allowance or other benefits.
31. Care, guidance and support are good. Learners enjoy coming to the college and feel well cared for. Initial assessment of literacy and numeracy is good. Learners with additional learning needs make similar progress to their peers. Induction programmes ensure a smooth transition to the college. A broad range of information, advice and guidance is available and presented in high quality literature. The college web site is helpful, interesting and informative. Good use is made of college 'open days' to attract new learners.
32. The college has recognised that, following a recessionary period in the construction industry, retention rates are low and it has introduced effective strategies to support learners who are 'at risk'. Support and teaching staff work well together to provide very good pastoral support for learners. Early intervention and detailed case reviews are improving retention for current learners. Excellent use is made of support staff to reinforce health and safety in workshops and maintain classroom discipline. Learners with physical needs receive very good support, which enables them to access the college.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

33. Governors and senior managers provide very effective strategic leadership and direction. The principal and executive team have created a supportive culture focused sharply on raising aspirations and meeting learners' needs. Strategic planning is good and clearly guided by the needs of employers and the local community. Curriculum and programme management are good. The college

- manages its finances particularly well to support its planned improvements. Resources, including accommodation and technologies, are used very effectively to enhance learning opportunities. Operational and quality plans are aligned closely to the strategic plan and business planning processes are thorough. Planning has resulted in improved progression routes for learners.
34. Governance is outstanding. Governors provide excellent support and a good level of scrutiny and challenge to senior managers. They are highly committed to the college's success and are fully involved in setting and monitoring strategic targets. They monitor college finances particularly well. Governors have a wide range of expertise and industrial knowledge. The implementation of policies on equalities and safeguarding legislation is scrutinised closely. Governors challenge performance outcomes rigorously and are particularly diligent in assessing risk including for the development of a new building. The college is working towards improving the influence of student governors on strategic planning.
 35. Safeguarding arrangements are good and comply with current legislation. All staff and governors have criminal record bureau checks. A governor and a designated senior manager have responsibility for safeguarding. All staff have attended training in safeguarding. Rigorous attention is paid to ensuring that learners understand and conform to safe working practice. All learners and staff are protected well from harassment, bullying, and discrimination including those based with employers and on external sites. Additional information is available for employers on behaviour indicating bullying at work. Learners, including vulnerable adults, feel safe and secure in the college. Learners from schools feel particularly safe. Learners are well informed about safe use of the internet and cyber bullying.
 36. Arrangements for the promotion of equality and diversity are good. The college regularly analyses equality and diversity impact measures and actions taken have closed the gap in achievement between different groups of learners. Successful initiatives have resulted in increased participation by female learners and students from minority ethnic communities. The college's contribution to community cohesion is good and includes themed food days and a 'kick out racism' football tournament. LCB deals promptly with complaints and maintains detailed records of actions taken and responses from the complainant. It successfully widens the participation of learners from vulnerable groups, including young people not in education, employment or training. The equality and diversity group monitors the effectiveness of college initiatives and actions to avoid discriminatory practice. Training in diversity and the prevention of 'hate crime' is offered to learners through tutorials. There is insufficient promotion of equality and diversity through teaching and learning in some curriculum areas.
 37. Procedures for listening to, and acting upon, the views of employers are very good and highly developed. Employers actively help develop the curriculum particularly in the construction industry. Procedures for gathering the views of learners are less fully developed. The corporation receives feedback directly from learners through a student liaison committee which is attended by senior

managers. The views of students are taken seriously and collected through focus groups, questionnaires and tutorials. Many improvements come from suggestions by learners, for example the range of healthy foods available in refectories. The college is extending opportunities for student governors to become more involved in influencing its strategic development. LCB recognises the need to improve ways of obtaining students' views away from the main sites and the need to summarise these views more systematically.

38. The self-assessment report contributes well to improving the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. Management information is accurate and data are well used to monitor performance. Judgements in the report are largely accurate. Course reviews are evaluative and action plans have realistic targets. Progress against actions in the annual operating plan and the self-assessment is monitored rigorously. A few actions to improve quality are not implemented fully in all areas. There is over-grading of some lessons by observers and actions to improve teaching are not managed systematically.
39. Value for money is good. High quality resources are used well and managed to ensure maximum benefit to learners. Efficient and flexible use is made of accommodation to provide a healthy, safe and welcoming environment. Outstanding financial planning and controls ensure accountability and financial stability. Learners make good progress and develop good skills, and those that are retained achieve highly. The college has recognised the need to strengthen initiatives to improve retention and in the current year has enhanced support for, and scrutiny of, learners at risk of leaving early. The college promotes sustainability through several initiatives including the purchase of synthetic plastic made from waste products, purchasing schemes, solar heating, passive infra-red lighting systems and the careful labelling of waste to avoid contamination and to aid recycling.

Subject areas

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Context

40. The provision in engineering includes electrical installation, wood machining, furniture crafts, sign making and computer aided design. Currently 382 learners are enrolled on these courses of whom 74 are studying full time and 308 are taking part-time programmes. A further 143 learners are undertaking work-based learning apprenticeships at intermediate or advanced levels.

Key findings

- Success rates on part-time courses and those for apprentices completing in the expected timescales at intermediate level are high. Success rates for computer aided design courses at intermediate and advanced levels have been consistently high for the last three years. However, for full-time learners at intermediate level and advanced apprentices, success rates are low. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. College data indicate that the in-year retention of current learners has improved.
- The standard of practical work is good. Learners develop good personal and practical skills in college workshops and in the workplace. Teaching and support staff encourage the highest of standards and learners work with care and precision within all practical activities. Learners achieve skills awards locally and nationally. Apprentices develop useful personal skills through regular contacts with customers on site and with parts suppliers.
- Learners feel safe in the college and in the workplace. College staff and employers ensure that a very high priority is given to health and safety and as a result all learners have excellent awareness of health and safety practices. Personal protective equipment is provided for most learners and costs are subsidised for those who want to purchase their own.
- Learners have a satisfactory understanding of health and well-being related topics such as healthy eating options and climate change. On and off-the-job training gives learners a good understanding of the importance of disability and discrimination legislation.
- Teaching, learning and training are good. Lessons are well structured, using varied activities and good learning resources. Teachers plan carefully to meet learners' different abilities. Teaching areas are well equipped and there is good use of information and communication technology. There are outstanding specialist workshops and modern equipment for sign making, wood machining and electrical installation.
- Teachers are patient and supportive of learners. In a few lessons, theoretical subjects are insufficiently linked to practice and there is too much reliance on computer based presentation systems. In some cases insufficient attention is given to accurate matching of tasks to the level and stage of the course. A very

few teachers make ineffective use of questions to test knowledge and understanding.

- High quality resources including specialist equipment, in workshops and within the workplace are used effectively to support teaching and learning. Teaching and support staff are suitably experienced and qualified. Staff development is effective in ensuring that teaching staff are suitably qualified. However, the use of the college's VLE is insufficiently promoted to ensure that all learners make use of the good range of materials available to support their studies.
- Assessment practices are well understood, varied and well planned. Assessment is linked carefully to teaching and training. Learners value the highly supportive approach of teachers and assessors that builds their confidence and self-esteem. The standard of assessed work is mostly high but feedback following assessment sometimes lacks detail and is satisfactory rather than good.
- Programmes meet the needs of learners and employers well. The college offers a good range of courses involving specialist skills including sign making and wood machining as well as electrical installation. Learners are able to study at a good range of levels with progression opportunities available up to NVQ level 5. Partnerships with employers are very strong, particularly in electrical installation and bring many benefits including specialist equipment and work experience opportunities. College-based learners are given effective work experience opportunities.
- Learners' additional support needs are suitably identified at induction and additional learning is sensitively provided individually or within the classroom. The provision of additional learning support in workshop activities is good, particularly in ensuring that all learners meet targets for the completion of work activities and in the promotion of, and adherence to, health and safety regulations. Course progress tutorials and termly college reviews are effective in supporting learners both personally and in relation to their course of study.
- Managers are highly effective in supporting improvements in success rates and in teaching and training. Courses are well organised. Internal communication is effective and staff work well together. Appropriate actions have been taken to maintain the high success rates on part-time programmes. Apprentices' progress reviews have been improved to include the promotion of equality and diversity.
- Self-assessment is inclusive and generally accurate and most key improvement actions needed have been identified. Plans to improve the quality of provision are clear and include regular monitoring. Staff involvement in self-assessment and quality improvement is good. However, the views of learners are insufficiently sought and as a result are not used to inform self-assessment.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory and understood by learners and apprentices. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively through the curriculum and within the college environment. College based learners' awareness of equality and diversity issues is satisfactory.

What does Leeds College of Building need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the success rates on full time programmes and apprenticeships at advanced level by close monitoring of attendance and retention of learners.
- Support teachers to make more effective use of question and answer techniques and presentations within lessons to better engage learners in the learning process.
- Make more use in self-assessment of learners' views to improve the quality of provision and provide more feedback on the actions taken as a result of these views.
- More effectively promote the wide range of good support materials available on the college's VLE so that all learners are able to access revision and course materials and keep on schedule with their studies and assessment materials.

Construction, planning and the built environment (Learner responsive provision)

Grade 2

Context

41. The college offers a broad range of courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels in carpentry and joinery, plastering, painting and decorating, bricklaying, general construction operations, wall and floor tiling, roofing and plumbing together with technician provision in building services engineering, civil engineering, construction and site management. At the time of inspection 1,112 full-time and 734 part-time learners were attending courses. A further 236 pupils aged 14 to 16 attended from local schools.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Pass rates are high. Key skills pass rates are also high at 93%. Outcomes for 14 – 16-year-old learners are good. Success rates are satisfactory and have been broadly at or above the national average for the past three years. In contrast, success rates on foundation level plumbing and advanced part-time construction technician courses are low and in 2009/10 declined to well below the 2008/09 national average.
- Punctuality and attendance are satisfactory. Following a recessionary period in the construction industry, on many courses retention is low and has declined on average by 4% over the last two years. However, in-year retention is much improved when compared to the same period in 2009/10. Many learners achieve a good range of additional qualifications which improves their employment prospects.
- The quality and standard of learners' work in construction is very good. Learners apply and demonstrate good work related skills and many work on tasks and projects beyond the expected level. Portfolio and assignment work is generally of a good standard and is well presented.
- Students feel very safe in college and in their work placements. Through regular discussions and during training, teaching staff ensure that learners consistently adopt safe working practices in workshops; this is routinely reinforced in the workplace by placement providers.
- Learners make a positive and valued contribution to their communities by undertaking live construction projects which support their occupational skills development in a real working environment. For example, learners working on a heritage skills project to refurbish a church acquired good first-hand experience of using modern design technology alongside the use of traditional materials and techniques.
- Teaching and learning are good. In the majority of lessons learners make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of construction which effectively underpins their practical training. Generally teachers use a wide variety of methods to interest and engage learners. However, some theory

sessions are uninteresting and lack pace and learners remain passive for long periods.

- Assessment and verification are very good. They are well planned and provided flexibly. Feedback to learners is good which helps them to improve and make good progress. Internal verification arrangements are particularly rigorous and are effective in ensuring that high standards are maintained and that qualification awarding body requirements are met.
- Teaching resources in construction are outstanding. Classrooms and workshops offer a stimulating learning environment. They contain a comprehensive range of information and learning technology equipment which is used effectively. Workshop facilities are excellent and allow the development of full-scale construction activities. This helps learners gain the work skills required by employers.
- The range of provision in construction is outstanding. Learners have a wide choice of subjects and levels relevant to their career and employment aspirations. Employers' needs are very effectively met by providing bespoke training to respond to their specific training requirements. Recent developments in renewable technologies benefit the provision to further expand learners' knowledge and skills.
- The college has developed extensive partnerships with many local and national employers and also construction industry sector lead bodies. These have improved the industrial relevance of the provision and progression opportunities for learners at all levels.
- Support for learners is good. Procedures to identify learners with additional support needs are effective. Learners receive good individual support from their teachers and other support staff to complete their work to a good standard. Effective links with external bodies provide specialist support where required. Arrangements to identify learners at risk of leaving their programmes early are comprehensive.
- Course management is good, and, by using an effective self-assessment and corresponding development plan, managers have a clear focus on improving the quality of the provision. Staff use their knowledge of the construction sector to ensure that courses are at a standard that meets industry requirements. Managers promote high standards of behaviour which has contributed to learners' personal development and success.

What does Leeds College of Building need to do to improve further?

- Rigorously monitor the college retention improvement plan to ensure that more learners stay on programme. Improve the learner tracking systems to ensure that punctuality and attendance improve.
- Ensure that theory teaching is made more interesting and that the needs of all learners are met.

Construction, planning and the built environment (Employer responsive provision)

Grade 2

Context

42. The college offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, plastering, roofing, sign writing, wall and floor tiling, building services, technician and management courses. Train to Gain On-Site Assessment and Training (OSAT) programmes are offered in construction crafts, glazing and site management. At the time of inspection, there were 502 learners on apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships and a further 595 on Train to Gain programmes.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates are high for apprentices and advanced apprentices. The rates for completion within agreed timescales on Train to Gain programmes, particularly at advanced level, are also high. Current in-year retention on Train to Gain is high but is low on apprenticeships.
- The standard of learners' practical work is good. Learners develop good vocational skills. Train to Gain learners build on their good occupational skills. Apprentices extend their background knowledge and practical skills well. Practical work undertaken in the college is mostly good and increases learners' employability. Learners progress well through their practical tasks as they gain increased confidence.
- The quality of learners' portfolios is satisfactory. They incorporate a diverse range of evidence that meets awarding bodies' requirements. Learners demonstrate a suitable understanding of underpinning knowledge. However, very few portfolios are well-structured and organised. Where photographic evidence of the work carried out is presented, it often lacks the necessary narrative describing the work.
- Learners feel safe and protected. Health and safety is strongly emphasised in college workshops and in the workplace. Learners adhere to health and safety requirements, carry out risk assessments prior to undertaking practical work and are aware of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulation. In workplaces, health and safety are well covered in reviews and assessments. Site inductions on health and safety are rigorous.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teaching inspires learners through the effective use of technology in the classrooms and in college workshops and good use is made of the college's VLE. Teachers skilfully check learners' progress and understanding through the use of focused and probing questions. In the better lessons, teachers use a good range of activities and link theory to practice well. However, most lesson plans are generic and not subject specific.
- Assessment practice is good. Assessments are well planned, thorough, regular and use a diverse range of evidence. They are carried out by qualified and experienced teachers and assessors. Feedback to learners is constructive.

Internal verification practice is rigorous. Reviews are carried out in a timely manner and include measurable and timely targets. On Train to Gain programmes, employers are insufficiently involved in the reviews and assessment process and learners and employers are not given copies of the documentation.

- The range of courses is extensive. Construction courses meet the needs of all learners and employers. The college is very responsive. Views of employers are regularly obtained and employers appreciate the support that the college gives learners.
- Support for learners is very effective. The initial assessment for all apprentices and Train to Gain candidates is good and identifies areas for development in learners' numeracy and literacy skills. Learners are well supported in the college by teachers and learning support assistants and, through the on-site reviews, by advisors and assessors. One-to-one support for candidates is very good. Significant extra support is given to candidates with learning difficulties.
- The co-ordination and management of work-based learning and OSAT training are good. Operational plans to monitor the progress of work-based learners and OSAT candidates are good. The work-placement coordination for full-time learners is good.
- The use of resources is effective. There is an adequate number of qualified assessors and advisors. The utilisation of technology (ILT, VLE and specialist computer software) to support learners is good. College workshops are spacious and fully equipped.
- Self-assessment reports are comprehensive and accurate. They identify most strengths and areas for improvements. Improvement plans incorporate realistic actions to bring about the intended improvements.
- Actions taken to address areas for improvement following teaching and learning observations are not systematically carried out. There are no systems in place to address the issues that arise from teaching and learning observations. There is no written procedure to show how teachers in need of support would receive it in order to improve their teaching.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, lesson plans do not sufficiently identify or cover equality and diversity issues.

What does Leeds College of Building need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of learners' portfolios by including a check list of contents to help learners to organise and structure them in a more meaningful manner.
- Ensure that teachers integrate equality and diversity in their lessons and include prompts in their lesson observation documentation to encourage this aspect.
- Ensure that all learners and employers receive copies of the completed on-site assessments and reviews in order for them to deal with any issues that may arise in time for the following visit.

- Establish a procedure to systematically address issues arising from teaching and learning observations and to help teachers in need of support.

Preparation for life and work

Grade 2

Context

43. The college provides flexible literacy and numeracy courses leading to entry and foundation level qualifications for long term unemployed and young people not in education, employment or training on construction courses. In addition functional English and maths qualifications from entry to intermediate level are integrated into construction and engineering courses across all college sites. At the time of the inspection 1,296 learners were enrolled on functional English and mathematics courses and 593 were working towards key skills qualifications.

Key findings

- Overall pass rates are high for all qualifications. However, retention rates are below the 2008/09 national average and especially low for entry and foundation level literacy and numeracy qualifications.
- Learners recognise the value in developing English and mathematics skills to improve their employment opportunities. They generally enjoy these lessons and demonstrate their understanding of the importance of improving these skills to complement and support the achievement of vocational and work skills.
- Overall learners' work is of a good standard. Assessment is effective with valuable written feedback which supports learners' progress and helps them to improve their grades. Learners are expected, and actively supported, to maintain well-organised and presented portfolios and assignments. Assessment and verification procedures are comprehensive and lead to positive external verification outcomes.
- Initial and diagnostic assessments for functional skills are comprehensive. Opportunities to identify further specialist support are embedded into the enrolment, induction and initial delivery of learners' programmes to help to identify support needs at an early stage. However, initial and diagnostic assessments are not always fully utilised for setting specific targets to help learners achieve their full potential.
- Learners, including vulnerable adults, feel safe and secure in college. They respect the restrictions applied to internet access. Themes for assignment work and projects in class positively encourage learners to make healthy lifestyle choices. Fundraising events support the development of mathematical skills and contribute to the local community.
- Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are well planned with clearly identified learning outcomes that are shared with learners who fully understand what they are expected to achieve during their lessons. A wide variety of teaching activities engages and motivates learners.

- Tutors skilfully contextualise functional skills, equality and diversity and sustainability themes and incorporate them within learners' vocational courses. However, this is not always evident in the schemes of work or lesson plans.
- Staff are well qualified, highly skilled and experienced. Most of them have specialist literacy and numeracy qualifications. Skills for Life tutors are multi-skilled and provide additional learning support as well as teaching functional skills. There is a valuable programme of training events which include the sharing of good practice with regular workshops to showcase resources and teaching strategies.
- Partnerships with employers, schools and external agencies are strong. LCB works proactively with partners to develop and monitor improvement strategies. Liaison with external agencies and vocational staff is substantial in supporting learners who are long term unemployed or young people who are not in education, employment or training to stay on their course and to embed safeguarding practices for at risk learners.
- Learning support for those with specific needs is responsive and positive, enabling learners to make progress. Learning support assistants are used effectively and sensitively to promote learning in the classroom and to support individuals effectively.
- Management of the curriculum area is highly effective. Managers provide clear direction for the course team managers in developing and monitoring quality improvement strategies. The team promotes a whole college approach to Skills for Life which is further supported by the college's strategy. Skills for Life tutors work in dedicated vocational areas and are actively supported to work in partnership with vocational tutors in planning and delivery of the curriculum.
- The self-assessment process is robust, evaluative and accurate. The staff team is fully involved in the process through regular information and planning meetings. Their contribution is valued and they are clear about the key areas for development and the improvement strategies. Data for the different age groups are suitably analysed and used to inform quality improvement strategies.

What does Leeds College of Building need to do to improve further?

- Systematically assess the impact of quality improvement strategies and continue to implement strategies to improve retention for all qualifications and improve success rates for entry level literacy and numeracy.
- Further develop and extend contextualisation of literacy and numeracy within the planning process, included in lesson plans, to ensure that good practice is embedded in lessons.
- Ensure that all tutors extend the use of outcomes from diagnostic assessment to set challenging and individualised targets to further extend differentiation in lessons and to ensure that learners are working at the correct level to achieve their full potential.

Information about the inspection

44. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and nine additional inspectors, assisted by the college's Deputy Principal & Executive Director of Curriculum and Quality, 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 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.
45. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires that learners and employers had recently completed for the college. They 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)
Leeds College of Building

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	1186	0	1061	125	0
Part-time learners	2551	236	239	807	1269
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2	2	3	2	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?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	1				
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?*	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?	1				
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?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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