

11. BUSINESS, COMPUTING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Performance Level: Good

Areas Inspected: Further Education Provision in:

- Full-time level 2 and level 3 courses in business, computing and information technology (IT); and
- Part-time level 2 and level 3 courses in business.

CONTEXT

11.1 The College has an extensive curriculum provision of level 2 and level 3 courses in business, computing and IT, with a total enrolment of just under 1,300 learners. Nearly all (92%) of the learners are enrolled on full-time level 2 and 3 courses. The College provides good pathways for those learners who wish to progress to higher education courses.

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

11.2 The head of school, supported well by the deputy heads of school, and course co-ordinators provides good strategic leadership, with a clear focus on the continuous development of the curriculum to support economic engagement. The curriculum is well-planned, reflecting the development of employability and industry relevant skills for the learners. The leadership team work effectively to manage the extensive provision across the College. Under the performance enhancement process, appropriate actions are being taken to address the retention issues across the level 3 provision, including better assessment planning, improved tracking of the progress of individual learners and the development of a reporting tool for parents/guardians. The lecturers are well-qualified within their specialist professional and technical areas. The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes are not sufficiently robust, particularly at course team level, in order to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and to plan for improvement.

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

11.3 The ethos across the school is inclusive and supportive of all learners, providing very good levels of additional support, including a well-planned learner mentoring service. Most learners are positive and enthusiastic about their course of study, and the range of enhancement activities that form an integral part of the curriculum. Careers advice and guidance is effectively planned and linked well to the development by learners of employability and industry relevant skills. The College, for example, has a unique retail provision, including a tailored customer service offer and a retail shop experience which provide very good opportunities for learners to develop and apply retail and employability skills. Levels of economic engagement are very good, with a broad range of links with industry. The learners can apply their learning and develop their employability skills through a well-planned programme of industrial visits and guest speakers, as well as through relevant enrichment activities including the Career Academy and Young Enterprise Northern Ireland programme. The quality of teaching and learning observed ranged from outstanding to inadequate, with most (87%) of the lessons being good or better; one-third of the lessons were very good or better. In the more effective practice, the lecturers planned effectively to meet the individual needs of learners, and they deployed active learning strategies along with skilful questioning to engage and motivate the learners. In the less effective practice (13%), planning for learning was weak and the lessons were over directed by the lecturers. Across the provision, the learners make extensive use of the College's online learning platform to support their learning and assessment.

Achievements and standards are good.

11.4 The learners demonstrate a good range of appropriate technical and transferrable skills. The professional and technical standards achieved by them across provision are well-developed and reflect current industry practice. Achievements are recognised across the school and there has been a high level of success in external awards and competitions. Attendance is good in most of the lessons and learners are making good progress in their professional and technical units. The learners develop good ICT skills and demonstrate high levels of confidence in their work. While the overall retention rate is good at 77%, the management team has taken action, supported through a performance enhancement programme, to improve retention rates, particularly on the level 3 provision. The average achievement rate is very good at 89%.

Table of Achievements

Course Type	Completion Year 2010/11			Completion Year 2011/12			Completion Year 2012/13			Three Year Average		
	Ret (%)	Ach (%)	Succ (%)	Ret (%)	Ach (%)	Succ (%)	Ret (%)	Ach (%)	Succ (%)	Ret (%)	Ach (%)	Succ (%)
Full-time Courses at Level 2	81	85	69	87	79	69	90	93	85	86	85	74
Full-time Courses at Level 3	77	93	71	69	85	59	72	92	66	73	90	66
Part-time Courses at Level 3	85	100	85	100	90	90	85	80	68	91	88	80
Overall	78	91	71	77	84	64	77	91	70	77	89	69