

# Was your college among best or worst success rates performers?

The Skills Funding Agency's national success rates were published this month — and for the first time ever were divided into classroom qualifications and apprenticeships.

This week, FE Week reporter Rebecca Cooney takes a look at the results for classroom qualifications.

Blackpool and the Fylde College (B&FC) and Farnborough College of Technology are celebrating after topping this year's general FE and tertiary college non-apprenticeship success rates tables.

The principals of both colleges have said they were “delighted” by the results for 2013/4, which placed B&FC as number one in the country for all age and all level qualifications, and Farnborough in the top spot for all level courses for 16 to 18-year-olds.

Bev Robinson, principal of B&FC, which achieved a success rate of 92.9 per cent (meaning 22,157 learners out of 23,850 completed their learning aims) in the tables published this month, said: “We work in partnership with employers to ensure that the provision which we offer meets the needs of industry and delivers sustainable employment opportunities for our students.

“This combined with a highly committed and passionate staff team clearly focussed on learning, teaching and assessment motivates students to achieve the best possible outcomes.”

Farnborough's success rate was 93 per cent, with 3,794 of 4,080 enrolments completing their learning aims.

Principal Christine Slaymaker CBE said: “I'm proud to say our success is down to our inspirational and professional staff delivering the highest standards of education alongside the dedication and hard work of our students.”

At the other end of the table, the ill-fated K College had the lowest success rates in the country for all age and all level courses, scoring just 66.1 per cent— more than five percentage points below the next college on the list, with 9,195 enrolments of 13,910 succeeding.

K College, formed by a merger between West Kent College and South Kent College in 2010, was dismantled at the end of the last academic year after running up a £15m debt with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

Its provision was divided between Hadlow College and East Kent College. Graham Razey, principal of East Kent College which took over K College's Dover and Folkestone provision, said: “These figures show the scale of the challenge that the team faces in terms of transforming the provision.

“By working closely with the business community, local partners, and the SFA we have a clear skills strategy that now closely matches the needs of our local young people and the economy.”

An East Kent College spokesperson said FE

TOP THREE ALL AGE ALL LEVEL GFE AND TERTIARY COLLEGE SUCCESS RATES				
NAME	OVERALL LEAVERS	OVERALL SUCCESS RATE %	RETENTION RATE %	ACHIEVEMENT RATE %
BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE	23,850	92.9	95.0	97.7
STEPHENSON COLLEGE	6,650	91.9	96.2	95.5
GATESHEAD COLLEGE	17,240	91.8	95.4	96.3

BOTTOM THREE ALL AGE ALL LEVEL GFE AND TERTIARY COLLEGE SUCCESS RATES				
SOUTH AND WEST KENT COLLEGE	13,910	66.1	88.3	74.8
GREENWICH COMMUNITY COLLEGE	6,660	71.2	90.0	79.1
HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE	7,210	71.6	89.0	80.5

TOP THREE 16-18 ALL LEVEL GFE AND TERTIARY COLLEGE SUCCESS RATES				
FARNBOROUGH COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY	4,080	93.0	97.3	95.5
RUNSHAW COLLEGE	11,690	92.5	95.5	96.8
SOUTH DEVON COLLEGE	8,830	91.1	95.8	95.1

BOTTOM THREE 16-18 ALL LEVEL GFE AND TERTIARY COLLEGE SUCCESS RATES				
GREENWICH COMMUNITY COLLEGE	1,910	60.7	85.5	71.0
DONCASTER COLLEGE	5,790	62.6	84.2	74.3
BARNFIELD COLLEGE	3,750	63.4	81.8	77.5

Source : [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sfa-national-success-rates-tables-2013-to-2014-open-data-csv-files](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sfa-national-success-rates-tables-2013-to-2014-open-data-csv-files)

TOP THREE 16-18 TOTAL LEAVERS, ALL LEAVERS GFE AND TERTIARY COLLEGE SUCCESS RATES				
NCG	26,110	69.2	78.9	87.8
SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGE OF FE & HE	16,670	78.9	91.5	86.2
BIRMINGHAM METROPOLITAN COLLEGE	16,640	79.0	92.6	85.3

## Combination of provision paints unfair picture

Success rate figures for 2013/14 have painted an unfair picture of NCG (formerly Newcastle College Group), it has been claimed.

While it was 11th from bottom for all level non-apprenticeship qualifications for 16 to 18-year-olds, the scale of the organisation meant its impact was greatest after 8,042 of its 26,110 enrolments in the age group were shown to have failed to achieve on their courses.

However, NCG said this did not paint a fair picture as the figures included all branches of the organisation — but compared them only to other colleges.

It consists of three FE colleges — Newcastle, West Lancashire and Kidderminster (which joined the group after 2013/14) — training provider Intratraining, youth charity and training provider Rathbone and Newcastle Sixth Form College (SFC). However, it is listed as a general FE college in the Skills Funding Agency data.

Chris Payne, NCG group director of planning and performance, said its mix of different providers made direct comparison with other FE colleges “impossible”.

He pointed to the combined success rate for three colleges which were

part of NCG at the time (Newcastle, West Lancashire and Newcastle SFC), which NCG calculated was at 80.8 per cent, saying this was “in line with the performance of the rest of the college sector”.

He said NCG's results had been pulled down by Rathbone, which works specifically with disengaged learners and has a success rate of 52 per cent.

Rathbone caters for 5,875 of NCG's 26,110 learners, who Mr Payne said, were “on short courses with the main aim of progressing into a job, an apprenticeship or further training to give them skills for work”.

“We achieve that with two thirds of our Rathbone learners, which is how we measure our success,” he said.

“Because these learners come to get a job or learn a trade — rather than a specific qualification like most college students — some leave as soon as that opportunity comes up rather than completing the course, which reduces the success rate.

“So when you look at the achievement rates – the passes of those who stayed on the course — we reach 83 per cent, which matches the pass levels of similar independent learning providers.”



Bev Robinson



Christine Slaymaker



Lindsey Noble

Commissioner Dr David Collins had praised its progress in integrating provision after a follow-up visit relating to his past inspection of K College.

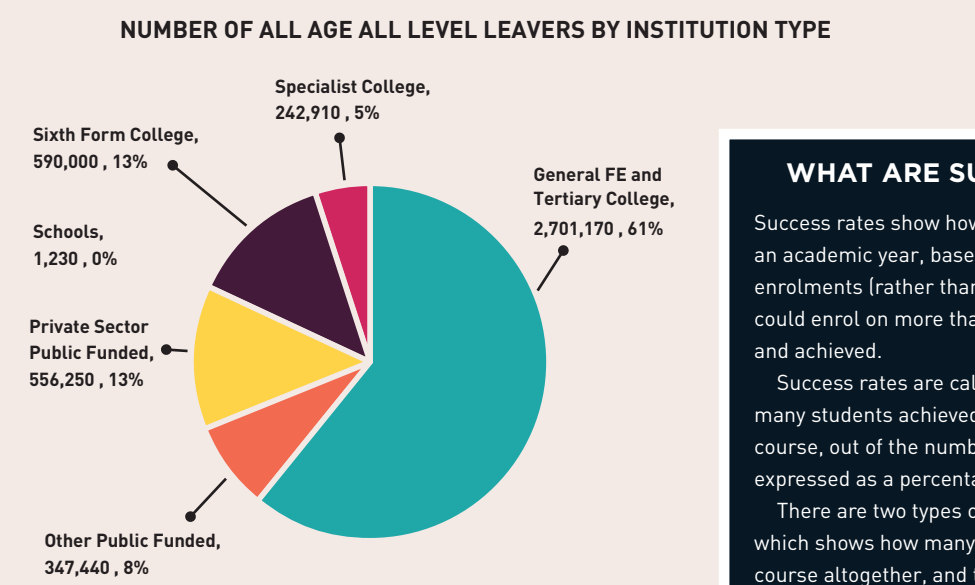
Hadlow College vice principal Lynda Brown, said: “The college has made significant improvements in teaching and learning this academic year. This has

resulted in a substantial improvement in student retention, their experience and their futures.”

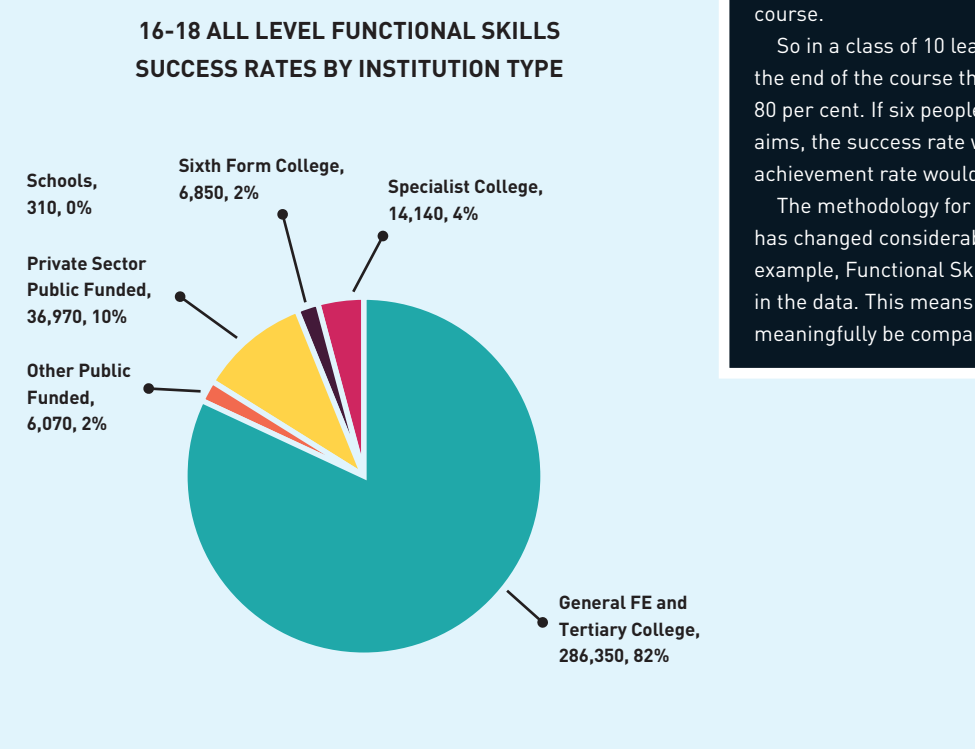
At the bottom of the 16 to 18 all levels table was another troubled college — Greenwich Community College, with 60.7 per cent or 1,159 of 1,910 enrolments succeeding.

The college, under new leadership since the

ALL AGE ALL LEVEL SUCCESS RATES BY INSTITUTION TYPE		
INSTITUTION TYPE	OVERALL LEAVERS	OVERALL SUCCESS RATE %
GENERAL FE AND TERTIARY COLLEGE	2,701,170	83.6
OTHER PUBLIC FUNDED	347,440	83.7
PRIVATE SECTOR PUBLIC FUNDED	556,250	86.5
SCHOOLS	1,230	67.4
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	590,000	86.7
SPECIALIST COLLEGE	242,910	89.2
ALL INSTITUTION TYPE	4,439,000	84.7

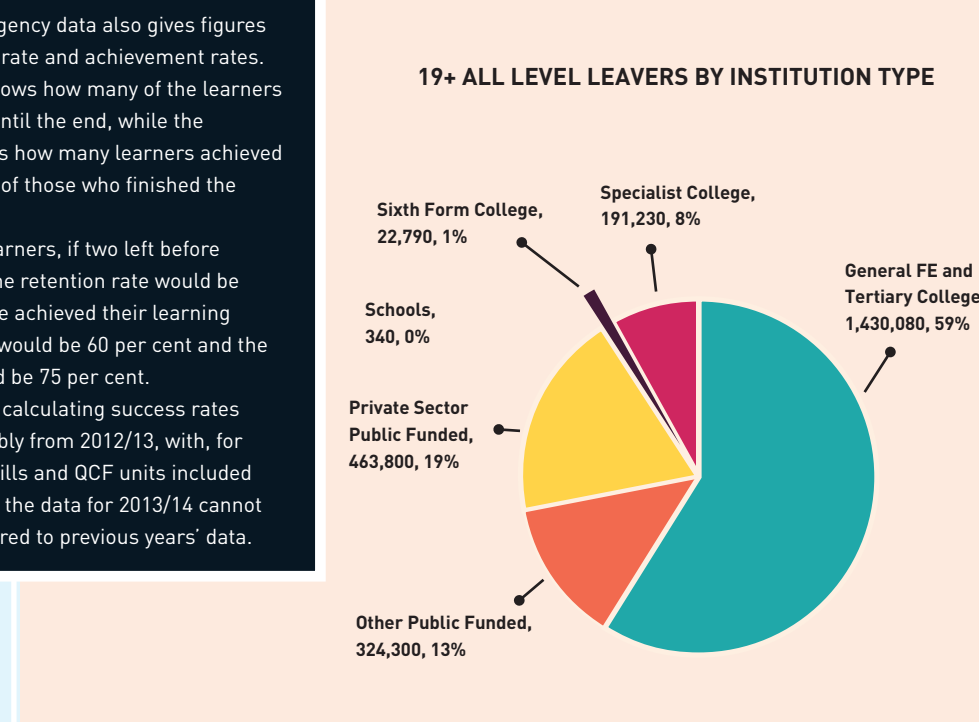
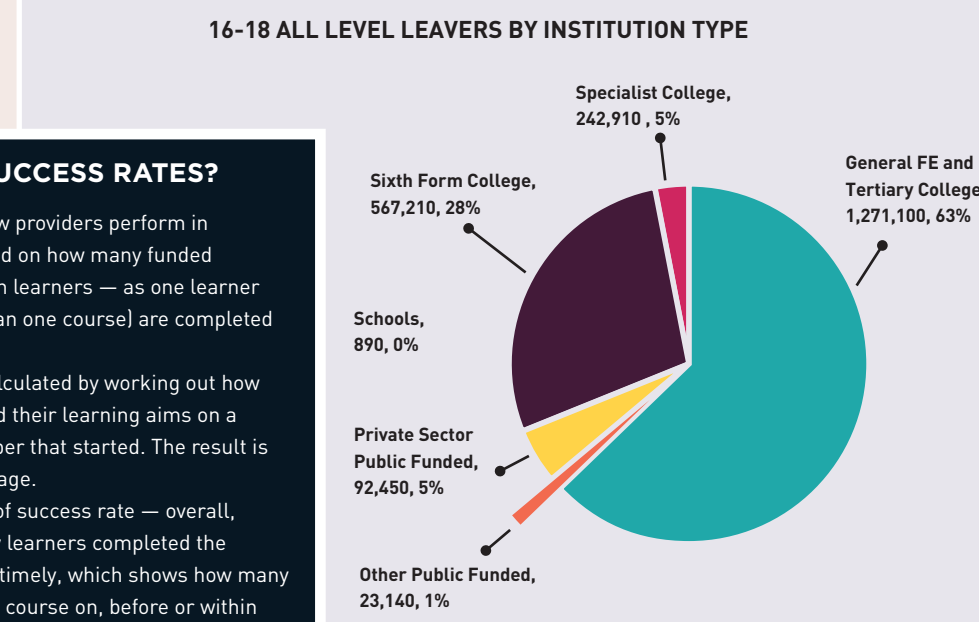


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16-18 ALL LEVEL FUNCTIONAL SKILLS SUCCESS RATES BY INSTITUTION TYPE		
INSTITUTION TYPE	OVERALL LEAVERS	OVERALL SUCCESS RATE %
GENERAL FE AND TERTIARY COLLEGE	286,350	64.3
OTHER PUBLIC FUNDED	6,070	59.7
PRIVATE SECTOR PUBLIC FUNDED	36,970	52.9
SCHOOLS	310	54.1
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	6,850	63.7
SPECIALIST COLLEGE	14,140	64.7
ALL INSTITUTION TYPE	350,680	63.1

16-18 ALL LEVEL SUCCESS RATES BY INSTITUTION TYPE		
INSTITUTION TYPE	OVERALL LEAVERS	OVERALL SUCCESS RATE %
GENERAL FE AND TERTIARY COLLEGE	1,271,100	80.1
OTHER PUBLIC FUNDED	23,140	73.6
PRIVATE SECTOR PUBLIC FUNDED	92,450	62.7
SCHOOLS	890	64.6
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	567,210	86.9
SPECIALIST COLLEGE	51,670	80.4
ALL INSTITUTION TYPE	2,006,460	81.2



19+ ALL LEVEL SUCCESS RATES BY INSTITUTION TYPE		
INSTITUTION TYPE	OVERALL LEAVERS	OVERALL SUCCESS RATE %
GENERAL FE AND TERTIARY COLLEGE	1,430,080	86.7
OTHER PUBLIC FUNDED	324,300	84.4
PRIVATE SECTOR PUBLIC FUNDED	463,800	91.2
SCHOOLS	340	74.9
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	22,790	81.7
SPECIALIST COLLEGE	191,230	91.6
ALL INSTITUTION TYPE	2,432,540	87.6

Find out who the top apprenticeship success rates performers are in the next edition of FE Week