



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Longitudinal Inspection of the  
Further Education and Work-  
Based Learning Provision in  
North West Regional College

February and April 2012



Providing Inspection Services for  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

|                         |   |               |
|-------------------------|---|---------------|
| Almost/nearly all       | - | more than 90% |
| Most                    | - | 75%-90%       |
| A majority              | - | 50%-74%       |
| A significant minority  | - | 30%-49%       |
| A minority              | - | 10%-29%       |
| Very few/a small number | - | less than 10% |

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

|                |
|----------------|
| DESCRIPTOR     |
| Outstanding    |
| Very Good      |
| Good           |
| Satisfactory   |
| Inadequate     |
| Unsatisfactory |

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| ALC          | Area Learning Community                        |
| CDP          | College Development Plan                       |
| Department   | Department for Employment and Learning         |
| EF           | Entitlement Framework                          |
| e-ILP        | Electronic Individual Learner Plan             |
| Inspectorate | Education and Training Inspectorate            |
| GCSE         | General Certificate of Secondary Education     |
| ICT          | Information and Communication Technology       |
| ILT          | Information and Learning Technology            |
| IQ:RS        | Improving Quality: Raising Standards           |
| NI           | Northern Ireland                               |
| NQF          | National Qualifications Framework              |
| NVQ          | National Vocational Qualification              |
| PTP          | Personal Training Plan                         |
| PSA          | Priority Skills Area                           |
| QCF          | Qualifications and Credit Framework            |
| SER          | Self-Evaluation Report                         |
| SMT          | Senior Management Team                         |
| STEM         | Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics |
| VLE          | Virtual Learning Environment                   |
| WDF          | Workforce Development Forum                    |

## **PART ONE: SUMMARY**

### **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND CONTEXT**

1.1 The North West Regional College was established in 2007 following the merger of the previous legacy Colleges, the North West Institute of Further and Higher Education and Limavady College. The College has two campuses in Londonderry, two in Limavady and one in Strabane. It is the main provider of professional and technical training in the region and has significant outreach provision in the community. As well as its further education provision, the College provides work-based learning through the Department's ApprenticeshipsNI and Training for Success programmes. The College is also contracted by the Department as Lead Contractor for the delivery of the Steps to Work employment programme in the Foyle contract area.

1.2 The College's catchment area covers some of the most economically deprived parts of NI. In April 2012, Derry District Council had the highest rate of unemployment (claimant count) in NI at 8.2%<sup>1</sup>; Strabane and Limavady District Council areas had the third and fourth highest rates at 6.7% and 7.1% respectively. Seven of the wards across these District Council areas have rates of unemployment in excess of 14%. The three District Council areas have lower rates of employment for people aged 16-64 than the NI average and they have corresponding higher rates of economic inactivity. The skills mix of the labour force is below the NI average, particularly the proportion of adults with no formal qualifications.

1.3 In the academic year 2010/11, there were 24,100 learner enrolments across the College's further education provision; there were just over 4,000 full-time and 20,000 part-time enrolments. Just over half of the enrolments were enrolled on entry level and level one courses. One-quarter of the learners were enrolled on level two courses, and just over one-fifth of the learners were enrolled on level three courses. The proportion of enrolments on the Department's current priority skills areas was 20%, which is below the target set for the sector of 28%<sup>2</sup>

1.4 At the time of the inspection, 323 learners were registered on Training for Success programmes; 38 learners were registered on the Skills for Work strand and 285 learners were on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand. There were only 85 learners registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, 41 on a level 2 apprenticeship and 44 on a level 3 apprenticeship. The main provision in work-based learning is in construction craft training programmes, which account for 42% of all registrations in the College.

### **2. THE INSPECTION**

2.1 In February and April 2012, the Inspectorate carried out an inspection of the College's further education and work-based learning provision. The further education provision covered a representative sample of professional and technical courses up to and including level 3 courses on the NQF. In work-based learning, the inspection focused on the College's provision under the ApprenticeshipsNI and Training for Success programmes. The inspection did not include the College's Steps to Work adult employment programme.

2.2 A team of inspectors observed 241 lessons and directed training sessions. Discussions were held with the Principal and Chief Executive, members of the SMT and the College Management Team, the Chair of the Governing Body, heads of school, curriculum managers, course team leaders, lecturers, the Chair of the Skills Directorate, and a sample of employers.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: The April 2012 Northern Ireland Claimant Count.

<sup>2</sup> Source: The Department for Employment and Learning PSA Delivery Agreement 2: 2008

2.3 The inspection team examined samples of the learners' work, progress reviews, PTPs, minutes of team meetings, course planning and development documentation, self-evaluation reports and quality improvement plans, and other relevant documentation, policies, and reports.

2.4 The arrangements for the learner care, guidance and support, including safeguarding of vulnerable groups, were also inspected. In advance of the inspection, learners were given the opportunity to complete a confidential questionnaire to elicit their views on their experiences of the College. A total of 729 questionnaires were returned to the Inspectorate and 306 of these included written comments. The Inspectorate reported to the Principal and the Chair of the Governing Body, the main findings emerging from the questionnaires and, where, appropriate, these have been commented on within this report. In addition, inspectors carried out focus group meetings with a wide range of learners in the College.

| <b>Type of provision</b>   | <b>Number of learners enrolled</b>                        |
|--|---|
| Total Enrolments (Further Education )                            | 24,100  |
| Further Education  | Full time: 4,044<br>Part-time: 20,056                     |
| Entitlement Framework (14 – 19)                                  | 1,321   |
| Work-based Learning (Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI) | 408   |
| ApprenticeshipsNI:   | Level 2: 41<br>Level 3: 44                                |
| Training for Success:  | Programme-Led Apprenticeships: 285<br>Skills for Work: 38 |

### **3. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

#### **3.1 FURTHER EDUCATION AND WORK-BASED LEARNING PROVISION IN THE COLLEGE**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education and training provided by the College is good. The College has important strengths in most of its education, training and pastoral provision.

#### **3.2 FURTHER EDUCATION PROVISION**

In the professional and technical areas inspected, the quality of education and training provided by the College is good. The College has important strengths in most of its education, training and pastoral provision.

#### **3.3 WORK-BASED LEARNING PROVISION**

The quality of training provided by the College is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management and achievements and standards and the provision for learning which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively.

#### 4. TABLE OF PERFORMANCE LEVELS

| Overall Effectiveness | Further Education and Work-Based Learning Provision | Further Education | Work-Based Learning |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|
|                       | Good  | Good              | Satisfactory        |

| Contributory Performance Levels:  | Further Education and Work-Based Learning Provision | Further Education | Work-Based Learning |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| Leadership and Management         | Good  | Good              | Satisfactory        |
| Quality of Provision for Learning | Very Good   | Very Good         | Good                |
| Achievements and Standards        | Good  | Good              | Satisfactory        |

#### Professional and Technical Areas

##### (Further Education and Work-Based Learning)

|                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Essential Skills       | Satisfactory |
| Health and Social Care | Outstanding  |

##### Professional and Technical Areas (Further Education)

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Art and Design          | Very Good    |
| Business and Management | Good         |
| Early Years             | Very Good    |
| Essential Skills        | Satisfactory |
| Hairdressing            | Very Good    |
| Health and Social Care  | Outstanding  |
| Music                   | Good         |
| Sport                   | Good         |

##### Professional and Technical Areas (Work-based Learning):

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Electrical Installation and Engineering   | Very Good    |
| Essential Skills                          | Good         |
| Health and Social Care                    | Outstanding  |
| Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering  | Inadequate   |
| Plumbing                                  | Good         |
| Transportation Operations and Maintenance | Satisfactory |
| Wood Occupations                          | Satisfactory |

#### 5. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

5.1 In further education and work-based learning, the overall quality of education and training in the College is good. In further education it is good, and in work-based learning it is satisfactory.

5.2 Leadership and management of the curriculum is good overall; it is good in further education and is satisfactory in work-based learning. Senior and middle managers have a shared commitment to continuous improvement and performance management in the College is good. With the exception of the essential skills provision, the quality of leadership and management is good or better in the professional and technical areas inspected. In work-based learning the quality of leadership and management is variable across the professional and technical areas inspected.

5.3 In further education, the use of management information to aid quality improvement planning is a key strength. In work-based learning, although good progress has been made recently in providing curriculum managers with mostly accurate information on outcomes, its use to aid decision making at all levels in this area is underdeveloped.

5.4 The Inspectorate has confidence in the College's self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes for its further education and work-based learning provision. Self-evaluation and quality improvement planning are well-developed in most of the professional and technical areas. In the majority of the professional and technical areas, course teams, however, do not evaluate sufficiently the quality of teaching and learning, and the use of specific and measurable targets for improvement in the quality improvement plans is underdeveloped.

5.5 Overall levels of economic engagement are good, and they are particularly strong in art and design, early years, hairdressing and in health and social care. More needs to be done strategically, however, to enhance levels of economic engagement in work-based learning, where the provision is limited, particularly in the ApprenticeshipsNI programme; the number of learners registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is inadequate. With the exception of health and social care, the provision in nearly all of the professional and technical areas is too small.

5.6 The quality of the provision for learning overall is very good; it is very good in further education and is good in work-based learning.

5.7 The quality of pastoral care for learners is a strong feature of the College. On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the College has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults.

5.8 In nearly all of the further education professional and technical areas inspected, the range of provision of full-time and part-time courses is good or better, and learners have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that matches well their career aspirations.

5.9 The quality of teaching and learning is good or better in most (82%) of the lessons and directed training sessions, with just under one-half (48%) being very good or outstanding. In the remaining minority of lessons, the quality of teaching and learning is mostly satisfactory.

5.10 The quality of the provision in essential skills is satisfactory. While the SMT is strongly committed to the delivery of a high quality provision within the essential skills, and have invested significantly in resources to enhance the delivery of the essential skills, the overall strategic management is fragmented. The outcomes in the essential skill of ICT are poor.

5.11 ILT is well used in nearly all aspects of the College's further education provision; overall it is very good. While the use of ILT to enhance training and learning is good overall in work-based learning, it is less well-embedded than in the further education provision, and its use, is underdeveloped in electrical installation and engineering, the essential skills, mechanical and manufacturing engineering and wood occupations.

5.12 Achievements and standards overall are good; they are good in further education but are satisfactory in work-based learning.

5.13 In further education, most learners attain good or better standards of work. They develop a good range of professional and technical skills and are making good progress in their work. The standards of work attained by learners in work-based learning, however, are variable.

5.14 Overall success rates on level 2 and level 3 courses in further education have increased over the last two years, due to improvements in retention and achievement rates.

5.15 Success rates have improved on the Skills for Work strand of the Training for Success programme over the last three years. Success rates, however, have fallen on the Programme-Led Apprenticeships programme due to a lack of relevant work placements. Success rates across all the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes have increased significantly over the last three years, due to major improvements in retention rates.

5.16 In work-based learning, the progression rates from the Programme-Led Apprenticeship programme into employer-based apprenticeships are low.

#### **5.17 What does the North West Regional College need to do to improve further?**

In further education, further work is needed to improve the quality of the College's provision in essential skills, particularly leadership and management, the quality of teaching and learning in a significant minority of lessons, and in the outcomes in the essential skill of ICT.

In work-based learning, there is a need to improve the quality of the provision, particularly:

- to provide more effective leadership and management of the work-based learning provision;
- improve the quality of mechanical and manufacturing engineering which is inadequate;
- expand the range of the provision, and in particular the numbers of learners registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme; and
- to improve outcomes and achievements and progression rates to further education and training on the Programme-led Apprenticeship strand of Training for Success programme.



## **PART TWO: OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION**

### **6. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

6.1 Overall, the quality of the strategic leadership and management of the curriculum in the College is good. The SMT, led by the Principal, is committed to the continuous improvement of the quality of teaching and learning and standards of attainment; this is a key priority in the strategic plans of the College. Good use, for example, is made of internal curriculum development projects to promote improvement across the College. Performance management is good, and effective processes are in place to identify and to address underperforming courses through the College's performance review process. The inspection identified examples, where heads of school and course teams, through the support of the SMT, have implemented robust actions to good effect to raise standards across the College.

6.2 While the restructuring of the middle management tier in September 2011 has been challenging in realigning roles and responsibilities in whole-college curriculum management, it has been implemented effectively, and has created a coherent middle management tier. Members of this tier, the College Management Team (CMT), show high levels of dedication to their work, are a cohesive group and undertake their work very effectively.

6.3 In further education, the quality of leadership and management is good or better in nearly all of the professional and technical areas inspected. It is outstanding in art and design, health and social care, and sport, and is very good in early years, and in hairdressing. The quality of leadership and management in essential skills, however, is satisfactory.

6.4 In work-based learning, there are variations in the quality of leadership and management across the professional and technical areas inspected. It is outstanding in health and social care, very good in electrical installation and engineering, and is good in the essential skills, plumbing and the Skills for Work provision. Leadership and management is satisfactory in transportation operations and maintenance, and wood occupations, and is inadequate in mechanical and manufacturing engineering.

6.5 Most of the lecturers in the College are dedicated and professional in their work. A key strength is their commitment to meet the needs of learners in the College.

6.6 Lecturers and support staff in the College have good opportunities to contribute to the drafting of the CDP. Nevertheless, their knowledge and understanding of the business and strategic planning processes in the College is underdeveloped.

6.7 In 2010, the responses to a Listening to Staff Survey identified significant concerns by staff on their levels of job satisfaction, poor relationships between management and staff, and on low levels of staff morale. In response to this survey, the SMT implemented a wide range of initiatives to enhance internal communications with staff and to improve relationships within the College. The results of the 2011 Listening to Staff Survey show significant improvements in staff perceptions on their experiences in the College. While these improvements are welcome, during the inspection some lecturers reported ongoing levels of anxiety on some key issues, notably job security and workload pressures. The inspectors found that these concerns were not having an adverse effect on the quality of the learners' experiences in the classroom. It is important, however, that the SMT continues to sustain further improvements in internal communications and relationships with staff across the College.

6.8 Members of the Governing Body are committed to the life and work of the College. Appropriate reporting mechanisms are in place to scrutinise the College's high-level key performance indicators on outcomes and achievements through the work of the Education Sub-committee. Opportunities for this Sub-committee to scrutinise the quality of provision and levels of attainment, at an operational level, in each of the eight academic schools, however, are underdeveloped.

6.9 The effective use of management information to inform decision-making is a key strength of the work of the College's further education provision. There is a strong emphasis on the interrogation of data and the use of reporting tools to create accurate summaries on key performance indicators for managers and staff at all levels. Although it is less well implemented, the College has made good progress recently in providing curriculum managers access to mostly accurate information on the outcomes for work-based learning programmes, through its bespoke College Training Information System. There is a need for further refinement of the system and for additional training for middle managers in its use.

6.10 The Inspectorate has confidence in the College's self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes for its further education provision up to and including level 3 courses and in work-based learning. Self-evaluation and quality improvement planning are well-developed in most of the professional and technical areas. Typically, course teams make effective use of data to make informed judgements on the quality of the provision. In the best practice, in art and design, health and social care, and sport, learners play a significant role in the self-evaluation process. In the majority of the professional and technical areas, however, course teams do not evaluate sufficiently the quality of teaching and learning. More generally, there is insufficient use of specific and measurable targets for improvement in the majority of the quality improvement plans.

6.11 Across the College, staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in their professional and technical areas. The staff development provision is mostly very good. Annual staff development planning is robust; it is set against an appropriate range of objectives, and responsive to identified and specific training needs arising from staff appraisals and curriculum self-evaluation reports. In a minority of areas, including hairdressing, the lecturers' industrial experience is dated. In mechanical engineering, the lecturers need further professional development in modern engineering practices.

6.12 The College, over recent years, has invested significant resources to support internal curriculum development projects. These projects have achieved much in developing innovative approaches to teaching and learning and assessment, connected learning across different professional and technical areas, and in the use of coaching and mentorship to raise standards. The scope and scale of these projects in both further education and work-based learning are impressive. About one-third of the projects support further innovation in the use of ILT in teaching and learning, and in assessment. The foci of the other projects include curriculum development to support new courses, careers and work-related learning, and learner support. The inspection has identified examples where the projects have enriched the quality of the learners' experiences and improved course outcomes, notably in art and design, electrical installation and engineering, hairdressing, health and social care, music, and in sport.

6.13 The quality of the accommodation and resources is very good and often outstanding in most of the campuses. The recent investment of £16 million has had a significant positive impact on the quality of the learning opportunities for learners attending the Strand Road campus. Further investment is planned to upgrade the quality of the accommodation on the Springtown campus, which is timely and necessary. Across nearly all of the campuses,

there is a very good range of specialist vocational equipment, which is mostly matched well to current industry standards. In mechanical and manufacturing engineering, there is an insufficient range of modern equipment in fabrication and welding, and the mechanical engineering workshop in the Limavady campus is unsatisfactory; it is cramped, untidy and does not meet fully the required standards in health and safety.

6.14 Levels of specialist technician support are good or better in nearly all areas in the College.

6.15 The overall quality of the leadership, management, planning and development of ILT across the College is very good. A high priority is given by the SMT to the strategic development and embedding of ILT and the College has made a significant investment in ILT resources and staff development across the campuses. The quality and range of ILT resources in most professional and technical areas is very good. There are, however, shortfalls in the quality of ILT resources available for learners in mechanical engineering, and in plumbing.

6.16 The College is committed strategically to the economic development of the region and engages well with a wide range of employers and other agencies, including the North West Skills Directorate. It is well- represented, at a strategic level, in key regeneration partnerships in the region. The heads of school, supported by the curriculum managers, have established employer liaison forums. These are used to good effect to improve the learners' learning experiences through work placements, site visits, sponsored competitions and enhanced lecturer expertise and industrial practices. In art and design, early years, hairdressing and in health and social care, the levels of economic engagement are very good or better. Key features include high levels of awareness of the employers' training and development needs, responsiveness in the provision of flexible, bespoke programmes or courses, and good opportunities for employer involvement in curriculum planning decisions and in the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes.

6.17 While there is clear evidence of some good levels of economic engagement, more needs to be done, including: better use of existing local labour market intelligence to review and broaden the narrow work-based learning curriculum, and in particular to expand the uptake and scope of the ApprenticeshipsNI provision; share the existing good practice in the way some heads of school and curriculum managers identify and respond to employers' needs for training and related services; and, enhanced flexibility in the delivery of short, bespoke training courses for employers. The College business development officer has worked hard to promote the College to the business community, although the position of economic engagement within the College needs to be strengthened strategically, and the impact monitored systematically, to ensure a more coherent approach to identifying and meeting effectively the diverse range of employers' needs.

6.18 The College has a strong profile in the community and has built a number of significant links and partnerships with local community stakeholders. College staff participate actively at strategic levels on local partnership boards and respond promptly and effectively to local and regional educational needs. It serves a wide regional hinterland and offers a good range of community-based services, including training in essential skills to a variety of age ranges within rural communities.

6.19 The College offers a wide range of courses to a large number of post-primary schools under the EF, across three ALCs. The schools report that communication and relationships with the College have improved in recent years and that most of their pupils' learning experiences are positive.

## **7. THE QUALITY OF THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

7.1 Overall, the quality of the provision for learning is very good; it is very good in further education and is good in work-based learning.

7.2 The quality of pastoral care for learners is a strong feature of the College. With few exceptions, the learners' responses to the Inspectorate's pastoral care questionnaire show high levels of satisfaction by them on their experiences in the College. Most of the written comments show that learners are very content with the quality of their learning experiences in the College. These findings concur with the feedback from the wide-ranging discussions inspectors had with learners in the focus group meetings that were held across the College.

7.3 On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the College has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults.

7.4 In nearly all of the further education professional and technical areas inspected, the range of provision of full-time and part-time courses is good or better. The inspection identified very few gaps in the curriculum offer. Over the last three years, there has been a significant expansion in learner enrolments in early years, hairdressing, health and social care, and in sport. With few exceptions, learners have good progression pathways to relevant higher education courses.

7.5 In further education, full-time learners have good access to a broad and balanced curriculum that matches well their career aspirations. In a number of professional and technical areas, including hairdressing, health and social care and sport, learners have good opportunities to undertake additional qualifications to enhance their progression routes into employment or higher education.

7.6 The curriculum in most of the work-based learning programmes is well-planned to meet the needs of the learners and those of the employers. Learners registered on the Skills for Work strand of the Training for Success programme, for example, are provided with a well-planned curriculum, particularly in construction, that helps them develop the relevant skills and competences to progress to appropriate further education and work-based training programmes. In mechanical and manufacturing engineering, and plumbing, however, a minority of the learners find it a challenge to complete their technical certificate in one year. In addition, in fabrication and welding, the range of units does not reflect well enough current practice in industry.

7.7 In work-based learning, the overall provision is narrow and in particular the number of learners registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is inadequate. With the exception of health and social care, the provision in nearly all of the professional and technical areas is too small. Most (87%) of the training on level 2 programmes is through the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand of Training for Success.

7.8 The quality of teaching, training and learning is good or better in most (82%) of the lessons and directed training sessions observed, with just under one-half (48%) being very good or outstanding. The very good or outstanding quality of teaching, training and learning is a feature of the provision in art and design, electrical installation and engineering, hairdressing, health and social care, and music. In health and social care, nearly all of the sessions were very good or outstanding. The key features of very good or outstanding lessons include, excellent planning and questioning techniques to meet the needs of individual learners, the effective use of a broad range of teaching strategies, well-planned work-related learning activities including guest speakers from industry and the innovative use of ILT to enrich the learners' learning experiences.

7.9 In the remaining minority (18%) of lessons and directed training sessions, most are satisfactory. These lessons are characterised by a narrow range of teaching approaches that do not meet adequately the often challenging needs of the learners, and ineffective planning to consolidate their learning.

7.10 Both lecturers and learners make effective use of ILT in nearly all aspects of the College's further education provision; overall it is very good. It is very good in business, hairdressing, music and sport; it is outstanding in health and social care. In essential skills, however, the use of ILT is not used effectively to enhance the learning. In work-based learning, while the use of ILT is good overall, it is less well-developed or embedded than in the further education provision. It is good or better in health and social care, transportation operations and maintenance, plumbing and on the Skills for Work strand of the Training for Success programme. There is however, insufficient use of ILT to support learning in electrical installation and engineering, the essential skills, mechanical and manufacturing engineering and in wood occupations.

7.11 The current placement rate for Programme-Led Apprentices with employers, across the professional and technical areas, varies from over 90% in plumbing to just over 50% in light vehicle body repair. The employer liaison officers work hard to find placements, but are challenged by the constantly changing labour market and the unwillingness of a significant number of local employers, even those on government contracts, to engage in the process. The employer liaison officers report that the majority of sole trader employers are unable to afford the insurance costs allied to offering a trainee a work placement. The quality of work-based training for those learners who are in a work-placement and for those on ApprenticeshipsNI programmes is good or better across the professional and technical areas.

7.12 The quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance is good, and is well-embedded in most areas across the College. It is well-managed and resourced and the careers staff work well with course co-ordinators and course teams, and the College marketing team. Effective use is made of work-related learning in art and design, business, early years, hairdressing, and in health and social care. Well-planned work-experience is a key strength in early years and in health and social care. The quality of the provision for careers in work-based learning is inconsistent; it is very good in plumbing and Skills for Work but is inadequate in mechanical and manufacturing engineering and transportation operations and maintenance, where the majority of learners are not sufficiently aware of the career progression pathways available to them.

7.13 The quality of learner services is very good with a strong presence across nearly all campuses. The student services manager has a well-articulated vision for learner services which incorporates a coherent, comprehensive and effective strategy for the provision of additional learning support. The learners are supported well by staff from the Learning Support Centre, assisted by the curriculum learning support co-ordinators from each of the eight schools. Referral processes, lines of communication, and the mechanisms for tracking learner progress are well-defined and robust. The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes for learner services are well-developed and embedded but do not reflect adequately the provision made for the learners on work-based learning programmes.

7.14 In most professional and technical areas, lecturers monitor and track closely the progress and attendance of learners, and the learners receive good support in their timetabled tutorials. In further education, however, the use of e-ILPs to help learners review their progress, and to set meaningful targets for improvement is applied inconsistently. They are particularly well-developed in early years and health and social care, but these online tools are at an early stage of development in most of the other professional and technical areas.

7.15 In work-based learning, the quality of the PTPs is good or better in all of the professional and technical areas. The College has an effective process for devising, monitoring and reviewing the PTPs, involving staff, the learners and employers. Good use is made of the outcomes from initial assessment to inform the PTPs; the target qualifications are well-set out with clear, measurable milestones for achievement and progress, which are well monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

7.16 Across nearly all of the professional and technical areas inspected, assessment is good or better. Typically, marking is thorough and lecturers provide learners with detailed and sensitive feedback on how they can improve their work. Formative assessment strategies are a particular strength in early years and in health and social care. In a number of professional and technical areas, the lecturers make effective use of a range of innovative assessment strategies, including group critiques in art and design, and the use of electronic portfolios in early years, hairdressing, transportation operations and maintenance, and in plumbing.

7.17 The overall quality of the provision in essential skills is satisfactory. While the SMT is strongly committed to the delivery of a high quality provision across the essential skills, the overall strategic management is fragmented and, as a result, roles and responsibilities across the provision are not defined adequately for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation.

7.18 The SMT has a strong commitment to cultural diversity in the College. It has implemented policies, structures, procedures and services which reflect accurately and effectively the needs and interests of individuals from different backgrounds and cultures, and support the promotion of good relations between staff and learners.

## **8. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

8.1 Overall, achievements and standards are good; they are good in further education and are satisfactory in work-based learning.

8.2 In further education, most learners attain good or better standards of work. They develop a good range of professional and technical skills and are making good progress. Most develop good communication skills that frequently match industry standards in the work they produce. The high expectations set by the lecturers are a feature of the provision in art and design, hairdressing and in health and social care.

8.3 The standards of work are variable in work-based learning. The standards of work in electrical installation and engineering, and health and social care are very good or better and in the essential skills and plumbing they are good. Standards are satisfactory in mechanical and manufacturing engineering, transportation operations and maintenance, and in wood occupations. Most learners demonstrate good technical skills in the workplace and in directed training, and are making good progress in their professional and technical units. In electrical installation and engineering, and plumbing, some of the learners attain outstanding achievements through their successful participation in regional and national skills competitions.

8.4 Overall, success rates on level 2 and level 3 courses in further education have increased over the last two years. Retention rates on level 2 courses are very good and have increased from 83% to 87%. The achievement rates<sup>3</sup> on level 2 courses are satisfactory and have improved from 67% to 74%. Although success rates on level 2 courses have improved from 56% to 64%, this is below the sector average of 70%. Over the same period retention rates on level 3 courses are very good at 84%. The achievement rates are good and have improved from 80% to 86%. Success rates on level 3 courses have improved from 68% to 72%. This is just above the average sector average of 71%. Progression rates to further education, training and employment are good or better in nearly all of the professional and technical areas inspected.

8.5 In further education, over the last two years, just over one-half of the learners enrolled on essential skills courses successfully achieved their qualification. The overall figures have been adversely affected by poor levels of attainment in the essential skill of ICT, where achievement rates over the last two years have been unsatisfactory. In 2011, the average success rate for all essential skills courses was 52%, which is below the sector average of 60%. In ICT, the success rate in the College was only 37%, which is well below the sector average of 57%; this is a particular concern.

8.7 During the period 2008/09 to 2010/11, the average retention and achievement rates on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme are good at 74% and 83% respectively. The average progression rate to further education or training is outstanding at 95%. Over the same period, the average retention and achievement rates on the Training for Success programmes are satisfactory at 66% and 70% respectively; the progression rate is also satisfactory at 60%. In nearly all of the professional and technical areas inspected, the progression rates from the Programme-Led Apprenticeship programme into employer-based apprenticeship programmes are low.

8.8 Over the last three years, success rates on the Skills for Work strand of Training for Success have increased from a low base of 44% to 60%, due largely to a significant improvement in retention rates. Over the same period, although most of the Programme-Led Apprenticeship learners achieved their technical certificates and essential skills qualifications part of their framework, the shortage of appropriate work placements have had a significant detrimental impact on the learners' opportunity to achieve their NVQs; consequently, achievement rates on this strand have fallen to just under 60%. Success rates in the same period on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme increased from a low base of 43% to 60%, due to significant improvements in retention rates.

8.9 The standards and achievements in the essential skills in work-based learning are good. Most of the learners' literacy and numeracy skills are good or better. Over the last three years, average achievement rates in both literacy and numeracy are very good at 86%. The achievement rates in ICT are good at 72%. The progress towards assessment for a minority of trainees in motor vehicle, plumbing and wood occupations is slow; after approximately 30 months since commencing their programme, it is inappropriate that approximately 9% of these trainees have not yet completed their essential skills assessment.

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<sup>3</sup> The proportion of learners who complete their courses, who achieve the full qualification

## **PART THREE: PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL AREA REPORTS**

### **9. ART AND DESIGN**

**Performance Level: Very good**

**Areas Inspected: Further Education Provision in:**

- Foundation Diploma full-time and part-time
- Diploma/Extended Diploma art and design
- Diploma/Extended Diploma art and design (design crafts)

#### **CONTEXT**

9.1 The College provides a good range of full-time and part-time art and design courses at levels 2 and 3, which provide learners with good opportunities to progress to higher level programmes. Enrolment on to full-time level 3 programmes is good.

**The quality of the leadership and management is outstanding.**

9.2 The head of school provides clear strategic direction and informed curricular leadership of the art and design provision. He has established good working relationships and developed collaborative working practices and standardised systems across both campuses. The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning process is appropriately underpinned by the effective analysis and use of quantitative and qualitative data to support the accurate identification of the strengths and areas for improvement. All staff are involved in the self-evaluation process and the head of school and the curriculum managers work closely in developing and monitoring the implementation of the quality improvement plan. The quality of the accommodation and resources on both campuses, including the technician support, is excellent.

**The quality of the provision for learning is very good.**

9.3 The quality of the teaching and learning is very good or outstanding in three-quarters of the sessions observed and good in the remainder. Sessions are well planned and structured and include a comprehensive range of teaching approaches, including effective one-to-one guidance and support, well planned and organised practical demonstrations and group critiques. An appropriately strong emphasis is placed on the integration of work-related learning to the assignment programmes through a comprehensive programme of visiting speakers, study visits and workshops by practising artists and designers which complement the very good careers education, information, advice and guidance provided by the course tutors. There is an appropriate focus on the use of drawing and first hand research to develop ideas through sketch books and design sheets, and extensive opportunities for learners to experience a wide range of media and processes and to develop their practical skills to a level where they can be applied creatively in the production of high quality work.

**Achievements and standards are very good.**

9.4 The standards of the learners' work across the art and design programmes are consistently very good. The learners are highly motivated and almost all are committed to pursuing careers within the creative industries. They develop very good communication skills and high levels of self-awareness and confidence, which are key attributes in enabling



their successful progression. A minority of learners, however, have insufficient opportunity to achieve an appropriate qualification in the essential skill of numeracy to support their progression. Retention and achievement rates on the full-time level 3 art and design programmes are very good at 88% and 93% respectively; the average retention rate on the part-time Foundation Diploma is good at 70%, with the achievement rate being good at 80%. The progression rate by the learners on the successful completion of their level 3 programme, to higher level programmes, is very good or better. The progression rate for the learners from the Foundation Diploma is outstanding at 92% and very good from the National Diplomas at 84%.

**Table of Results (Over the Last Three Years)**

| Course Type                  | Completion Year 2009 |         |          | Completion Year 2010 |         |          | Completion Year 2011 |         |          | Three Year Average |         |          |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------|----------|
|                              | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)            | Ach (%) | Succ (%) |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 1 | 100                  | 0       | 0        | 91                   | 69      | 63       | 91                   | 57      | 52       | 95                 | 31      | 30       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 2 | 72                   | 61      | 44       | 60                   | 39      | 23       | 70                   | 63      | 43       | 67                 | 54      | 36       |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 3 | 86                   | 94      | 81       | 88                   | 96      | 84       | 91                   | 91      | 82       | 88                 | 93      | 82       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 3 | 82                   | 86      | 71       | 100                  | 93      | 93       | 33                   | 33      | 11       | 70                 | 80      | 56       |
| Overall                      | 87                   | 65      | 56       | 85                   | 86      | 73       | 84                   | 82      | 69       | 86                 | 77      | 66       |

## 10. BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

**Performance Level: Good**

**Areas inspected: Further Education Provision in:**

- Full-time and part-time level 2 and level 3 business and related studies
- Part-time Foundation Certificate in human resource practice

### CONTEXT

10.1 There is satisfactory provision of level 2 and level 3 full-time and part-time courses in business and management. The full-time courses have been reviewed and restructured over the last two years and now provide more appropriate curriculum pathways across a range of business and related areas. Overall, full-time enrolments at levels 2 and 3 have increased over the last three years. In contrast, over the same period, there has been a significant drop in part-time enrolments across all levels up to and including level 3.

**The quality of the leadership and management is good.**

10.2 Due to poor outcomes over the last three years, the head of school, supported by the curriculum managers, comprehensively reviewed the full-time level 3 provision, focusing appropriately on its structure, content and staffing. This has resulted in a more contemporary and fit-for-purpose provision which matches well the learning needs of most of the learners. As a consequence, the provision based on the Derry campus is managed well and reviewed regularly. However, this effective practice is not reflected adequately in the same provision on the Limavady campus. There is a need for the managers to take action to tackle more effectively the inconsistencies which exist in the quality of provision across the campuses. The staff are well-qualified, and in some instances bring good, recent private and public sector experience to their teaching roles. The quality of the accommodation is good; it is clean and well maintained, with very good access to ILT facilities.

**The quality of the provision for learning is very good.**

10.3 The full-time provision at levels 2 and 3 provides appropriate learning pathways for the learners. The programmes also reflect an appropriate emphasis on the development of the learners' employability skills and on their career planning. The quality of teaching and learning in most of the lessons is good or better (87%); almost one-half of the lessons observed are very good. In the best lessons, the lecturers plan well and there is a good mix of skilful exposition, whole-class discussion and purposeful group work to consolidate the learning. The lessons are characterised by good pace and challenge. The regular and effective use of the VLE to enhance and support learning is a feature of almost all of the lessons. In the remaining (13%) lessons, the teaching and learning strategies do not meet adequately the particular and often challenging needs of the learners. The marking of assignments is mostly effective; the written feedback is detailed, and provides good guidance on how the learners can improve the quality of their work.

**The achievement and standards are satisfactory.**

10.4 Most of the learners make good progress in their professional and technical units. They demonstrate good standards of work, including a sound understanding of the characteristics of good training programmes, the features of contracts of employment, and a range of key accounting concepts. Most of the learners display good written and verbal communication skills, and they demonstrate good ICT skills, which they apply regularly and effectively in their work. However, a minority do not engage adequately with their lecturers; their attitude to learning is poor and reflected in their inconsistent attendance at classes. As a consequence, most of these learners are making slow progress towards achievement of their target qualification.

10.5 Over the last three years, the overall retention rate for the provision is very good (84%) and the overall achievement is satisfactory (79%). However, the poor retention rate on the full-time level 3 programmes over the same period has had an adverse impact on the overall success rate for the provision. Over the last three years, for those learners who complete their full-time programmes, most progress to employment, other full-time education provision or to higher level provision; most of the full-time level 3 learners who complete their courses progress to higher level provision.

**Table of Results (Over the Last Three Years)**

| Course Type                  | Completion Year 2009 |         |          | Completion Year 2010 |         |          | Completion Year 2011 |         |          | Three Year Average |         |          |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------|----------|
|                              | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)            | Ach (%) | Succ (%) |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 1 | 82                   | 85      | 69       | 95                   | 83      | 79       | 89                   | 67      | 59       | 88                 | 82      | 72       |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 2 | 80                   | 80      | 64       | 68                   | 92      | 63       | 67                   | 83      | 56       | 73                 | 84      | 61       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 2 | 95                   | 73      | 70       | 93                   | 73      | 68       | 85                   | 86      | 73       | 92                 | 75      | 69       |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 3 | 38                   | 87      | 33       | 59                   | 96      | 57       | 50                   | 91      | 45       | 49                 | 92      | 45       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 3 | 91                   | 73      | 66       | 94                   | 83      | 78       | 85                   | 82      | 69       | 90                 | 78      | 71       |
| Overall                      | 84                   | 77      | 65       | 89                   | 80      | 71       | 75                   | 82      | 62       | 84                 | 79      | 67       |

## 11. EARLY YEARS

**Performance Level: Very Good**

**Areas Inspected: Further Education Provision in:**

- Full-time and part-time level 1, 2 and 3 early years courses

### CONTEXT

11.1 The College provides a good range of full-time and part-time courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 across the three main campuses which ensure good progression routes to higher education programmes, and to employment. Enrolments have increased from around 450 learners in 2008/09 to the current total of 767 learners; of these 292 are on full-time programmes and 475 on part-time programmes. Almost all of the learners are female.

**The quality of the leadership and management is very good.**

11.2 The leadership and management of the early years provision is characterised by a strong strategic vision and commitment to continuous improvement. The effective use of data to monitor performance has influenced the curriculum planning and also led to a range of appropriate and increasingly effective approaches to improve retention rates across the

provision. This includes the introduction of a level 1 Cache Foundation Award and also a level 3 National Certificate, both with lower entry requirements, which has resulted in improvements in retention and achievement rates for the level 2 First Diploma and the level 3 National Diploma. The monthly monitoring of data ensures that all course co-ordinators are fully aware of the performance of their programmes.

11.3 Curriculum managers and their teams are committed to the learners' learning, care and welfare; they know the learners well. The course teams' use of effective tracking, for example, the good use of both e-ILPs and e-portfolios in individual tutorial sessions, help the learners set realistic targets and take responsibility for their own work. The lecturers contribute fully to the broadly accurate self-evaluation report and quality improvement plan, which is helpful in identifying areas for further improvement. The lecturers are well-qualified and suitably experienced; they are supported well in their work through an effective staff development programme. The well-developed, responsive links with employers and sectoral bodies are a key strength of the provision.

**The quality of the provision for learning is very good.**

11.4 The quality of the teaching and learning in the sessions observed is mostly (86%) good or better. There is a strong commitment for the learners to engage in active learning which generates good levels of motivation, interest and discussion. In the best practice observed, the lecturers provide well-organised and structured lessons, a good range of teaching and learning approaches, instances of good collaborative working by the learners, skilful questioning and good confirmation of the learning. In the less effective lessons (14%), planning is minimal, there is a lack of pace and challenge and some of the activities are insufficiently pitched at the ability levels of the learners. While ILT is used well to support teaching, its use needs to be developed further to enhance and extend the learners' experiences. Formative assessment strategies are well-developed, assessment of coursework is thorough and the internal verification process is robust. The learners receive very effective support in preparing to enter employment; they have very good opportunities to integrate the theory and practice learned by applying it effectively in appropriate work placements. The staff work hard to identify good quality work placements to ensure that learners can observe and experience the best practice. The College communicates clearly and effectively with employers about their expectations of the skills and knowledge that learners need to develop while in work placement, resulting in good levels of more focused support provided by them to the learners.

**Achievements and standards are good.**

11.5 The learners attain good standards in their work; they are well-motivated and attendance is good for nearly all of them. They mostly engage well in their studies and work placement, are responsive to the lecturers and have good attitudes to learning. In particular, across all levels of programmes, the learners develop a good awareness of important safeguarding practices and how these apply to the workplace. A majority of learners are fully committed to working with young children and intend to progress to further study or employment in the sector. Over the last three years, retention rates are very good at 83% and achievement rates are good at 84%. Progression rates to further education, training and employment across the provision are satisfactory.

**Table of Results (Over the Last Three Years)**

| Course Type                  | Completion Year 2009 |         |          | Completion Year 2010 |         |          | Completion Year 2011 |         |          | Three Year Average |         |          |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------|----------|
|                              | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)            | Ach (%) | Succ (%) |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 1 |                      |         |          |                      |         |          | 57                   | 75      | 43       | 57                 | 75      | 43       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 1 | 100                  | 100     | 100      | 100                  | 84      | 84       | 87                   | 98      | 85       | 96                 | 89      | 86       |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 2 | 74                   | 44      | 33       | 59                   | 100     | 59       | 86                   | 94      | 81       | 72                 | 83      | 60       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 2 | 82                   | 87      | 72       | 77                   | 92      | 71       | 94                   | 80      | 76       | 88                 | 84      | 74       |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 3 | 63                   | 92      | 57       | 59                   | 97      | 57       | 62                   | 81      | 50       | 61                 | 90      | 55       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 3 | 94                   | 80      | 75       | 94                   | 84      | 79       | 97                   | 74      | 71       | 95                 | 79      | 75       |
| Overall                      | 83                   | 82      | 68       | 78                   | 89      | 70       | 86                   | 81      | 70       | 83                 | 84      | 69       |

## 12. ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND INSTALLATION

**Performance Level: Very Good**

**Areas Inspected: Work-based Learning Provision in:**

- Training for Success Programme-Led Apprenticeship in electrical engineering and installation
- ApprenticeshipsNI electrical engineering and installation at levels 2 and 3

### CONTEXT

12.1 The provision of electrical programmes is very good and matched well to local needs. The economic downturn has severely impacted on employment opportunities in the region, leading to a steady decline in ApprenticeshipsNI enrolments over the last three years, and they currently represent just a minority (23%) of all work-based learning enrolments. Demand from trainees for electrical training remains high and enrolment levels on the Training for Success programme are strong, with an intake of around 32 trainees each year.

The profile of most trainees on entry to their programme is good with most holding a GCSE grade D or above in English and mathematics, while a minority (28%) of them have achieved both English and mathematics at GCSE grade C or above.

**The quality of the leadership and management is very good.**

12.2 Leadership and management of the electrical provision is very good, with an appropriate focus on raising achievement and supporting effectively the trainees and apprentices. The effective links and partnerships with local employers are managed well to source relevant work placements for most trainees. The College is highly committed to supporting electrical trainees and apprentices to participate in skills competitions, and this prepares them well to compete at the highest levels through an outstanding coaching and mentoring curriculum project. Staffing levels are good and lecturers are appropriately qualified. Electrical workshops are bright, spacious and well-resourced and maintained. All trainees and apprentices have regular access to very good specialist tools, equipment and resources across the College, and have good access to ILT facilities. While self-evaluation at course-team level is good, and team findings align closely with inspection evidence, improvement planning is just satisfactory, with actions not sufficiently prioritised or measurable.

**The quality of provision for learning is very good.**

12.3 The College offers a very good range of electrical courses that provide very good progression routes for pupils on EF programmes, and include good opportunities for trainees and apprentices to progress on to further and higher education provision. The curriculum is matched well to the needs of trainees, apprentices and employers, with flexible delivery and assessment. The quality of most (83%) of the training and learning is good or better, with a majority (66%) of sessions very good or outstanding. Most sessions are well-planned and developed to meet the individual training and learning needs of the trainees and apprentices. Feedback from trainees and apprentices in focus groups is very positive. The quality of the personal training plans is good, they are individualised with good evidence of feedback on progress being shared with trainees and apprentices, and of appropriate targets being set for their further development. While the quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance is satisfactory, it is too informal. Although employability is embedded into the training programmes, the trainees' knowledge of the local industry, jobs and opportunities available to them needs further improvement. While there is some good use of ILT, including resources on the VLE, it remains undeveloped, particularly for assessment purposes.

**Achievements and standards are very good.**

12.4 Trainees and apprentices are appropriately challenged and stretched, they develop skills and knowledge of a wide range of wiring systems and complex electrical circuits, and most are progressing well in their assessments. They can work independently in the workplace and are able to interpret complex instructions in a variety of formats. The trainees and apprentices demonstrate high levels of commitment to their programme, particularly those who regularly have to travel significant distances for their work or placements, due to the limited opportunities locally. Most trainees and apprentices demonstrate good or better standards of literacy and numeracy in their written work and in applied problem-solving. Almost all of them can effectively communicate orally with their peers, lecturers, employers and others in the workplace to plan their work. A small number of trainees and apprentices have demonstrated outstanding achievements in skills competitions and have been

recognised with prestigious awards over the last three years, at both local and national levels. Over the last three years, the retention rate is very good (83%) and the achievement rate is outstanding (91%) for the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand. Over the same period, the retention rate is good (75%) and the achievement rate outstanding (100%) for the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. Further action is required to improve the poor progression rates into employment (47%) and to further and higher education (31%).

**Table of Results (over the last three years)**

| Programme                    | Numbers registered who completed 4 weeks training | Retention rate % | Achievement rate % | Number progressed to FE/other training | Number progressed to relevant employment |
|------------------------------|---|------------------|--------------------|--|--|
| Programme-Led Apprenticeship | 95  | 83%              | 91%                | 29%                                    | 38%                                      |
| Level 2 ApprenticeshipsNI    | 16  | 75%              | 100%               | 75%                                    | 17%                                      |
| Level 3 ApprenticeshipsNI    | 28  | 75%              | 100%               | 0%                                     | 100%                                     |
| Overall totals               |   | 81%              | 94%                | 31%                                    | 47%                                      |

### 13. ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Performance Level: **Satisfactory**

|                                      |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Further Education<sup>4</sup></b> | Satisfactory |
| <b>Work-Based Learning</b>           | Good         |

#### Areas inspected:

- Further Education full-time provision
- Further Education provision in the community
- Work-Based Learning provision

#### CONTEXT

13.1 Since September 2011, the responsibility for the management and delivery of the essential skills of literacy and numeracy has been delegated to the eight heads of school in the College. The provision for the essential skill of ICT is managed by the head of school for science and technology. The heads of school are supported by the heads of department for further education and work-based learning. In addition, the College has appointed a curriculum manager for the essential skills and a curriculum co-ordinator for the essential skill of ICT. Over the last two years, the College has participated in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) pilot in the essential skills in literacy and numeracy.

<sup>4</sup> The College's Essential Skills Provision for Trade Unions and in Magilligan Prison was not included in the inspection.

13.2 The College's provision of essential skills in further education and work-based learning is extensive; over the last three years, there has been a total 10,228 enrolments on essential skills courses, and growth has been evident across all three essential skills areas, particularly in ICT which has almost doubled. The College has a good community outreach programme for the essential skills. Through the work of its community organisers, the College has established significant links and partnerships with local community groups, across a wide regional hinterland, particularly in the areas of high social and economic disadvantage, including some hard-to-reach groups. It has invested significantly in its outreach education provision, particularly through the allocation of additional computers and technician support in community venues. Work-based learning accounts for around 11% of the total essential skills provision in the College.

**The quality of the Leadership and Management is satisfactory.**

13.3 The quality of the management by the individual heads of school of the essential skills of literacy and numeracy across the further education, and the adult and community provision, is variable but is mostly good. In work-based learning, the management of literacy, numeracy and ICT is good.

13.4 In further education, there has been good progress in the use of internal and external benchmarking data to identify and support those courses where the outcomes in the essential skills are poor. It is clear that the managers and tutors have faced considerable challenges in meeting the assessment requirements of the essential skills pilot arrangements. There are ongoing weaknesses in the planning of the essential skills of ICT and numeracy. In numeracy, difficulties in deploying suitable tutors, in some instances, result in ineffective timetabling arrangements. As a result, a minority of the teaching blocks are too long and a minority of learners, inappropriately, have not had access to essential skills lessons until well after the commencement of their main programme. In the essential skill of ICT, changes in staffing have resulted in the inconsistent monitoring of enrolments and learners' progress and attainments, which in turn has resulted in unsatisfactory outcomes over a three year period. The College has implemented actions to support the planning and co-ordination of the ICT provision, including stronger initial assessment and screening arrangements and more robust internal verification processes. There are indications that these strategies are resulting in a noticeable improvement in outcomes.

13.5 The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes for the essential skills lack cohesion across the full range of the provision in further education and work-based learning. The areas of work-based learning, further education and community education are self-evaluated separately. As a consequence, the key self-evaluation findings are not analysed sufficiently and do not inform adequately the key actions for improvement at whole-College level. Overall, the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes do not evaluate sufficiently the quality of teaching and learning.

**The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.**

13.6 The quality of teaching and learning is good or better in the majority (65%) of sessions, and it is very good in a minority (16%) of them. Across the provision, the quality of teaching and learning in work-based learning is better than in further education, with most (80%) of the lessons being good or better in the work-based learning provision. The features of the best lessons, across all of the provision, include good use of initial assessment information to plan learning to meet the differing needs of learners, high tutor expectations and purposeful learning, and the effective use of a wide range of teaching and assessment strategies. Across most of the provision, course teams have worked with essential skills tutors to contextualise the essential skills in teaching and learning to good effect. It is a concern, however, across all of the essential skills provision, that around 35%



of the sessions are either just satisfactory or inadequate. In these sessions, the tutors face challenges in deploying effective teaching and learning approaches to meet the needs of the learners. This is more evident in the College's further education full-time provision, where there is evidence of low levels of confidence and motivation for a minority of learners and often poor levels of attendance. Across the provision, the use of ILT in supporting and enhancing teaching, learning and assessment is underdeveloped.

**Achievements and Standards are satisfactory.**

13.7 In literacy and numeracy, the standards are mostly good or better across the provision. The standards of written work in the learners' folders range mainly from good to satisfactory, although the standard of work in a small minority of the further education learners' folders is inadequate. Where the work is inadequate, it is organised poorly, there is evidence of gaps in learning and an over-reliance by tutors on the completion of worksheets. The standards of the learners' spoken skills range from outstanding to good and almost all can articulate clearly the ways in which the achievement of the essential skills has improved their employability skills.

13.8 In work-based learning, over the last three years, the achievement rates in both literacy and numeracy are very good at 86% and the outcomes in ICT are good at 72%. Equally, however, in work based learning, the progress towards assessment for a minority of trainees in motor vehicle, plumbing and wood occupations is slow. After approximately thirty months from the commencement of their training programme, it is inadequate that around 9% of these trainees have not yet completed their essential skills assessment.

13.9 In further education, over the last three years, the average achievement rate in literacy is good at 82%. Over the same period, the achievement rate in numeracy is satisfactory at 74%. The average achievement rate in ICT is unsatisfactory at 47%. However, management at all levels in the College have taken significant steps to address the issues in the ICT essential skill that has resulted in an improved achievement rate in the period 2010/11 from a low level of 42% up to 53%.

**Table of Results (Over the Last Three Years)**

**Essential Skills in Further Education**

| Essential Skill | Completion Year 2009 |         |          | Completion Year 2010 |         |          | Completion Year 2011 |         |          | Three Year Average |         |          |
|-----------------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------|----------|
|                 | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)            | Ach (%) | Succ (%) |
| ICT             | 97                   | 46      | 45       | 82                   | 42      | 35       | 79                   | 53      | 42       | 81                 | 47      | 38       |
| Literacy        | 78                   | 83      | 65       | 82                   | 81      | 66       | 81                   | 82      | 66       | 80                 | 82      | 66       |
| Numeracy        | 79                   | 75      | 59       | 78                   | 74      | 58       | 79                   | 75      | 59       | 79                 | 74      | 59       |
| Overall         | 80                   | 78      | 62       | 81                   | 66      | 53       | 79                   | 71      | 56       | 80                 | 71      | 57       |

**14. HAIRDRESSING**

**Performance Level: Very Good**

**Areas Inspected: Further Education Provision in:**

- Full-time and part-time level 2 and level 3 hairdressing courses
- Short accredited 17- week programmes

## CONTEXT

14.1 The College has an extensive provision of full-time and part-time courses at levels 2 and 3. As a result, the learners have very good progression opportunities to higher education or employment. The total number of full-time and part-time learners on hairdressing programmes has grown significantly, by 80%, over the last three years.

### **The quality of the leadership and management is very good.**

14.2 The head of school provides strong leadership which is effective in promoting high standards of work, open channels of communication and harmonious working relationships. The introduction of curriculum projects into the hairdressing provision has been innovative and resulted in very good internal linkages and partnerships that are used to good effect to collaborate with other professional and technical areas in the College. Whilst the head of school and curriculum managers analyse and interpret data effectively to monitor retention and achievement rates, the quality assurance and improvement planning processes need to include the further standardisation of the provision across the College campuses and more specific targets against which progress can be measured. The well-developed links with employers and representatives from the hairdressing industry are used to good effect to support teaching and learning, especially through the provision of good quality work placements. While the lecturers are well-qualified, for a significant minority of them their experience of working in the industry is dated.

### **The quality of the provision for learning is very good.**

14.3 The curriculum planning is very good and is effective in promoting coherent and cohesive learning experiences across the programmes. In the majority (70%) of the lessons observed, the quality of the teaching and learning is very good or better. The hairdressing lecturers are well-prepared and use an extensive range of strategies, including the effective use of ILT, to engage the learners in their learning and develop their practical skills, knowledge and understanding of the hairdressing industry; very good use is made of guest speakers and presenters, including former learners, key employers and product representatives to enhance teaching and learning. The assessment of the learners' work is regular and thorough, and almost all of the lecturers provide them with constructive feedback. The lecturers provide very good support and guidance, are flexible in their approaches and are very aware of the learners' individual needs. The quality of most of the accommodation and physical resources is excellent.

### **Achievements and standards are very good.**

14.4 Across all levels of the provision, most of the learners achieve very good standards in their work with clients. The lecturers place an appropriately strong emphasis on developing the learners' personal and transferable skills and qualities that are needed in a work situation. As a result, the learners' personal presentation is particularly good; they display very good levels of professionalism and are pleasant and co-operative in classes. Most report that their confidence has increased significantly as a result of their training and participation in inter-campus, local or international competitions. The standards of the learners' verbal communication skills range from satisfactory to excellent, but are mostly good. Most of the written work produced by the learners is good. All of the learners are developing a good understanding of the hairdressing industry standards, as well as a keen awareness of health and safety in the workplace. Retention and achievement rates across the provision are good; the three year averages are 79% and 85% respectively. Progression rates to education, training and employment are also good.

**Table of Results (Over the Last Three Years)**

| Course Type                  | Completion Year 2009 |         |          | Completion Year 2010 |         |          | Completion Year 2011 |         |          | Three Year Average |         |          |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------|----------|
|                              | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)            | Ach (%) | Succ (%) |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 2 | 74                   | 87      | 64       | 72                   | 90      | 65       | 73                   | 89      | 64       | 73                 | 89      | 64       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 2 | 78                   | 85      | 66       | 79                   | 81      | 64       | 80                   | 85      | 68       | 79                 | 84      | 66       |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 3 | 78                   | 86      | 67       | 89                   | 80      | 71       | 83                   | 93      | 77       | 93                 | 87      | 71       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 3 | 85                   | 100     | 85       | 80                   | 75      | 60       | 87                   | 82      | 71       | 85                 | 83      | 71       |
| Overall                      | 77                   | 87      | 67       | 78                   | 83      | 65       | 80                   | 86      | 69       | 79                 | 85      | 67       |

**15. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

Performance Level: **Outstanding**

|                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Further Education</b>   | Outstanding |
| <b>Work-Based Learning</b> | Outstanding |

**Areas Inspected: Further Education Provision in:**

- Full and part-time level 2 and level 3 health and social care courses

**Work-based Learning Provision in:**

- ApprenticeshipsNI programme at level 2 in health and social care

**CONTEXT**

15.1 The College has an outstanding range of health and social care courses at levels 2 and 3, including an ApprenticeshipsNI programme. It has excellent progression routes to higher education programmes, including a wide range of relevant professional courses. In addition, a comprehensive programme of bespoke courses is provided for employers in a wide range of specialist areas. The number of learners enrolled on health and social care courses has increased significantly over the last three years, having doubled from 478 in 2009 to 1,155 learners currently. Almost one-half of the learners on the full-time courses are aged 16 to 18 and a majority of them are female.

**The quality of the leadership and management is outstanding.**

15.2 The leadership and management of the health and social care provision is outstanding. The head of school provides strong and sensitive leadership which has been effective in promoting a strong learner-centred focus and clear sense of learner entitlement, which underpins all of the provision. The work of the highly qualified, multi-disciplinary staff team is characterised by strong collegiality and a commitment to excellence. Reflective practice and a positive regard for learners is evident in the work of all of the staff. The self-evaluation arrangements are robust and well-embedded and excellent use is made of both qualitative and quantitative data to identify and address any areas of underperformance.

15.3 The links and partnerships with key employers and sectoral bodies, at both strategic and operational levels, are excellent; the staff use these links effectively to update their own practice and improve the learners' awareness and understanding of contemporary issues impacting on the sector. Some outstanding features of the leadership and management of the provision include: the effective use of labour market information to inform curriculum design; excellent involvement of employers from the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum; and, the continuous re-alignment of the curriculum portfolio of courses on offer to meet the changing needs of the health and social care sector.

15.4 The quality of the leadership and management of the ApprenticeshipsNI level 2 programme in health and social care is also outstanding. The detailed planning, excellent levels of support provided by professional and technical and essential skills tutors, and the high levels of employer engagement combine to create an outstanding provision. The tutors have designed with precision a broad, comprehensive and well-balanced programme which enables apprentices to achieve high standards of work and a range of additional, relevant qualifications over and above the requirements of the apprenticeship framework. The relationships with employers are excellent and they contribute fully to the design of the individual apprentice's programmes and the establishment and review of targets across the training periods.

### **The quality of the provision for learning is outstanding.**

15.5 The quality of teaching and learning in the observed lessons and directed training sessions ranges from outstanding to good; it is very good or better in almost all (89%) and, significantly, outstanding in just under one-half (47%) of them. All of the lessons observed are characterised by the use of a broad range of teaching strategies and creative, leading edge approaches to learning, supported and enhanced effectively through the outstanding use of ILT. Curriculum planning is rigorous, collaborative and innovative. The staff work together closely to maximise the integration of theory and practice, to minimise unnecessary duplication, and develop the learners' essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. There is a strong emphasis on planning for learning and formative assessment is used very effectively to enable learners to improve their written work. Well-structured tutorials, underpinned by good use of the e-ILPs and high quality personal training plans enable learners to develop skills in target-setting and in tracking and recording achievement of their personal goals and progression in their own learning. All of the learners on the full-time courses benefit from excellent and well-planned periods of relevant work experience. Very good use is made of personal journals to enable them to record the skills and competences they are developing. There are excellent opportunities for learners to access a wide range of relevant additional qualifications, matched appropriately to their career aspirations. The coherence and breadth of the curriculum offer, matched effectively to the individual needs of learners who are fully aware of the range of opportunities for progression, is a key feature of the quality of the provision for learning.

## Achievements and standards are very good.

15.6 The learners respond very well to the high expectations staff have of them and their levels of engagement in learning are very good. They are making very good progress in their professional and technical units and have an excellent understanding of the key principles of good practice in health and social care. Their oral skills are well-developed; most are confident in their use of language, they engage effectively in discussions and activities during small group work and regularly make verbal presentations of a high standard to their peers. The standards of the learners' written work are mainly very good, and they use electronic resources extensively to research and support their work. They are developing good skills in note-taking and in referencing techniques and make very good use of a wide range of ILT applications, including blogs, podcasts and collaborative online tools to complete and support their work. The learners and apprentices are developing well their skills in independent learning, managing effectively their own time and working as a member of a team. They have an excellent understanding of the opportunities for progression to higher education and employment and well-developed skills in career planning. The effective development of their transferable skills, which promote employability and support lifelong learning, are key features of this provision.

15.7 Average retention rates on further education courses over the last three years are very good at 85% and achievement rates are good at 78%. The average retention and achievement rates for the ApprenticeshipsNI provision are good at 75% and 87% respectively. There is clear evidence to show that retention and achievement rates are improving significantly across all of the provision, as a result of actions taken to support improvement.

**Table of Results (Over the Last Three Years)**

| Course Type                  | Completion Year 2009 |         |          | Completion Year 2010 |         |          | Completion Year 2011 |         |          | Three Year Average |         |          |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------|----------|
|                              | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)            | Ach (%) | Succ (%) |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 2 | 90                   | 75      | 67       | 86                   | 83      | 72       | 88                   | 92      | 80       | 87                 | 85      | 75       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 2 | 96                   | 67      | 64       | 97                   | 68      | 65       | 96                   | 63      | 60       | 96                 | 65      | 62       |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 3 | 70                   | 94      | 65       | 78                   | 88      | 69       | 72                   | 94      | 67       | 73                 | 92      | 67       |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 3 | 85                   | 71      | 61       | 81                   | 73      | 59       | 84                   | 91      | 76       | 83                 | 78      | 65       |
| Overall                      | 82                   | 78      | 64       | 86                   | 77      | 66       | 86                   | 78      | 67       | 85                 | 78      | 66       |

## 16. MECHANICAL AND MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING

### Performance Level: Inadequate

#### Areas Inspected: Work-based Learning Provision in:

- Skills for Work in fabrication and welding
- Programme-Led Apprenticeship in fabrication and welding
- ApprenticeshipsNI in fabrication and welding at levels 2 and 3
- ApprenticeshipsNI in maintenance engineering at levels 2 and 3

#### CONTEXT

16.1 The range of courses in mechanical and manufacturing engineering is satisfactory. It comprises Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in fabrication and welding, and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in maintenance engineering, offered mainly in the Springtown campus. Almost all (90%) of the trainees on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand were in relevant work experience placements.

#### **The quality of the leadership and management is inadequate.**

16.2 The strategic planning and development of the mechanical engineering provision is inadequate. As a result, the structure and balance of the fabrication and welding provision does not meet well enough the needs of the trainees, and the quality of the training resources are not matched adequately to local industry practice. There is an insufficient range of modern fabrication and welding equipment, and only limited ILT resources to support and enhance the trainees' and apprentices' learning experiences. While the classrooms and laboratories for maintenance engineering are spacious and well-resourced with modern equipment and ILT resources, the mechanical engineering workshop is unsatisfactory. It is cramped, untidy and does not meet fully the required standards in health and safety.

16.3 While most of the staff are well-qualified and experienced, a minority require further professional development in modern engineering practices. The programme co-ordinators work hard to establish effective links with local engineering employers to provide good quality work-based training for the trainees and apprentices. The current quality improvement plan is satisfactory and includes most of the areas for improvement identified through the inspection. There is, however, a need for the actions within the improvement plan to be prioritised and include more measurable targets for improvement.

#### **The quality of the provision for learning is inadequate.**

16.4 In maintenance engineering, the apprentices benefit from a well-balanced programme of theory and practical units in both electrical and mechanical engineering that is matched well to their employers' needs. In fabrication and welding, however, the sequencing and the range of units are not matched well enough to the needs of the trainees or to the needs of employers. The trainees and apprentices inappropriately target all of the units of the level 2 technical certificate in year one of their programme, which is too challenging for a minority of them. In addition, the range of units does not provide sufficient training and accreditation opportunities in the use of modern technology, such as manual active gas welding, tungsten inert gas welding and computer-aided design and manufacturing techniques.

16.5 The quality of the directed training sessions observed ranges from inadequate to very good; a significant minority (43%) of the sessions are good or better, but the majority (57%) are satisfactory or below. In the satisfactory or below sessions, there is an overly narrow range of training approaches used, with insufficient support for those trainees with weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. In addition, the sessions are characterised by an ineffective use of questioning to consolidate learning and inform the planning of future learning. The quality of the trainees' and apprentices' work-based training is good or better; they have good opportunities to develop relevant occupational skills. The quality of the trainees' and apprentices' portfolios of assessment evidence is variable; a minority of the folders are untidy and the trainees and apprentices have not received timely feedback. The provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance is inadequate.

**Achievements and standards are satisfactory.**

16.6 Most of the trainees and apprentices are well-motivated and achieve at least good standards of practical work. In the workplace, the fabrication and welding trainees and apprentices are able to read drawings, follow instructions and use a range of tools and equipment to manufacture engineering products made from steel pipe, steel plate or sheet metal. A minority of the trainees are, however, making slow progress in achieving the appropriate levels of mathematical skills. The maintenance engineering apprentices develop a sound understanding of mathematics and engineering principles which they are able to apply confidently to solve a range of problems. Over the last three years, the overall retention rate is satisfactory at 63%, and the overall achievement rate is good at 84%. The progression rate from level 2 programmes to level 3 apprenticeships is low at 29%.

**Table of Results (over the last three years)**

| Programme                    | Numbers Registered Who Completed 4 Weeks Training | Retention Rate % | Achievement Rate % | Progression Rate for those Who Achieved Full Award % |
|------------------------------|---|------------------|--------------------|--|
| Programme-Led Apprenticeship | 54  | 50               | 78                 | 67   |
| Level 2 ApprenticeshipsNI    | 19  | 58               | 100                | 70   |
| Level 3 ApprenticeshipsNI    | 23  | 96               | 75                 | -  |

**17. MECHANICAL ENGINEERING SERVICES (PLUMBING)**

**Performance Level: Good**

**Areas Inspected: Work-based Learning Provision in:**

- ApprenticeshipsNI and Programme-Led Apprenticeship in mechanical engineering services (plumbing) at level 2

## CONTEXT

17.1 The provision for mechanical engineering services (plumbing) is small, in particular the levels of recruitment to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. At the time of the inspection, there were 26 Programme-Led Apprentices and just 3 apprentices completing qualifications in plumbing. Less than one-third of the trainees and apprentices have four or more GCSE passes at grade C or above on entry to the programme and only four of them have achieved a GCSE grade C or above in English and mathematics.

### **The quality of the leadership and management is good.**

17.2 The programme is led well by the course co-ordinator and there are effective arrangements in place at course team level for monitoring, reviewing and assessing the trainees' and apprentices' progress and achievements. The tutors have good relationships with local employers and, as a result, almost all of the Programme-Led Apprentices are in good work placements which provide appropriate opportunities for them to develop, apply and demonstrate the skills and knowledge required for their qualification. In contrast, the College's links with local employers and government agencies are ineffective in promoting the ApprenticeshipsNI provision, which remains too small. The technical certificate is delivered in one year and a significant minority of the Programme-Led Apprentices find the level of learning too high; the curriculum planning and timetabling arrangements need to be reviewed by the College in order to address this. At course team level, the tutors are proactive in the development of the e-portfolio and the online personal training plan and review processes, which are used effectively to track and monitor the trainees' progress. The tutors are well-qualified and experienced. Self-evaluation arrangements are effective in enhancing the quality of the trainees' and apprentices' learning experiences in the College and on site. The quality of accommodation, equipment and resources is good, but the personal computers provided for staff and trainees are dated and there is insufficient access for staff to interactive whiteboards to stimulate the quality of the training and learning.

### **The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

17.3 The quality of training and learning is good or better in most (83%) of the sessions observed. The practical sessions are well-planned and the trainees work independently or in pairs on a wide range of appropriate tasks to practise and enhance their skills; most of the trainees make very good progress in the practical sessions and enjoy their training. In the theory sessions, because the pace of learning is overly high, there is only limited time for the development of discussions. The planning for the employability sessions is good and a tutor-devised webpage has been developed to support the trainees and apprentices in their learning. The arrangements for the assessment of the trainees and apprentices in the workplace are good and the tutor has developed very good working relationships with the employers' site staff; feedback is used effectively to inform the trainees and apprentices about their performance and they are well-informed about how they might improve. In addition, the trainees' and apprentices' progress towards their target qualification is accurately tracked and recorded. However, there are missed opportunities to complete NVQ assessments with the first year trainees on site, as assessment for the NVQ doesn't begin, inappropriately, until the second year of the programme. The quality of the personal training plans and progress reviews is very good.

### **Achievements and standards are good.**

17.4 In plumbing, the trainees and apprentices develop a good range of skills in their directed training and work hard to meet the employers' deadlines. In the practical sessions, they develop a good knowledge of the typical plastic and metal pipe-work used in domestic dwellings and are able to cut, bend and joint both types of pipe-work accurately. One of the



apprentices recently won the gold medal in the industrial heating section of the Northern Ireland SkillBuild competition. Over the last three years, the overall retention and achievement rates on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme are good at 71% and 80% respectively. Over the same period, the overall retention and achievement rates on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand are satisfactory at 60% and 73% respectively; the progression rate into employment and to further and higher education is low at 45%.

**Table of Results (over the last three years)**

| Programme                    | Numbers Registered Who Completed 4 Weeks Training | Retention Rate % | Achievement Rate % | Progression Rate for those Who Achieved Full Award % |
|------------------------------|---|------------------|--------------------|--|
| Programme-Led Apprenticeship | 47  | 60               | 73                 | 45   |
| Level 2 ApprenticeshipsNI    | 7   | 71               | 80                 | -  |

## 18. MUSIC

**Performance Level: Good**

**Areas Inspected: Further Education Provision in:**

- Full-time music at level 3
- Full-time and part-time music technology at levels 2 and 3

### CONTEXT

18.1 The provision of music and music technology courses is good; the College offers an appropriate range of courses at levels 2 and 3. These courses provide the learners with good opportunities to progress to the level 3 and higher education provision. Enrolment on to the programmes is good, with an increasing uptake at level 3.

**The quality of the leadership and management is good.**

18.2 The head of school and the curriculum manager have developed a supportive, open and collegial ethos within the school. The course co-ordinators lead well the development of innovative strategies to engage the learners and ensure there is a relevance to all aspects of the programmes. While the processes of self-evaluation and quality improvement planning are well-embedded, more action is needed to address the outcomes in the full-time level 3 courses, which are just satisfactory. The embedded use of curriculum projects within the provision has created opportunities for the learners to engage in appropriate multi-discipline music events. The quality of the accommodation and resources, including the technical support, is outstanding.

**The quality of the provision for learning is very good.**

18.3 The quality of the teaching and learning is good or better; it is very good or better in two-thirds of the sessions observed. In the best practice, good use is made of peer evaluation, the teaching builds on the learners' previous learning, the staff use appropriate levels of questioning and there is very good differentiation to meet effectively the differing

needs of the learners. In addition, effective use is made of an extensive range of practical strategies, including the use of ILT, to engage the learners in their learning and further develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Excellent use is made of guest speakers, including former learners, to enhance the teaching and learning. There are well-established links and partnerships, which enable the learners to participate in appropriate music industry events and to enhance significantly their learning experiences. The majority of the lecturers provide constructive written feedback to the learners, including information on how to improve the standards of their work. The lecturers provide very good support and guidance, are flexible in their approach and are very aware of the learners' individual needs.

**Achievements and standards are good.**

18.4 Most of the learners achieve good standards in their work. The staff develop to good effect the learners' personal and transferable skills to prepare them well for work in industry settings. The learners display confidence and professionalism in live situations, working well independently and collaboratively. All of the learners are developing a good understanding of the standards within the music industry. Over the last three years, the overall retention rate is good at 78% and the overall achievement rate is satisfactory at 73%. It is noteworthy that many of the learners who do not manage to achieve all of the units required for the level 3 National Diploma qualification do achieve a National Certificate in music or music technology.

**Table of Results (Over the Last Three Years)**

| Course Type                  | Completion Year 2009 |         |          | Completion Year 2010 |         |          | Completion Year 2011 |         |          | Three Year Average |         |          |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------|----------|
|                              | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)            | Ach (%) | Succ (%) |
| Full-time courses at level 2 |                      |         |          | 76                   | 81      | 62       | 100                  | 93      | 93       | 86                 | 87      | 75       |
| Part-time courses at level 2 | 74                   | 64      | 47       | 95                   | 68      | 65       | 100                  | 37      | 37       | 90                 | 56      | 50       |
| Full-time courses at level 3 | 77                   | 78      | 60       | 71                   | 78      | 55       | 71                   | 76      | 54       | 72                 | 77      | 56       |
| Overall                      | 76                   | 73      | 56       | 77                   | 76      | 59       | 81                   | 70      | 57       | 78                 | 73      | 57       |

**19. SPORTS AND SPORTS SCIENCE**

**Performance Level: Good**

**Areas Inspected:**

- Level 2 Diploma in Sport
- Extended/Subsidiary Diploma in sport development (coaching and fitness)
- Extended/Subsidiary Diploma in sport and exercise sciences
- Extended/Subsidiary Diploma in outdoor education

## CONTEXT

19.1 There is good provision of level 2 and level 3 sports and sports science courses, including a particular focus on outdoor education. An important review of the sports science courses has led to restructuring of the programmes to better meet the needs, interests and abilities of the learners. The programmes provide the learners with very good opportunities to progress to higher education courses. Enrolment onto the full-time level 3 programmes is very good and has risen almost three-fold over the last three years.

### **The quality of the leadership and management is outstanding.**

19.2 The head of school, supported well by the curriculum managers, provides outstanding strategic leadership. The self-evaluation arrangements are very effective in promoting important improvements in the quality of the learners' learning experiences. Effective data analysis, responding to the learners' voice, rigorous monitoring of the standard of their work and direct observation of teaching and learning all contribute to lowering the barriers to learning and raising the standards they attain.

### **The quality of the provision for learning is very good.**

19.3 The lecturers are highly motivated, well-qualified and experienced; they prepare well for the sessions and provide high levels of individual support for the learners. The quality of the teaching and learning is good or better in almost all (90%) of the lessons and practical training sessions observed. The very good or better (50%) practice is characterised by the excellent working relationships between the lecturers and the learners, and the effective use and differentiated nature of whole class, small group and one-to-one support which promote the development of learning. In the less effective practice (10%), the learners are not fully enough engaged in their work due to the teaching strategies not matching their needs and ability levels.

19.4 The learners respond enthusiastically to the very good combination of lectures, seminars, tutorials and practical sessions. The ILT resources are used very effectively to support the learners' progress in their work, and there is an important focus on, and good development of, their independent learning skills.

### **Achievements and standards are satisfactory.**

19.5 In the sports-related courses, the learners develop a good range of skills through their studies and practical activities, which are complemented well by a wide range of additional award-bearing courses. The learners benefit from good opportunities to use a range of equipment related to fitness testing, learning in the outdoors and notational analysis. They gain a sound understanding of the world of sport which enables them to make informed choices about their health and well-being, personal and social development and possible career pathways. Over the last three years, retention rates are good at 71%. Over the same period, the achievement rates are satisfactory at 73%, and while there is a significant improving upward trend, this is an area that requires ongoing monitoring to ensure that improvements are consolidated and built upon. Progression rates to further education, higher education and/or employment are good at 75%.

**Table of Results (Over the Last Three Years)**

| Course Type                  | Completion Year 2009 |         |           | Completion Year 2010 |         |           | Completion Year 2011 |         |          | Three Year Average |         |           |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------|-----------|----------------------|---------|-----------|----------------------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------|-----------|
|                              | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Suc c (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Suc c (%) | Ret (%)              | Ach (%) | Succ (%) | Ret (%)            | Ach (%) | Suc c (%) |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 1 | 100                  | 100     | 100       | 100                  | 83      | 83        | 100                  | 100     | 100      | 100                | 89      | 89        |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 2 | 81                   | 53      | 43        | 71                   | 62      | 44        | 64                   | 89      | 57       | 72                 | 67      | 48        |
| Part-Time Courses at Level 2 | 93                   | 100     | 93        |                      |         |           |                      |         |          | 93                 | 100     | 93        |
| Full-Time Courses at Level 3 | 60                   | 51      | 31        | 63                   | 68      | 43        | 72                   | 78      | 56       | 68                 | 71      | 48        |
| Overall                      | 71                   | 62      | 44        | 71                   | 69      | 49        | 71                   | 80      | 57       | 71                 | 73      | 52        |

## 20. TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

**Performance Level: Satisfactory**

**Areas Inspected: Work-based Learning Provision in:**

- Skills for Work in light vehicle maintenance and repair
- Programme-Led Apprenticeships in vehicle body repair and light vehicle maintenance and repair
- ApprenticeshipsNI in light vehicle maintenance and repair at levels 2 and 3
- ApprenticeshipsNI in vehicle body repair at levels 2 and 3

### CONTEXT

20.1 The range of courses in transportation operations and maintenance is good. It comprises Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes at levels 2 and 3 in light vehicle maintenance and repair in the Springtown and Greystone Road campuses. The same programmes in vehicle body repair are offered on the Springtown campus. Recruitment to the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes is very low. Most (80%) of the trainees on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strands are in relevant work experience placements. Only a few (15%) of the Skills for Work trainees have placements.

**The quality of the leadership and management is satisfactory.**

20.2 The strategic planning and development of the transportation operations and maintenance provision is satisfactory. There is, however, insufficient holistic planning in order to develop a more coherent provision which meets well enough the needs of all the trainees and apprentices, the needs of employers, and to optimise the use of the specialist

resources. More needs to be done to further develop the level 1 provision across the campuses and to increase the number of apprentices. The College has appropriately invested in very good quality, industry-standard facilities and teaching resources across the two campuses. They consist of well-resourced workshops with a broad range of industry-standard equipment and tools, which are well-maintained and used to good effect to provide trainees and apprentices with a good range of training experiences. There is a need, however, to update the training vehicles to provide more up-to-date training experiences, particularly at level 3, and to expand the ILT resources to exploit more fully the online learning and assessment resources. The course co-ordinators work hard to develop good links with local employers to ensure the trainees and apprentices have good quality work-based learning opportunities.

**The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.**

20.3 The training programmes are well-designed; they provide the trainees and the apprentices with an appropriate range of units, which are matched well to their work-based training. There is a good balance between practical training sessions and theory sessions. In particular, the Programme-Led Apprenticeship trainees have very good opportunities to develop their practical occupational skills to a high standard. The quality of the directed training sessions observed ranges from inadequate to very good; the majority (67%) of the sessions are good or better, but a significant minority (33%) are satisfactory or below. The very good sessions are mostly in workshop practical training, where there are well-planned practical tasks that are matched well to ability levels of the trainees, and provide very good opportunities for them to develop their communication and team-working skills. In addition, in a small number of sessions, ILT resources are used effectively to support the exposition and explanation of vehicle technology. In the less effective sessions, there is an overly narrow range of training approaches used; the sessions are over-directed with limited use of questioning to consolidate the trainees' and apprentices' learning.

20.4 The quality of the trainees' and apprentices' work-based training is good or better; they have good opportunities to develop relevant occupational skills. The quality of the trainees' and apprentices' portfolios of assessment evidence is good overall. On the Greystone campus, an e-portfolio is used effectively to improve the quality of the trainees' and the apprentices' written responses. The design and planning of the employability provision and the careers education, information, advice and guidance provision is inadequate. The employability provision fails to exploit the good opportunities that exist within the trainees' work placements and practical directed training sessions to develop and assess the transferable skills relating directly to their occupational area. In addition, there are insufficient opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to increase their awareness of employment opportunities and career progression pathways through, for example, guest speakers, job research and career planning.

**Achievements and standards are satisfactory.**

20.5 Most of the trainees and apprentices are well-motivated and achieve at least good standards of occupational skills. They carry out a range of routine services, fit and replace components, use a range of body repair techniques, and diagnose and repair faults. They also develop a good understanding of vehicle technology, which they use effectively to diagnose faults. Most of the trainees and apprentices develop very good working relationships with the lecturers and their workplace supervisors, and are able to understand and carry out instructions. Over the last three years, the overall retention rate is satisfactory at 60%, and the overall achievement rate is also satisfactory at 62%. The progression rate to higher level training programmes is low overall at 28%. It is a particular concern that the progression rate to level 3 apprenticeships is very low at 15%.

**Table of Achievements (over the last three years)**

| Programme                    | Numbers Registered Who Completed 4 Weeks Training | Retention Rate % | Achievement Rate % | Progression Rate for those Who Achieved Full Award % |
|------------------------------|---|------------------|--------------------|--|
| Skills for Work              | 34  | 50               | 76                 | 100  |
| Programme-Led Apprenticeship | 162   | 62               | 55                 | 29   |
| Level 2 ApprenticeshipsNI    | 20  | 60               | 67                 | 50   |
| Level 3 ApprenticeshipsNI    | 9   | 78               | 100                | -  |

## 21. WOOD OCCUPATIONS

**Performance Level: Satisfactory**

**Areas Inspected: Work-based Learning Provision in:**

- Programme-Led Apprenticeship in wood occupations at level 2.

### CONTEXT

21.1 The provision for the Programme-Led Apprentices is delivered in both the Springtown and Limavady campuses; there are currently no apprentices enrolled in the ApprenticeshipsNI wood occupations programme. Recruitment is steady with around 55 trainees registering each year. Currently there are 48 trainees in the Springtown campus and 25 in Limavady. A majority of the trainees have a suitable work placement. The prior qualifications of the trainees on entry to the programme are low.

**The quality of the leadership and management is satisfactory.**

21.2 The programme is well-managed and organised across the two campuses. There are clear lines of communication between the course co-ordinators and the curriculum managers. Good personal training planning and review processes are in place to provide accurate and up-to-date information on the trainees' progress through the programme. Assessment is carried out regularly and appropriate procedures are in place for internal verification of the trainees' work. The tutors are well-qualified and experienced, and appropriately deployed. The trainees have good opportunities to develop their occupational skills through directed training, but there is a lack of appropriate work placements for a minority of trainees; as a result, these trainees have only limited opportunities to develop and demonstrate their occupational competences.

21.3 The processes and arrangements for self-evaluation are satisfactory. The key priorities are identified and the curriculum managers have made a good start in reviewing appropriately the pre-entry guidance and organisation of the provision in order to take account of the very mixed ability of the intake. The tutors need to implement fully the outcomes of the review to ensure there is sufficient differentiation within training, teaching and learning to meet the wide range of abilities and to effect improvement.

**The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.**

21.4 The quality of the training and learning is good or better in around two-thirds of the practical sessions observed and in one-half of the theory based sessions. In the most effective practice, the trainees benefit from well-planned practical sessions to progress their manufacturing and planning skills, and good opportunities to integrate relevant aspects from theory modules, for example, health and safety training. The tutors provide good individual support and direction during directed training and also on site visits; they use effective questioning and suitable work-based examples to extend the trainees' learning and skills. In the less effective practice, the theory and practical sessions lack pace, challenge and do not meet fully enough the wide range of learning needs of the trainees. These sessions are overly directed by the tutors with limited use of effective questioning or other assessment strategies to evaluate or confirm the trainees' progress and inform future planning.

**The achievements and standards are satisfactory.**

21.5 The majority of the trainees demonstrate good standards of occupational skills in directed training and in the workplace, and most achieve their technical certificate. Attendance, however, at directed training for a minority of the trainees is too low. Over the last three years, the overall retention and achievement rates are satisfactory at 60% and 65% respectively. The progression rate is low at 52%.

**Table of Results (over the last three years)**

| Programme                    | Numbers Registered Who Completed 4 Weeks Training | Retention Rate % | Achievement Rate % | Progression Rate for those Who Achieved Full Award % |
|------------------------------|---|------------------|--------------------|--|
| Programme-Led Apprenticeship | 174   | 60               | 65                 | 52   |

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- At the time of the inspection, the mechanical engineering workshop on the Greystone Road campus contained undue health and safety risks.



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