

Loughborough College

General further education college

Inspection dates		25 February–1 March 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This college is good because:

- Learners' success rates have increased substantially, are high for adults and at foundation level. Provision in sport is excellent.
- Good teaching ensures most learners become confident, knowledgeable and skilled. Teachers use assessment to support learning very well and their monitoring of learners' progress has improved and is thorough.
- Specialist support staff and learning coaches provide good support for learners in a wide range of ways including making very good use of electronic resources.
- Managers and staff have high expectations of learners; teachers and support staff create a highly positive environment for learning.
- The curriculum is very well developed and flexible, including very strong partnership work. The curriculum meets learners' needs and their ability range well and it is supporting high levels of recruitment across subjects and in work-based learning.
- Managers' actions to improve provision in several key areas, including engineering provision, are proving very effective.

This is not yet an outstanding college because:

- Learners' staying-on rate requires improvement and their achievement in a few subjects is not good enough.
- Teaching and learning in a few subjects require improvement. In particular, theory teaching is ineffective where teachers do not ensure learners participate actively in learning. In a few lessons, more able learners are insufficiently challenged.
- The scope of data evaluation is too narrow and some evaluation is underdeveloped, particularly of the measures of learners' progress.
- The lesson observation system has a limited focus on the rigorous evaluation of learning, meaning that it is not consistently accurate.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of theory in the minority of lessons where the pace is slow and teachers overly direct learners by supporting teachers to use a wider range of strategies that involve learners fully in learning activities. Ensure that all teachers consistently stretch and challenge more able learners including through demanding questioning and targeting of extra work.
- Support learners with additional learning needs to develop their skills and abilities fully as well as promote their progress towards becoming independent learners by ensuring that clear and precise objectives are set in their individual learning plans. Make sure that teachers, learners and support staff work closely together in reviewing progress towards meeting these objectives frequently.
- Monitor performance and evaluate learners' outcomes more effectively by ensuring that data used in reviews of performance and self-assessment are sufficiently detailed. Make sure that managers analyse data for substantial and shorter courses, learners' progress and their destinations, and the performance of groups in order to inform a fuller and more sharply focused evaluation of learners' success.
- Increase the rigour of lesson observation to ensure that the evaluation of learning is accurate and meaningful. Review and simplify the criteria for observing lessons to ensure these focus on the impact of teachers' practice on learning. Improve the quality of observers' feedback so that it is unequivocal and focuses on learning.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- In 2011/12, learners' long course success rates increased substantially to that of similar colleges from well below the average. In particular, learners' pass rates increased markedly. Adult learners' success rates are above average and are high at foundation level. Younger learners' success rates overall are average; by level, rates are highest for the small proportion of learners who study at foundation level.
- Learners' staying-on rates are increasing further in the current academic year from an average position, as shown by curriculum managers' in-year monitoring records. Learners mostly attend well and are punctual. They are often eager to learn and self-motivated because their teachers and other staff set a good example and foster a professional approach to learning.
- Learners' success rates on short courses increased markedly in 2011/12 from well below to above average. The number of learners who take short courses, in most cases in addition to their main qualification aim, nearly doubled in 2011/12. High numbers of learners were successful on foundation level courses in enterprise and employability skills as well as in a 'Learn to learn' qualification. However, the level and content of these courses are undemanding for a large majority.
- Learners' success rates on A and AS-level courses are increasing and they are above average for A-level courses. However, learners' achievement of high grades at this level, while increasing, is below average. Their progression between AS and A-level varies between subjects; it is high in a number such as mathematics, English and media studies, but is low in others such as law, sociology and information technology.
- Compared to their prior attainment, most learners on advanced level courses make the progress expected of them. In a few subjects including sport, public services, mathematics and physics,

they make much better progress and exceed expectations. At other levels of study, learners mostly make at least satisfactory progress and develop good vocational skills.

- Work-based apprentices' achievement varies depending on subject they study. Overall, their framework success rates have increased and these are just above average; most of the apprentices who succeed do so within the time allowed. However, while apprentices' success rates are high in sport, they are low in engineering and customer service. Other workplace learners achieve with higher success rates than in similar colleges.
- A high number of learners are successful in functional skill qualifications at foundation level but the much smaller number who study at intermediate level underachieve. Achievement of high grades in GCSE English and mathematics is above average for the relatively small numbers of learners who resit these qualifications. In the majority of subject areas, learners achieve useful additional qualifications, such as coaching awards or specialist health care certificates, which support them in gaining employment.
- The extent to which learners make progress through levels of study is difficult to measure accurately because managers' analysis is insufficiently detailed. In addition, because rigorous collection of data about learners' destinations has only just begun, accurate measurement of learners' destinations is limited. However, data held at curriculum level indicate high levels of learners' internal progression and their destinations into higher education or employment in a few subjects.
- Male and female learners achieve at a broadly similar rate except on apprenticeships where the extent to which female apprentices outperform males is increasing. Wide gaps between the success rates of adults of Asian Indian, Bangladeshi and White Other heritage and whole college success rates closed in 2011/12. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities succeed at least as well as their peers.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, the use of assessment and, in particular, monitoring of learners' progress improved in 2011/12, as shown by the marked increase in success rates. Teachers ensure that a large majority of learning activities are good. In sport, teachers often teach excellent lessons and learners receive at least a few outstanding lessons in most other subjects. Teachers' high expectations of learners are a significant feature of good or better lessons, which inspires, motivates and helps them to be professional and mature in their attitudes.
- In the large majority of subjects, teachers are vocational specialists. They often bring learning alive by using realistic tasks, for example by learners undertaking responsible serving roles in the restaurant or dealing directly with clients in hairdressing salons. This well-managed approach helps learners develop confidence.
- Teachers' use of detailed and well-staged demonstrations, their explanations of important points and their linkage of theory and practical are frequently highly effective. Combined with these strategies, teachers often check that learners' knowledge is secure and consolidated. They use a good variety of activities, such as group and paired work, to engage learners productively in lessons, often well matched to ability.
- In a few subjects, teachers do too much of the work and allow a slow pace. Their structuring of lessons is not careful enough to keep learners involved or to be certain that learners are making adequate progress. Learners do not always grasp the key points fully due to teachers' explanations being insufficiently effective.
- Teachers' challenge to learners is often high. For example, teachers expect sports studies learners to aim for competition experience, beauty teachers require a high level of creativity, such as in nail art, as well as practical competence. However, in a few theory lessons, more able

learners are unchallenged, sometimes because teachers’ questions fizzle out rather than probe topics.

- In vocational areas, mostly high quality resources enhance learning well. Classrooms are well equipped with information and communication technology, which teachers and learners often use well. However, in a few cases related to learners’ internet use, teachers do not promote the use of credible sources or provide sufficient structure to learners’ research and independent work to ensure it is of high quality and constructive.
- Most learners use the web-based virtual learning environment ‘LearnZone’ well. This flexible and easily accessible resource holds a wide range of information and learning materials. Teachers refer to its use frequently in lessons to augment learning and learners respond well.
- Teachers and support staff monitor learners’ progress thoroughly and frequently in almost all subjects; in a very few cases, new arrangements are not fully effective. Staff, such as learning coaches, often with a non-teaching role to ensure their easy availability, work closely and successfully with learners at risk of underperformance. Staff add in extra time, such as through review weeks, very effectively to help learners who need help to catch up.
- Staff undertake initial assessment thoroughly and promptly. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support and they make good progress. However, learning plans for those with additional learning needs are insufficiently clear. These lack precise objectives with insufficient focus on promoting long-term independence. Involvement of learners and the range of support staff in reviews is limited and feedback to teachers on individual learners’ objectives is underdeveloped.
- In most subjects, staff use assessment very well. Teachers’ good, encouraging and motivating feedback helps learners improve their written work. Assessors’ very flexible approach to assessments, skills development and support benefits work-based learners greatly.
- In the majority of subjects, including on apprenticeships, learners develop good English and mathematical skills. Teachers routinely correct spelling and grammar, and improve learners’ use and awareness of English. For example, teachers often provide glossaries for learners and most spend time ensuring that learners pronounce technical terms fluently. Teachers help learners develop good levels of confidence in using their numeracy skills.
- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance during their time at college. Learners receive a comprehensive induction including useful sessions covering independent learning and study skills.
- Teaching staff provide an inclusive learning environment. They act as good role models, encouraging good working relations. Most teachers promote equality and diversity very effectively during learning. For example, comprehensive discussions about topics including respect, stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice, such as against prisoners, take place frequently.

Health and social care, and childcare	
Learning programmes for 16-18	Good
Learning programmes for 19+	

- Consistently good teaching, which good assessment supports well, is reflected in most learners’ improved and high success rates. Learners enjoy their studies and almost all make good progress. A large number of learners gain high grades and the majority achieve above expectations based on their prior attainment, particularly on childcare courses.
- The well-qualified, enthusiastic and experienced staff team have high expectations of learners and they enthuse and motivate them very well. Teachers use their wide knowledge and

experience of the care sector to provide stimulating and varied learning, which develop learners' knowledge and skills securely.

- Teachers develop learners' understanding and their attitudes towards working closely with often vulnerable people very well. This includes supporting learners to be successful in a wide range of additional qualifications, such as in mental health awareness. Teachers and learners regularly work closely to set and monitor challenging short and long-term targets, which improve them personally, socially and academically.
- Teachers plan learning well to meet learners' individual needs using a wide range of interactive strategies, outside speakers and educational visits, for example a trip to a Forest School. Learners enjoy and learn well from highly active learning tasks particularly working with different people in small group-work. Teachers check learning regularly and they encourage self-assessment and reflective learning.
- Teachers make good use of regular work experience to improve learners' studies. They explore work scenarios and link these well to lesson topics. Teachers link theory to practice very coherently. They make sure that learners, particularly more able, are challenged to research, think deeply and fully justify their findings including identifying any implications for professional practice.
- Advanced level health and social care learners respond well to challenging case studies, illustrating the above point. For example, they researched the roles and responsibilities of childcare professionals in a safeguarding context and held a mock case conference for a complex and sensitive situation. Learners worked maturely and they identified the facts objectively including how to offer the family support.
- Assessment is accurate, well planned and timely. Teachers set appropriately challenging assignments. Learners value the very detailed verbal feedback they receive, but written feedback does not always contain sufficient information to assist learners to reflect on what they have done well. Teachers do not consistently correct spelling and grammar.
- Learners' work is good and often uses appropriate academic language. Teachers promote learners' confident use of information and learning technology and their good research and problem solving skills well. Learners reference their work and use a bibliography correctly. However, they do not always record the date on which they accessed a website.
- Teachers develop learners' English skills well. Learners prepare and present visual information well including in a range of formats to meet the audience needs. Teachers develop mathematical skills less widely, but adequately, for example by calculating percentages to understand the findings of a research project more fully.
- Staff provide very good personal and academic support for learners. Learning support assistants work effectively with teachers. Staff have close partnerships with parents and carers, which ensures that the resolving of issues is quick and effective. Good working relationships exist with wider college support arrangements and with employers and local schools.
- A high number of learners progress to relevant employment, but far fewer progress to the next level of study. Progression to higher education is highest for health and social care learners, but is not yet a strong feature.
- Staff promote equality, diversity and safeguarding very well. Teachers' good learning resources and their attitudes reinforce the importance of respect and the need to value individual differences. Teachers are positive role models ensuring learners' work reflects a diverse society. Learners feel safe and adopt safe working practices consistently.

Engineering and motor vehicle**Learning programmes for 16-18****Learning programmes for 19+**

Requires improvement

- While practical teaching is mostly good, too much theory teaching requires improvement and support arrangements have not been sufficiently effective in retaining learners. This is reflected in the previously low long course success rates, which are mainly due to too few learners completing their courses. Considerable progress has taken place in improving support and guidance and in-year retention rates are high. Progression rates between levels of study are increasing.
- Teaching and learning are good in practical workshop lessons. Teachers organise these sessions well and learners work safely and diligently. Accordingly, they make good progress and develop good vocational skills. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for learners to develop wider skills, but there remains scope to link workshop activity more closely to developing theory and wider skills.
- Learners' progress in theory lessons varies too much because of uneven quality in teaching. In the minority of better lessons, teachers make good use of modern technology, such as circuit simulation software, questioning and a variety of activities and extension exercises. Their strategies engage and sustain learners' interest and they respond well.
- In a minority of theory lessons staff do not organise teaching well. For example, too much teaching is repetitive, the pace of learning is slow and those who learn quickly have insufficient challenge. Teachers' management of group work and plenary sessions to assess what learning has taken place is ineffective.
- Recent curriculum development has improved learners' motivation and interest. This includes innovation such as the use of tablet applications in motor sports engineering. Shorter blocks of work in the motor vehicle curriculum have improved course structure and enable clearer progress monitoring. Teachers work well with employers to enhance the curriculum. For example, employers contribute well as guest speakers.
- Arrangements to recruit learners are satisfactory. Managers have recently revised the criteria for entry and staff apply these rigorously in order to give learners the best chance of success. Initial advice and guidance are more systematic than previously. Staff initially assess learners' literacy and numeracy skills thoroughly and support arrangements for those learners who need extra help are effective.
- Teachers use assessment well for most learners, but not for those on engineering courses, where it is adequate. Across subjects, written work is not marked and returned consistently promptly and the usefulness of written feedback varies in quality. However, learners' work is often of a high standard. Teachers ensure learners collate their notes well in electro-technology but not so in engineering and in a few lessons note taking is insufficient.
- Specialist workshop resources are good and excellent in a minority of areas such as electro-technology. Classrooms are well equipped with information and learning technology. A few theory lessons take place, inappropriately, in computer rooms and a minority of practical electronics lessons takes place in unsuitable general classrooms.
- Recently individual learners' progress reviews have improved, particularly through the work of learning coaches. However, the use of targets generally, particularly minimum target grades to promote progress, is underdeveloped. Teachers' use of constructive catch-up sessions for learners is at an early stage.

- Teachers' role in the development of English skills is a recent priority and arrangements are satisfactory. Learners' work is marked appropriately for grammar and spelling and teachers provide adequate feedback. Teachers develop learners' mathematical skills well.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity satisfactorily. Group tutorials cover equality and diversity matters adequately. Schemes of work prompt consideration of these matters and, in a few lessons teachers give specific attention to topics such as how barriers to engagement, such as disability, are overcome.

Sports studies

Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+

Outstanding

- Excellent teaching supports learners in achieving high success rates on academic and vocational courses and the development of their very good sports and coaching skills. Highly motivated teachers are aspirational role models and have very high expectations of learners. Learners respond keenly and with enjoyment. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary.
- In most lessons, teachers plan and manage highly effective and often inspirational learning ensuring learners' full engagement and quick progress. Teachers draw on their expert professional practice, setting imaginative and challenging activities that meet learners' individual needs and abilities. In a very few lessons, teachers allow learners to rely on them too much and not think for themselves.
- Teachers and learners maximise the opportunities to develop excellent practical and employability skills through use of a wide range of very high standard fitness, coaching and sports science resources. Practical lessons inspire learners and often integrate theory very effectively. For example, foundation and intermediate level learners undertake complex sport science fitness testing exercises, deepening their understanding of the effects of exercise including on their personal health.
- Teachers use technology very effectively to promote learners' independent study. Learners use the high quality learning materials and links to further learning and research available on 'LearnZone' extensively.
- Teachers' monitoring of learners' progress in lessons is excellent. They use continuous assessment particularly well to check and develop learners' understanding. Learners offer answers frequently during directed questioning, learn well from each other and often undertake peer and self-assessment.
- In lessons, teachers often develop learners' mathematical skills and English well through sport-related activities. For example, learners developed their numeracy skills through analysis of data about Manchester United's international fans followed by a discussion of the importance of using mathematical skills in the sports industry.
- Assessment is excellent; assignments are interesting and varied. Teachers' feedback helps learners develop their skills particularly well and consistently highlights inaccuracies in spelling and grammar. Learners use teachers' comments very productively to improve their work. Teachers regularly set and review challenging targets for learners. This ensures they make swift and often exceptional progress and frequently exceed expectations compared to their prior attainment.
- Highly effective measures are in place to support learners at risk of underachievement. Specialist learning support tutors identify individual learners' particular weaknesses, make thorough plans to support their improvement and work closely with teachers. Learners value this help and find it highly constructive and motivational.

- Learners benefit from highly valuable links with employers as well as the extensive partnerships that exist. A large majority of learners extend their leadership skills and experience of working with diverse groups through the Loughborough 'Flames' project that promotes fun and physical activity through the Olympic and Paralympic values in schools and local community venues.
- Staff provide excellent advice, guidance and support ensuring learners choose the right course to realise their ambition. Individual learners' needs are quickly identified during a thorough induction and appropriate support provided promptly. During tutorials and review weeks, learners receive timely information and skills training which develops attributes that employers value and supports learners' successful progression.
- Teachers sensitively and thoroughly promote equality and diversity alongside having high expectations of learners' behaviour and respect for others. For example, learners consider the psychological impact of profoundly debilitating injuries on elite athletes and the impact this has on their future lives. Many learners take part in activities with a diverse range of groups including coaching Boccia and work with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, religious faith groups and older clients with particular exercise and fitness needs.

<p>Sport</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p> <p>Other work based learning</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
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- Trainers use highly effective teaching methods very well to inspire and challenge work-based learners, ensuring that most make rapid progress as well as improving their skills and understanding to a high level. This results in their improved and very high apprenticeship success rates. In addition, most work-based learners complete their course within the time allocated.
- Trainers rigorously apply complex theory to practice which helps develop learners' analytical skills as well as helping them make excellent progress in sports performance including rugby, netball and volleyball. For example, advanced apprentices are able to explain clearly and accurately how carbohydrates contribute to performance energy requirements following reflection on their weekly food diary and their teacher's very good use of challenging questioning to reinforce understanding.
- Trainers make excellent use of their expertise including in inspiring learners to progress into sport-related employment and higher education courses. Most trainers come from elite sporting backgrounds and command considerable respect from learners. They use their expertise very well to explain complex physiological and psychological concepts. For example, in helping learners to understand how to control and use aggression constructively in rugby league matches.
- Trainers make very good use of high quality resources for off-the-job training. Work-based learners make full use of the excellent college based facilities, including a very well equipped sports laboratory and gymnasium. In addition, good collaboration with Gateshead College ensures that learners have access to high quality resources including excellent indoor sports facilities. In addition, training is well organised at various venues across the country according to learners' home base.
- Trainers, learners and assessors use information and learning technology well to prepare for workshops and reviews. Learners use information held on 'LearnZone' well to reinforce their understanding such as factors affecting performance. However, trainers' development and promotion of electronic resources are not fully comprehensive including meeting the needs of the broad range of elite athletes.

- Learners receive excellent and well-planned progress reviews, which ensure their full contribution. For example, through a tutor-led thorough one-to-one discussion, a trainee school-based coach accurately identified the significant progress made in developing pupil-behaviour management skills by linking theoretical work with practical coaching experiences.
- Teachers and learners agree highly effective specific, measurable and achievable targets in a supportive learning environment. Apprentices use these challenging targets to improve sports performance well. For example, an apprentice who successfully met a specific target based on improving volleyball skills has recently been assessed by a national volleyball team scout.
- Trainers’ excellent feedback, both written and verbal, enables most learners to improve their skills and knowledge of sports performance and coaching rapidly. For example, rugby league apprentices use feedback on their nutrition productively to adjust their food intake. Trainers correct written work and provide good feedback, which mostly supports learners well in developing their functional skills.
- Trainers promote equality and diversity strongly including discussions and probing questioning about relevant issues in sport, such as the relationship between ethnicity and ability. This approach supports learners in understanding difference, for example, in the needs of different minority ethnic groups of primary school pupils.
- Staff provide excellent information, advice and guidance which supports learning well. A comprehensive induction course enable learners to settle in quickly and most remain on their chosen course. Learners are rightly very satisfied with their courses. Staff support learners very well to progress towards their learning goals. In 2012, the large majority of apprentices went to university to study sports-related courses and, similarly, learners training as coaches found employment as sports coaches.

<p>Foundation English and ESOL</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Good teaching is reflected in learners’ increased and often above average success rates at foundation level in English and ESOL and their achievement of an above average proportion of good passes in GCSE English. However, teaching of functional skills at intermediate level for the small number who take these qualifications has not had the same impact as learners underachieve.
- Learners are punctual and their attendance is generally good. Learners develop and improve their language skills well in preparation for employment, further or higher education as well as for personal and social purposes. For example, learners practise writing reports including clearly identifying advantages and disadvantages of different products and they become skilled at writing good quality and grammatically correct descriptive text for illustrative purposes.
- Teachers are highly skilled and use their well-developed expertise to plan interesting learning for a range of ability levels and needs. They use specific learning objectives and individualised targets well to develop learners’ literacy and communication skills. For example, ESOL learners improve their pronunciation skills by precisely identifying and using different vowel sounds and GCSE English learners develop their use of similes and metaphors very well.
- Teachers prepare very helpful profiles of learners and make good use of use records of their specific learning needs to update schemes of work. All learners make at least satisfactory progress and most make good progress in learning.
- Teachers use a good range of motivating learning activities supported well by resources. They use technology very effectively to present pictorial images clearly, promote analysis of different forms of media and encourage learners to listen to narratives and music. These strategies help

develop learners’ contributions to discussions and as a stimulating basis for some of their creative writing.

- Teachers ensure lessons are well paced. They consistently challenge and extend learners to achieve their personal targets. Teachers place much good and sharply focused attention on improving learners’ spelling of day-to-day vocabulary that relates to learners’ main study and interests. However, in a few lessons, teachers’ attention to developing learners’ handwriting is minimal and a few become too reliant on word processing using a computer.
- Most learners benefit from teachers’ regular and effective assessment. Teachers provide plenty of feedback and encourage peer assessment, for example as part of summaries of work at the end of lessons to aid the identification of strengths and weaknesses. However, in a few lessons, passive and less confident learners’ work is insufficiently assessed, mostly because teachers’ questions to not include to all learners.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Specialist teachers are fully involved in assessing and analysing learners’ starting points in English. In addition to using creative writing tasks at interview and induction, teachers use very successful practical and project activities to ensure learners are on the appropriate courses and understand the demands of these. However, the link between the findings from initial and diagnostic assessment and setting of individual targets to monitor progress is not consistently strong.
- Staff provide good and intensive individual support. Specialist English teachers use feedback from subject teachers well to help improve learners’ performance. However, learning support assistants and teachers do not always work closely enough to ensure that the support offered in class is maximised, in part because their role is often not included in planning.
- Teachers ensure that their choice of lesson topics and materials promotes discussion of equality and diversity matters well. For example, ESOL learners discuss cultural and religious differences. Teachers challenge barriers to learning well to promote equality, for example through successfully promoting a reading club targeted at reluctant readers.

<p>Business studies</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
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- The quality of teaching and learning varies too much, a minority is good, but much teaching requires improvement, particularly in accounting and law. This links with the range of success rates across the subjects, some of which are high, as in AS- and A-level business, and some which are low as on most accounting courses. Learners’ retention rates are increasing and progression between AS and A-level is high.
- Most learners are highly motivated and are enthusiastic about their courses. Their attitudes to work are good both in class and during independent study. Teachers mostly have very good business knowledge.
- In the minority of better lessons, teachers use lively learning activities, which encourage learners to work productively. In particular, business and law teachers make regular use of real industry-based scenarios to help learners understand different aspects of topics. Most learners in these lessons develop good skills and useful and relevant knowledge. For example, in law, learners evaluate funding sources and their accessibility for legal advice or representation. In business, learners explore and discuss a range of political factors and analyse the impact of these on a range of businesses.
- Teachers over-direct too many lessons, particularly on accountancy courses. In these lessons, learners make too little contribution and often fail to extend their learning through discussion

and debate. Teachers give instructions and often provide the answers to questions without allowing learners to develop their own thinking.

- Teachers do not adjust their approach to match learners’ abilities, particularly more able learners, frequently enough. Learners often work on the same basic task at the same pace with too little challenge for the more able. For example, business learners worked on completing cost forecasts for a new product range, but the teacher did not encourage the more able to include economies of scale in their pricing strategies to stretch their thinking and extend their skills.
- Business learners benefit from a good range of links with local companies who provide input and context for their learning. Visits from local business owners provide learners with opportunities to engage in live projects. For example, learners following the applied business programme work with a local business to research and develop strategies to increase sales.
- Teachers’ use of assessment is satisfactory. They use a limited range of assessment strategies in lessons, relying mostly on questions and answers to assess learning. Teachers’ targeting of questions to ensure all learners are involved is underdeveloped and they do not always allow learners enough thinking time to ensure they give a meaningful answer.
- The majority of teachers provide effective feedback on learners’ written work including what they need to do to improve. Teachers’ verbal feedback is often very useful, but its recording is not consistent to provide learners with helpful notes for later reference.
- Teachers help most learners develop good English and mathematical skills. Teachers ensure learners practise their numeracy skills in a range of contexts, for example in calculations for budgeting. Most teachers routinely correct spelling and grammatical errors in learners’ work and help them use business terminology competently. However, a few learners’ hand written work is of poor quality and unchallenged by teachers.
- Staff provide good support and care. Their pre-course advice and guidance has improved to be relevant and accurate in placing learners on the right course. Learning coaches mostly work productively with individual learners to support their progress and help them meet attendance and work targets.
- Although learners and staff work harmoniously and with mutual respect, teachers do not routinely reinforce equality and diversity themes to challenge perceptions and deepen learners’ knowledge and understanding within the context of their subject. For example, when learners carry out market research for a new product development, they do not consider cultural issues that could influence buying behaviours.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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- Leaders and managers focus strongly on making the clear and valid strategic objectives a reality for learners, employers and the local community. Managers’ development work links closely to the four main strategic themes of being responsive, delivering high quality provision, ensuring financial sustainability and attracting and working with high quality staff. Managers’ actions to increase success rates from a low base proved very effective in 2011/12.
- Most key performance targets are appropriately challenging, although those related to learners’ outcomes do not have sufficient basis on success rates for substantial courses. In 2011/12, the college achieved its targets for curriculum development, success rates and budget surplus, but those for recruitment of adults and commercial income were missed.
- The recently appointed principal has increased the number of the senior managers and successfully broadened the scope of the senior leadership team through a sharper focus on all aspects of the college’s work and to increase growth. Managers’ detailed and constructive review of curriculum management is well underway.

- Governors worked closely with managers to form the strategic plan for 2011 to 2016 and they are monitoring its implementation carefully. By recently moving to monthly board meetings, governors have rightly increased their scrutiny of performance. They provide a good level of challenge to managers. However, governors do not review in enough detail all performance indicators, such as learners' rates of retention.
- Managers' actions have improved apprenticeship provision. For example, a central team implements improved recruitment procedures including ensuring that employers are well informed of the expectations and requirements of apprenticeships. Employers' feedback is mostly positive.
- The teaching and learning strategy is carefully considered and links closely to the strategic objectives. Centralised arrangements for recruitment of learners, assessing their literacy and numeracy needs, induction, and pastoral support, enable curriculum teams to focus more successfully on improving teaching and learning.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of teachers, whose performance they manage effectively to improve provision to a high standard. Outcomes from lesson observations link closely to annual reviews of performance. Managers tackle underperformance effectively and staff make good use of the development opportunities available.
- Support for teachers to improve their skills within subject teams is good. They are encouraged to 'talk teaching' and the sharing of good practice is particularly effective. Investment in posts of advanced teachers and teaching and learning advisors is having a positive impact on raising the standard of teaching and supporting less experienced teachers.
- The arrangements for observing lessons require improvement. Lesson observation records do not always identify clearly the reasons for particular grades. Observers use too many individual criteria to evaluate lessons and the quality of their feedback varies too much. Inspectors judged that standardisation of records lacks rigour as a high proportion require amendment.
- Managers monitor the challenging targets that are set for course performance and improvement monthly and agree actions to resolve underperformance. However, reviews of departmental performance are insufficiently frequent. Managers' actions to tackle underperformance in engineering, motor vehicle and public services show signs of success although it is too early to judge the impact on learners' achievements.
- While self-assessment is broadly accurate, evaluation of learners' success rate data is underdeveloped as judgements are at too high a level of aggregation. Managers' evaluation of measures of learners' progression and destinations is too limited. At subject level, they give insufficient emphasis to the performance of individual courses and groups with the result that reports are not evaluative enough.
- Learners' views of the college are largely positive, with most recommending the college to others. Work to improve communication with parents through focus group activities and a 'frequently asked questions' page, is very effective and their feedback is highly positive. Managers act on learners' feedback with improvements such as the creation of more social spaces and the 'Upstairs Café'.
- The curriculum is broad and offered across most levels, including higher education routes in most subject areas. Managers develop the curriculum well; including through good partnerships, to meet priority areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Plans to increase the A-level curriculum are well established, with increased applications for the September 2013 intake.
- Employment-based provision is developing successfully and this includes the launching of a diploma in space engineering in conjunction with the National Space Centre and a local university. Part-time vocational programmes for pupils from local schools are successful, with high achievement.
- Most managers and staff promote equality and diversity well. They have successfully closed the achievement gaps between groups of learners. Bullying is not tolerated; learners are made aware of how to stay safe and how to report bullying including the appropriate use of social

media. Actions to resolve differences in performance highlighted in subject self-assessment reports do not always have sufficient detail.

- Managers ensure that the college meets statutory safeguarding requirements. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and comprehensive. Regular training for all staff, including governors, ensures they are clear about their responsibilities for learners and links well to other aspects of their work such as assuring the security of learners' data.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Loughborough College									
Inspection grades are based on a provider’s performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
Outcomes for learners	3		3	3	3	3			
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2		2	2	2	2			
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2		2	2	2	2			

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2
Early years and playwork	2
Engineering	3
Transportation operations and maintenance	3
Sport, leisure and recreation	1
Sport	1
ESOL	2
Foundation English	2
Business	3

College details

Loughborough College	
Type of college	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 2,100
	Part-time: 2,410
Principal/CEO	Esme Winch
Date of previous inspection	November 2008
Website address	www.loucoll.ac.uk

College information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	79	53	491	96	1,116	215	0	0
Part-time	131	304	176	993	218	337	4	133
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	125	90	465	172	0	2		
Number of learners aged 14-16	298							
Number of community learners	77							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the college contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MTS Training ■ Impact Apprenticeships ■ Mitre Group Ltd. 							

Additional socio-economic information

Loughborough College shares a large campus with Loughborough University and the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) College close to the town centre. Most learners come from the Charnwood borough of Leicestershire. The percentage of learners from a minority ethnic heritage is much higher than in the local population. The curriculum includes courses from foundation to higher education level. Classroom-based courses are available in all subject areas except land-based studies. The college provides work-based courses in five subject areas. Most provision is on the main site but several community venues and employers' premises are also used. The percentage of pupils who leave school with five or more GCSE qualifications at A* to C including English and mathematics in Leicestershire is similar to that nationally.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Philippa Francis HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the assistant principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners, parents and carers, and employers; these views are reflected in the report. Inspectors observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the government funded provision at the college. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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