

Farnborough College of Technology

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130689

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Type of provider: General further education college

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Information about the provider

1. Farnborough College of Technology is a medium-sized general further and higher education college in Hampshire. During 2010/11 the college ran courses on the main site in Farnborough and at 'The Aldershot College', which provides a venue primarily for construction skills training. The college has a significant work-based learning contract within which engineering and hairdressing are the largest areas of work. The mission of the college is to 'ensure that our students achieve foundation, technical or higher level vocational qualifications and skills which meet local and regional skills needs and allow for progression from 14+ to higher education'.
2. In 2010/11 there were substantial numbers of long-course enrolments in almost all subject areas. There were over 5,000 qualification outcomes, excepting work-based learning. Around 60% of learners were aged 16 to 18. There were, in addition, over 500 qualification outcomes in work-based learning, including apprenticeships and in Train to Gain. The college offers a significant number of higher education programmes, which provide a range of potential progression routes for further education students.
3. The college serves the areas of Farnborough, Aldershot and the surrounding towns and villages of the Blackwater Valley. These areas experience low levels of unemployment. There is significant choice available to learners aged 16 to 18 at the end of their GCSE studies, especially as the college is on the border of three counties. The college cooperates closely with five other providers of sixth form provision in the vicinity, including Farnborough's sixth form college. In the last few years the ethnicity of the college's student population has become more diverse. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic communities has risen to 23%, higher than in the local population. The largest of these communities is of Nepali heritage with current or historic links to the Brigade of Gurkhas.
4. In 2010/11 the majority of learners aged 16 to 18 came from schools where pupils' performance at GCSE of five A* to C grades (including English and mathematics) was below the average for both Hampshire and England.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - ReMIT (technical certificates for apprenticeships in automotive engineering)
 - Construction Industry Training Board (construction skills)
 - League Football Education (coaching awards).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
<p>Provision for young learners: 14 to 16</p> <p>Further education (16 to18)</p> <p>Foundation Learning</p>	<p>363 part-time learners</p> <p>1,727 full-time learners</p> <p>70 part-time learners</p>
<p>Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)</p>	<p>250 full-time learners</p> <p>1,405 part-time learners</p>
<p>Employer provision: Train to Gain</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p>	<p>338 learners</p> <p>601 apprentices</p>

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 1
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Capacity to improve	Grade 1
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	1
Quality of provision	1
Leadership and management	1
Safeguarding	1
Equality and diversity	2

Subject Areas	
Health, social care and childcare	1
Engineering	2
Catering and hospitality	1
Art, design and media	2

Overall effectiveness

- This is an outstanding college. Capacity to improve is excellent, as has been demonstrated by the college's record of sustained and very significant increases in success rates for all learners and in its highly successful actions to tackle areas for improvement from the last inspection. Inspectors found individual tutorial provision, a key area for improvement in 2007, to be a core strength in contributing to outstanding outcomes for learners, with excellent management of learners' progress and target-setting. Learners feel very safe in the college as a result of excellent arrangements for safeguarding. The college equips learners very well for their future careers. Their practical skills are good and often outstanding. The emphasis the college places on developing learners' employability skills is shown in employers' reflections on the high standards of work and professional conduct they find in the learners they employ.

7. The quality of provision is outstanding. Teaching and assessment are good. Lessons are well planned and include a broad range of activities that keep learners interested. Inspectors observed some outstanding lessons, showing that there are very high standards in teaching and learning to be shared, but found that in too many lessons teachers do not use the comprehensive group profiles available from initial assessment to plan learning activities to challenge the more capable learners to reach their full potential. Inspectors found there to be insufficient promotion of cultural diversity in lessons and progress reviews in work-based learning.
8. The Principal, staff and governors have shown great ambition for the college and its learners. Outstanding leadership and management, exemplified by rigorous quality assurance and self-assessment procedures, have driven up results and improved the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Value for money is outstanding, as is evident from the college's financial health and outstanding outcomes for learners.

Main findings

- The college has been highly successful in bringing about sustained improvement in outcomes for learners, continuing the substantial increase in learners' success that was evident at the last inspection. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are particularly high.
- Learners develop good, and often outstanding, practical skills, and a sound grasp of the related underpinning theory. Learners are prepared well for the next step in their future careers, and the emphasis the college places on developing employability skills is valued highly by learners and employers alike.
- Learners make good progress from their starting points on entry to the college; however, data show inconsistency in learners' progress across the range of subject areas.
- Learners engage actively in interesting activities in lessons and make good progress in their studies. Staff use information and learning technologies (ILT) very well to enhance learning. Learners appreciate the broad variety of materials on the virtual learning environment (VLE) that enable them to check and further develop their understanding.
- Comprehensive initial assessments are compiled into group profiles which help teachers arrange appropriate support, where necessary, to meet the needs of individuals. However, in too many lessons the planning of tasks to extend the learning of higher ability learners is insufficient.
- The lesson observation system is well organised and managed. Observers identify clearly the key strengths and weaknesses of lessons, and the college employs an effective support procedure for staff whose performance is less than good. Teachers do not promote an awareness of cultural diversity sufficiently in lessons and learner reviews and this is not picked up in observations routinely and systematically.

- The range of courses is very extensive, offering excellent progression routes from entry level through to advanced level and on to higher education. The college is highly responsive to local needs and uses local information well to plan sustainable provision. Provision for employers is broad and engagement with three local schools consortia is good.
- Partnerships and partnership working are outstanding in developing provision to meet learners' needs. Employers speak very highly of the college and its commitment to enabling people to gain access to high-quality education and training. Community partners speak well of the community awareness developed in its learners.
- Tutorial support is at the heart of learners' success. Inspectors acknowledge the key role that managing learners' progress and target setting have made to the significant improvement in learners' success rates. Group and individual tutorials make highly effective use of the 'student organiser'. The college continues to make progress to improve further the consistency of tutorial practice: a key weakness identified at the last inspection.
- The Principal, staff and governors have shown great ambition and this is reflected in the sustained improvements over time. Governors provide very strong critical challenge and support for senior managers, with an unrelenting focus on ensuring that the college has sound financial health and learners are successful.
- The very strong culture of performance management, aligned with rigorous quality assurance and self-assessment procedures, has driven up results and improved the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- Learners feel very safe in the college and work safely. Arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding. Learners make a very valuable contribution to reviewing and improving arrangements through course evaluation and 'learner voice' arrangements.
- Staff treat the views of learners and employers very seriously and have exemplary arrangements for collecting and acting upon them.
- The financial health of the college is outstanding, as are the financial control and management systems. Resources are good and there is a high standard of accommodation and specialist resources. Value for money is outstanding.

What does Farnborough College of Technology need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the awareness of cultural diversity is promoted well in all lessons and in reviews for work-based learners, to prepare learners for their future participation in a multicultural workforce.
- Develop further the systematic sharing of outstanding practice in teaching and learning across the college, to ensure that more activities in lessons are planned consistently to provide suitable challenge for the more able learners.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- learning in a professional but supportive and caring atmosphere
- the support and motivation provided by approachable tutors
- the 'student organiser' which helps them to reflect on what they have achieved and focus on their targets for improvement
- the college's responsiveness to making improvements on issues learners may raise
- work experience and the promotion of employability skills
- feeling safe in the college
- the high quality of the resources
- working in groups
- the open communal spaces for socialising and relaxing
- being treated as adults
- the college radio station
- one-to-one information technology support offered by the learning centre.

What learners would like to see improved:

in a few instances:

- greater consistency in the quality and relevance of group tutorials
- vending machines and personal storage facilities in the engineering block.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the effort the college makes to ensure that training meets employers' needs
- the flexibility of progress reviews and assessments to meet the working patterns of the business
- the quality of the support the college provides to apprentices in the workplace
- the speed of the reporting of learners' absence and the quality of communication with the college
- the friendly and open atmosphere in the college
- the high standard of work produced by the learners they employ.

What employers would like to see improved:

in a few instances:

- opportunities for learners to practise skills in college prior to assessments.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

9. The college has been highly successful in bringing about sustained improvement in outcomes for learners, continuing the substantial increase in success rates that was evident at the last inspection. Learners' outcomes are now outstanding, as is the quality of provision. The college has made excellent progress in tackling areas for improvement from the last inspection. The provision of tutorials for individual learners is now outstanding and is a key factor in learners' high standards and continuing success. The college recognises work still to do to bring the quality of lessons consistently to the level of the best seen by inspectors. Lesson observation processes and support for teachers equip the college very well to effect further improvement. The college provides outstanding value for money, as is shown in outstanding outcomes for learners and the college's robust financial health.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 1

10. Outcomes for learners are outstanding. The rate of improvement in success rates since the last inspection has been very significant and has been sustained. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18, who account for the majority of learners, are very high. They are above average for adults and for learners across the range of the college's work-based learning provision. Learners make good, and often better, progress in their learning, but advanced level learners in BTEC national diploma courses make inconsistent progress compared to their prior attainment on entry to these courses. This is an area for improvement that the college recognises.
11. Learners develop good, and often outstanding, practical skills, and a sound grasp of the related underpinning theory. This was evident in each of the subject areas inspected. Learners are prepared very well for the next step in their future careers. Great emphasis is placed on developing wider employability skills through work experience or paid, part-time work. Employers and learners alike value the emphasis the college places on developing learners' employability skills.
12. The high-profile approach to managing learners' progress and target setting has made a very significant contribution to outstanding outcomes for learners. Teachers and learners share an understanding that taught classes form only part of the programme of study in addition to timetabled assignment, homework and resource-based study. Weekly group tutorials begin with a personal reflection on attainment and enjoyment of the past week's lessons and assignments and then focus on individual target setting for the coming week. Excellent use of the 'student organiser' is integral to this process.

13. Learners feel exceptionally safe while studying, and on college premises, and make a very valuable contribution to reviewing and improving arrangements through course evaluation and the 'learner voice' arrangements. Safe working practices are continually reinforced and the promotion of internet safety measures is high. Learners are well informed and very able to make mature decisions regarding their own health and well-being. They participate well and with enthusiasm in a broad range of tutorial, enrichment and cultural events.
14. Volunteering is integral to the college's commitment to the local community partnership. Learners participate enthusiastically through a wide range of events. Learners in receipt of additional learning support succeed at least as well as their peers. Inspectors found no evidence of significant underachievement among different groups of learners.

The quality of provision

Grade 1

15. The quality of teaching and learning is good. All teachers are qualified or working towards a teaching qualification. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subjects. They are reflective and keen to improve their practice. Learners appreciate the high level of support from staff, which stimulates learning and enables them to interact with their peers with confidence. Most lessons are well planned and include a range of activities that keep learners interested. They often include games, group work and role playing to reinforce learning and understanding and to provide a relaxed atmosphere.
16. Initial assessment of learners' individual learning needs is effective and used well to provide informative student profiles for all teachers. Teachers use these well to provide effective additional support in lessons, but use them less effectively in lesson planning to provide higher level tasks for more able learners. In the better lessons, teachers ensure that they check the learning of all learners through directed questioning, and skilfully draw out contributions until learning objectives are covered fully.
17. Learners are attentive, make good use of their time, work very well together and treat each other with respect. They enjoy their lessons, and participate positively and constructively in activities, making good progress with their learning. However, in a minority of cases, the teacher dominates the lesson and provides little opportunity for learners to demonstrate independent and collaborative learning; learners are not challenged sufficiently to achieve their full potential. Teachers rarely take advantage of opportunities to promote cultural diversity.
18. A comprehensive and rigorous lesson observation scheme accurately identified areas of teaching and learning practice which needed to be improved, and these have been successfully tackled since the previous inspection. Observation reports focus equally on the development of learning and teachers' activities to promote learning. Advice for teachers on how to improve learning is detailed

and helpful. College observation grades are consistent with those on this inspection. Where lessons have been judged less than good, a robust support and monitoring procedure has ensured continual improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. However, the observation forms do not expect observers to check for the promotion of cultural diversity in lessons and records show little evidence that it is checked.

19. Teachers set frequent and regular coursework and homework. Learners receive useful and specific feedback on work, with good advice on how to improve standards and how to make better progress. Staff and learners make excellent use of the 'student organisers', which contain their individual learning plans to set effective short-, medium- and long-term academic and personal targets. This encourages learners to reflect on their progress in their lessons in preparation for their weekly one-to-one tutorials. Teachers monitor work completion records carefully and chase up quickly any missing work. Internal verification processes are rigorous and accurate.
20. Learning accommodation is suitable and most classrooms are decorated with posters and learners' work. Learning resources are very good, including access to computers and to the VLE. Learners appreciate and value the broad variety of materials on the VLE. It enables them to catch up on missed work, to check their understanding of the subject matter, and to provide further opportunities to extend their knowledge. Teachers use ILT well to enhance learning in many lessons, including the use of video, computer animations and interactive software. However, in a small minority of lessons, learners gain little from the use of the presentation software merely as an alternative method of giving teaching notes.
21. The range of courses available is very extensive, offering clear and well-established progression routes in most subjects from entry level to advanced level and higher education. The college is highly responsive to broadening the curriculum, using local information well to plan and significantly expand sustainable provision, especially at entry level. In many subjects learners have a broad range of options available to meet their needs and career aspirations. Engagement with schools is good, with the college working collaboratively with three schools consortia that include schools with significantly low attainment at GCSE. Taster courses offer insight into life at college, motivating and inspiring school pupils to discover and experience new subjects and vocational areas.
22. Work with partner organisations is outstanding and ensures the maximum learning and careers opportunities for learners. The college provides apprenticeships in a broad range of vocational areas, in partnership with a wide range of employers and in response to local and regional demand. Effective discrete provision for young people not in employment, education or training has been developed in collaboration with a local specialist provider and local charity. Highly-developed partnerships have helped to bring together the local community and international corporations. For example, running an innovative training programme in aircraft maintenance, led by a consortium of local

aerospace employers, has resulted in three weeks' work experience for full-time learners with a major company. Employers speak very highly of the college and its commitment to enabling people to gain access to high-quality education and training. The college uses volunteering by staff and learners very well to develop learners' community awareness through a wide range of events.

23. The college has made exceptional progress in developing its tutorial support, which is now outstanding. A cross-college schedule of themes and events is used as a basis for group tutorials and good use is made of the college theatre to host cross-college themed events, for example about money matters in support of national finance week. All learners benefit from high-quality, specialist presentations by health professionals and external speakers. The college maintains strong communications with parents, carers and employers. Reporting mechanisms are good. For example, when learners are absent the college automatically contacts parents, employers and carers.
24. A very good range of extensive support services is available for learners, who benefit from specialist advice on careers, higher education, finance, health, welfare and legal matters. The college has made a strong commitment from its own reserves to funding and maintaining a careers advice and guidance service as part of its sustained approach to developing learners' long-term employability.

Leadership and management

Grade 1

25. The clear ambition and vision of the Principal and governors, coupled with the very strong commitment of staff to learners, are reflected in the consistent trend of improvement since the previous inspection. A very strong culture of performance management permeates the college that is embraced by staff. High expectations are set and shared by staff and learners alike. Clear two-way communication between senior managers and staff leads to a friendly atmosphere in the college, where staff turnover is relatively low and morale high. A very effective ethos of team work has played a significant part in the consistent improvements seen across many aspects of the college.
26. Governance of the college is outstanding. Governors use their broad range of highly relevant skills and experience to play an active and appropriate role in setting the strategic direction of the college. They provide strong critical challenge and support to the Principal and senior managers. All aspects of college life are scrutinised rigorously, with an unrelenting focus on ensuring the college remains in a sound financial state and that high standards are maintained.
27. Safeguarding has a high profile in the college and arrangements for safeguarding learners are outstanding. Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks are carried out for governors, staff and the small number of volunteers. These are repeated every three years. Safeguarding records are maintained on a comprehensive single central register that includes details of the college's safe

recruitment practices and relevant staff training. A safeguarding team coordinates safeguarding activities very well across the college. The safeguarding improvement action plan incorporates suggestions from learners. Staff review safeguarding issues sensitively with work-based learners, who are very aware of their personal safety at work. The overwhelming majority of learners feel safe. Staff and governors have undergone appropriate safeguarding training and both staff and learners have a clear understanding of the correct procedures to follow if they have any safeguarding concerns. Health and safety procedures are rigorous, with risk assessments completed for all relevant activities, especially within practical working environments. The few incidents and accidents are monitored carefully.

28. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college has benefited recently from an increasingly diverse student cohort, and staff are responsive to ensure these learners are successful. Following a significant increase of Nepali learners, staff training has helped staff to be familiar with the customs and culture of this community. In addition, a full-time course of English for speakers of other languages was instigated primarily for Nepali learners, and a Nepali governor was appointed recently. Despite comprehensive staff training, the promotion of diversity is not prominent in teaching and learning sessions for a number of curriculum areas, including work-based learning. Where it does take place, it is done very well.
29. The college has a well-established equality forum where equality and diversity issues are explored thoughtfully and procedures are reviewed as appropriate. In particular, the success, retention and achievement rates of learners are analysed very thoroughly and there is no achievement gap for any group of learners by gender, ethnicity or disability. The participation by learners in enrichment activities is analysed similarly. The college is adopting a single equality scheme and has a comprehensive action plan that is driving forward further improvements. The proportion of staff of minority ethnic heritage is above that of the local community, but not that of the learner population. The college's accommodation is fully accessible to learners with restricted mobility.
30. Arrangements for collating the views of learners are outstanding. All courses elect student representatives and staff take the views of learners seriously, responding positively to their requests and suggestions wherever possible. Learners complete college-wide questionnaires at the beginning and end of the academic year which are analysed thoroughly by staff. The college also systematically gathers the views of parents through questionnaires and well-attended parents' meetings. These provide staff with useful feedback which has led to subsequent improvements. The views of employers are similarly canvassed and acted upon.
31. Quality assurance procedures are comprehensive and have led to significant improvements. Progress towards a wide range of targets, both curriculum and financially related, is monitored stringently through regular meetings between managers at every level. These include course reviews between the Principal

and curriculum managers which lead to well-focused actions, for example to maintain learners' retention rates. The support provided to learners is outstanding and their progress towards individual targets is reviewed rigorously. Procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are accurate. Teachers receive good support to improve their teaching, especially where teaching and learning are judged to be no better than satisfactory. Self-assessment is an inclusive process involving all staff and incorporates the views of learners. The self-assessment report is accurate, but a small number of programme reviews were too superficial in parts. Management information is accurate and used extensively by staff to monitor the performance of learners.

32. The college has outstanding financial health. Senior managers and governors adopt a prudent approach towards the college's finances. Budgeting processes are rigorous, but allow curriculum managers flexibility in how they deploy staff; for example, remission from teaching is agreed appropriately for staff involved with special projects. The college consistently meets its recruitment targets. The college has invested heavily to improve the standard of accommodation, and facilities and specialist equipment are good. For example, in 2009/10, a new aeronautical and automotive academy building was completed within budget and timescale, funded solely by the college. The high success rates across the college and the college's financial health contribute to outstanding value for money.

Subject areas

Health, social care and childcare

Grade 1

Context

33. Some 200 learners, who are mainly female and aged 16 to 18, are taking full-time programmes from foundation to advanced level. The majority of learners are on health and social care courses at advanced level, with some 80 learners studying childcare. Small numbers of learners work at foundation level. Foundation degrees provide several pathways for progression. The college's work-based learning provision was not inspected as part of the subject area.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Learners' success rates on almost all courses have improved so that they were very high in 2010/11 and have been consistently above average. Learners' achievement of high grades is good, in health and social care in particular, and all learners were successful in functional skills. Their attendance and punctuality are excellent.
- Learners' progression to further or higher study or relevant employment is good, with many learners progressing from foundation through to advanced level courses, into foundation degrees, or into nursing, primary teaching or social work. A growing number of learners gain employment as a direct result of work placement.
- Learners' development of employability skills is excellent. Learners gain in self-confidence, develop good time management, communication, research and problem-solving skills. Learners on advanced level courses develop highly effective critical thinking skills to analyse and evaluate their own performance through reflective practice and action planning for improvement.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan a rich variety of activities that motivate learners and promote their participation. In better sessions, creative assessment strategies confirm and extend learning successfully, often through good use of ILT. However, teachers provide limited opportunities for learners in advanced level childcare to gain confidence in using the interactive whiteboard – now a standard practice in industry.
- Strong links to placement experiences raise learners' understanding of social inclusion and safeguarding to inform professional practice. For example, learners worked enthusiastically in small groups to plan a reminiscence activity for older people. They showed an excellent understanding of the varying needs of older people, including their different needs in terms of ethnicity, culture and ability.
- Learners are motivated to achieve their challenging targets and show good understanding of their progress. They value highly the excellent 'student organiser' as an aid to reflect on their progress, plan homework and set targets.

Teachers' planning benefits from comprehensive group profiles that include clear targets for learners. However, in several sessions teachers missed opportunities to plan systematically to extend and challenge fully the more able learners.

- Well-planned assessment provides appropriate challenge for learners. Programme handbooks provide an assignment schedule enabling learners to manage their time effectively. Teachers' feedback is clear, constructive and leads to improvement in learners' performance. Work is of a good standard with clear evidence of wider reading and research.
- A well-managed and organised work experience programme provides a range of opportunities to broaden experience and develop appropriate skills. Teachers take appropriate steps to ensure learners' safety. Several foundation level learners undertake voluntary work, enriching their experience. A particular strength is the strong relationship with a local hospital that provides well-supported placements in several of its departments. Learners make good use of these experiences in lessons.
- A comprehensive range of full-time courses comprises provision from foundation level to degree level, with pathways for health and social care, and childcare. Summer schools provide valuable opportunities for potential learners to visit the college, speak to current learners and review the courses on offer. Efforts to recruit more males into programmes are ongoing and are well conceived.
- Initial advice and guidance ensure learners make a well-informed choice of study. Close links with parents and carers enable close monitoring of learners' progress. Precise initial assessment informs plans to meet personal and support needs closely. The management of additional learning support, individual tutorials and challenging realistic personal and learning targets all contribute to learners' enjoyment and outstanding success.
- A culture of continuous improvement and high expectations of teachers and learners drives the provision. Robust tracking systems highlight speedily any areas of concern and prompt appropriate action. Enthusiastic, highly-motivated teachers are well qualified and experienced, updating their vocational experience systematically to maintain its currency. Equality and diversity and safeguarding themes are at the core of the provision.
- The self-assessment report is inclusive of learners' and teachers' views, is detailed and evaluative, leading to a realistic quality improvement plan. Good progress is being made to tackle successfully identified issues. Resources to support learning are good reflecting diversity well, including careful inclusion of positive images. Well-designed practical rooms provide realistic working environments, enhancing the development of learners' skills.

What does Farnborough College of Technology need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and learning activities challenge and extend the more able learners in all lessons, by making more precise use of group profiles and

individual target setting. Share existing good practice in these aspects, to ensure consistently high levels in learners' progress.

- Provide opportunities for learners in childcare to gain confidence and competence in the use of interactive whiteboards, so that they meet more fully current industry standards.

Engineering

Grade 2

Context

34. Of the 400 or so learners in the subject area on programmes from foundation to advanced level, some 40% are in motor vehicle engineering, around 30% in general engineering, and approximately 25% in aeronautical engineering. Some 5% of learners are female. In addition, 142 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attend the college on a part-time basis. The college's work-based learning provision was not inspected as part of the subject area.

Key findings

- Success rates in aerospace and general engineering are high, significantly above national averages for the sector. However, learners' success in motor vehicle courses at intermediate level has been below national averages. Actions to improve success in this area, by revising entry criteria, are appropriate, but it is too soon to see any impact on success rates.
- Learners' progression through qualification levels and into higher education is good. Many learners start engineering whilst at school, then go into full-time courses at intermediate or advanced level. Many learners progress to higher education at a variety of universities.
- Learners develop good levels of practical skills with a good understanding of underpinning theory. In the motor vehicle workshop, learners in their first two months of learning demonstrated very good skills and knowledge in dismantling and re-assembling car engines. Employed learners, particularly those in aerospace, show very good knowledge in procedures and techniques used in a heavily-regulated and safety-conscious industry.
- Learners feel very safe at college. The environment is respectful and there are few instances of inappropriate behaviour. Learners wear appropriate protective equipment in workshops and have a sound awareness of their responsibilities for their own and others' health and safety. In workshops, however, risk assessments in relation to the operation of specific pieces of machinery are not displayed prominently enough.
- Teaching and learning and assessment are good. Teachers make good use of information and learning technology (ILT), including interactive whiteboards, to expand on and develop engineering concepts; video clips support the development of learners' understanding. Satisfactory lessons often feature the teacher giving too much information, without asking learners to contribute their own ideas, or in the case of apprentices, their experiences from the workplace.
- The provision meets the needs and interest of learners, employers, schools and the local community very well. There is a strong link with universities. Many learners from the national diploma programme progress into higher education.

A good range of engineering trades and professions are represented at the college, although there is little provision at foundation level.

- Teachers and learners make good use of learning plans in lessons and tutorials to assist with the setting and recording of targets for learners' progress. However, teachers make insufficient use of the results of initial assessment to plan to meet the needs of all learners in lessons. In-class support plays a vital role in enabling learners with additional learning needs to progress and achieve.
- The provision has improved significantly since the last inspection. Effective performance management systems are in place and staff have a good collective understanding and sense of ownership of strengths and areas for improvement in the provision. Engineering has a clear strategy for meeting the needs of employers through programmes which blend college and workplace-based training.
- The department participates with success in local and national initiatives to attract females into engineering. Some 5% of learners are women, and female staff and senior managers provide good role models for learners. The above average proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups progress and achieve in line with other learners.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. Contact details for college staff responsible for welfare are well publicised and learners refer confidently to their handbooks for details on this and other welfare aspects of their programme. Frequent tutorials provide good coverage of the details of support services including financial and personal support. Learners are clear on what to do if experiencing difficulties of any kind.
- Self-assessment is thorough and action plans focus on key areas for improvement. The use of feedback from learners to make improvements to the provision is outstanding. Improvements resulting from recent feedback include changes to timetables and the provision of ILT equipment. Learners value the prominent display of findings from learners' forums and the actions the college has taken in response.

What does Farnborough College of Technology need to do to improve further?

- Develop more varied activities for theory lessons, to enable learners to participate more actively and so that teachers are able to check more frequently and systematically learners' understanding. Ensure that activities in theory lessons provide the opportunity for learners to participate actively. Ensure that teachers check learners' understanding thoroughly and systematically.
- Make more precise use of the results of initial assessment to plan teaching strategies in order to meet the needs of all learners in the group. Record initial assessment results in handbooks, so they are more readily available to all teachers involved in learners' progress.

- Improve further the initial assessment, advice and guidance for learners progressing on to intermediate level motor vehicle programmes, in order to ensure their needs are met more fully and to improve their success.

Catering and hospitality

Grade 1

Context

35. The college offers a range of craft-based courses from foundation to advanced level in hospitality and catering for some 80 learners. At the time of the inspection almost all learners were following full-time programmes, with a small number of learners on apprenticeships. The majority of learners are aged 16 to 18 and are of White British origin; however, there are also large numbers of Nepali learners on these programmes. The college also offers a foundation degree in hospitality management. The college's work-based learning provision was not inspected as part of the subject area.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Their success has been consistently high over the last three years on all programmes. Learners demonstrate exemplary professionalism in their approach to their work. Learners' progression into further study or into employment is good.
- Learners develop excellent employability skills. When working in front-of-house situations learners demonstrate exceptional skills; they are confident and provide high standards of service in a range of situations. In the kitchens, learners demonstrate good skills during food preparation; their presentation of food is of a high professional standard. Learners develop their confidence, communication and team work skills well.
- Learners feel safe and use safe and hygienic working practices. Kitchens, restaurants and other hospitality areas are kept to a very high standard. The review of risk assessments is frequent and systematic. In lessons, teachers reinforce health and safety practice to good effect.
- Well-planned work experience, using a wide range of local employers, supports learners' progression to intermediate level. Learners value work experience highly, and a significant number obtain employment as a result. However, the college provides insufficient opportunities for learners to further their abilities, aspirations and awareness of the industry through activities such as competitions, guest speakers, visits to industry and events in the community.
- Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons, teachers' excellent use of individual questioning checks and extends learning very successfully. Teachers' passion for their subject creates a vibrant environment for learners. In the less effective lessons, the more able learners are insufficiently challenged and teachers provide too few opportunities for learners to demonstrate their learning and progress.
- Learners are very confident when working in practical areas and can explain confidently what they need to do and why. However, teachers do not always make use of opportunities to develop this learning sufficiently. Learners enjoy

working together and learn from each other very effectively. Intermediate level learners value their involvement as role models and mentors of foundation level learners.

- Teachers' and learners' use of 'student organisers' is highly successful in enabling learners to achieve their qualifications. Learners find them very useful and take responsibility for their updating and accuracy. The 'student organisers' are particularly useful in helping learners identify their strengths and areas of weakness. Learners confidently share this information with other learners, staff and tutors in order to help them improve.
- Assessment is well planned. Careful tracking enables teachers to monitor progress and make appropriate interventions where learners may be falling behind, such as through catch-up sessions or other specialist support. Staff are developing very good materials available online through the college's re-designed virtual learning environment to help learners prepare for assessment. Materials for intermediate level learners are particularly effective.
- The care, guidance and support provided to learners are excellent. Learners and tutors have very professional and productive relationships. The tutorial programme combines pastoral care and academic progress exceptionally well and plays a vital role in helping learners to succeed and take responsibility for their learning and progress.
- All staff participate in self-assessment, making very good and frequent use of learners' views to improve the provision. Learners feel comfortable in giving their views in the knowledge these will be considered appropriately. Self-assessment focuses on the very high success rates for learners which have been sustained and improved. Action plans are appropriate, and the monitoring of progress against these is regular and meticulous.
- The hospitality and catering staff have an excellent team ethos which helps to ensure that expectations of learners' professionalism and standards are consistently set high across all learning sessions, reflecting the expectations of future employers. However, the college recognises that its engagement with employers to broaden and enhance the curriculum, enhancing learners' experiences and skills yet further, is underdeveloped.

What does Farnborough College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teachers' questioning skills in lessons to check and extend all students' learning, and in particular for the more able learners, by sharing existing good practice in this aspect more systematically.
- Expand and formalise engagement with employers to enable learners to benefit from additional opportunities to develop further their professional and employability skills through enhancements to the curriculum, such as visits to employers, and participation in competitions and events in the community.

Art, design and media

Grade 2

Context

36. Currently 235 full-time and 37 part-time learners study a range of art and design and media courses from foundation to advanced level. The provision includes vocational and A-level subjects. Some 70% of learners study art and design and around 20% study on media courses. Just over half of learners are female with 18% from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good, but the provision shows an inconsistent picture of learners' success. In media courses, success rates are outstanding with good levels of high grades on foundation and intermediate level courses. Pass rates and high grade achievement in A-level courses are above average, but too few learners complete their courses. On advanced level vocational courses learners have not been making expected progress compared to their prior attainment.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Practical and written work in photography is of particularly high quality and learners' work in graphics is varied and sophisticated. Learners are exposed to a wide range of formal and experimental drawing techniques; they use sketchbooks very well to explore ideas and processes. Learners in media develop a good range of vocationally relevant practical and technical skills.
- Guest speakers, work experience and assignments set by external partners enrich the curriculum and provide strong vocational relevance. Learners in media are able to participate in live radio broadcasts. Learners' work is celebrated in an innovative, annual 'Great Exhibition' event, where learners achieve a work skills qualification, and at an end of year ceremony.
- Teaching and learning and assessment are good, although this judgement encompasses a range of practice. The best lessons are planned and structured carefully with activities well timed and paced to meet learners' needs. In weaker lessons learners are passive and both assignments and lesson activities do not challenge them sufficiently.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to elicit understanding of key points. In some lessons learning that has occurred remains unrecorded, and learning activities do not encourage sufficiently independent learning. Detailed group profiles from initial assessment are consistently available to teachers but they are not used to identify how tasks for the more capable learners could be extended.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. Learners value the commercial experience that many staff integrate into teaching. However, the sharing of best practice in learning and teaching is underdeveloped.

- Learners value the tutorial provision highly. Group and individual tutorials are very effective in supporting learners. Most learners use the 'student organiser' on a daily basis to plan their assignments, homework submission and part-time jobs. The use of individual learning plans is effective. Learners set down and take responsibility for their own targets, and tutors monitor these frequently.
- The range of provision and opportunities for progression within the department and to higher education are good. The wide range of national diplomas offers choice and variety of direction in a good range of subjects.
- A range of partnerships, including with local companies and charities, has been developed to enable 'live' projects to be set for learners. Support for learners is good and leads to good outcomes for learners receiving support. In a media class, very effective additional support enabled all learners to make progress.
- Managers and staff are clearly ambitious for the success of their learners. Staff have implemented successfully a number of strategies that have contributed to high levels of learners' success on many courses. A culture of accountability has been embedded successfully within the department. The meeting structure enables effective communication across the department.
- Male and female learners and learners from all ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. The promotion of diversity in lessons is inconsistent, but there is good practice to be shared. Inspectors saw an example of good practice in a tutorial where learners explored the experience of blindness in a well-designed activity. However, opportunities are missed to expose learners to a range of influences from a variety of cultures.
- Staff make good use of learners' views to make improvements. Course representatives are effective; learners say that their views are both listened to and acted upon. Inspectors mostly agree with judgements made in the self-assessment report. Staff complete evaluative course reviews carefully and understand performance data. Self-assessment has contributed to demonstrable improvements in the provision.

What does Farnborough College need to do to improve further?

- Improve learners' progress and standard of work, on vocational courses in particular, by ensuring lessons provide appropriate challenge and development opportunities for the more capable learners.
- Ensure the quality of teaching and learning is more consistent through more systematic sharing good of practice and the introduction of strategies such as a formal peer observation scheme.
- Enrich the context in which learners work by using a broader range of cultural influences in projects.

Information about the inspection

37. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's vice principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the 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.
38. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. 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)
Farnborough College of Technology
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	1,913	0	1,722	191	0
Full-time learners	1,442	273	0	677	492
Part-time learners					
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1	1	2
Capacity to improve	1				
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	1				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1				
How safe do learners feel?	1				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	1				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	1				
Quality of provision	1	1	1	1	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?	1				
Leadership and management	1				
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	1				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	1				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1				
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?	1				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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