

# Bracknell and Wokingham College

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 130603

**Name of lead inspector:** Richard Moore HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 15 June 2012

**Type of provider:** General further education college

**Address:** Church Road  
Bracknell  
RG12 1DJ

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## Information about the provider

1. Bracknell and Wokingham College is a medium-sized general further education college situated in Berkshire. The college has two main sites in Bracknell and three other centres in Bracknell and Wokingham, a number of which are used for specific areas of the provision. In addition, it provides adult and community learning courses in a significant number of community outreach centres. The college is one of five in Berkshire and all of the local schools have sixth form provision. Its mission statement is to 'enable all our learners to achieve their full potential'.
2. Learners are recruited mainly from Bracknell and Wokingham. Bracknell Forest is an area of economic prosperity but has pockets of relative deprivation with high proportions in those areas of young people not in education, employment or training. Unemployment rates are low and below both regional and national averages. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic heritage groups at the time of the last self-assessment report was 20%, well above the proportion in the local population. Learners enrolling at the college generally have average, or slightly below average, levels of prior attainment.
3. The college offers provision in all subject areas with the largest numbers of enrolments in preparation for life and work, health, public services and care, and engineering. In 2010/11, there were 1,112 full-time learners of whom about 90% were aged 16 to 18. Approximately 3,000 learners are enrolled on adult and community learning courses and a further 300 as apprentices on work-based learning programmes.
4. The current principal joined the college in September 2011. Since then, a major restructuring has taken place of its management and staff as well as changes to the governing body. The college is planning further new management appointments from September 2012.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - University of Greenwich (learner responsive: teacher training for adults and the lifelong learning sector)
  - University of Reading (learner responsive provision: children's development and learning)
  - Scottish and Southern Energy (employer responsive provision: electrical installation)
  - JTL (employer responsive provision: electrical installation).
6. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the college:
  - South West Trains (employer responsive provision: training for train guards and drivers)

- Phoenix 4 Training (employer responsive provision: warehousing and distribution)
- NCC (employer responsive provision: food hygiene)
- Reading College (employer responsive provision: heating and ventilation and carpentry)
- Enterprise Security & Safety Training Ltd (employer responsive provision: 'Bridging the Gap' work for the London Olympics).

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11</b>
<b>Provision for young learners:</b> 14 to 16  Further education (16 to 18)	447 part-time learners  921 full-time learners 202 part-time learners
<b>Provision for adult learners:</b> Further education (19+)	191 full-time learners 1,680 part-time learners
<b>Employer provision:</b> National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in the workplace Apprenticeships	1,072 learners  410 apprentices
<b>Adult and community learning</b>	2,508 learners

## Summary report

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
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	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3

<b>Subject Areas</b>	
Health, social care and early years	2
Arts, media and publishing	3
Business, administration and law	3

## Overall effectiveness

7. Bracknell and Wokingham is a satisfactory college. The relatively new principal and the restructured senior management team have worked hard and taken decisive actions during the current year to rectify underperformance in many areas of the college in 2010/11. Many of these actions have had a significant impact on the provision, most evidently in improving learners' retention and behaviour and in giving staff greater confidence and motivation to support learners well, particularly outside the classroom. However, in other areas of the college, and most noticeably in teaching and learning, it is too early to judge the overall impact of such changes on the consistency of standards. Adult and community learning is a strong area of the college's provision. Learners feel very safe in the college. The college successfully fosters a strong emphasis on learners' employability skills which greatly aids the development of their economic and social well-being.
8. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good, and occasionally inspirational, practice in teaching and learning is shared insufficiently by those curriculum areas where performance has improved over the last year. Too much

of the teaching is satisfactory and lesson observations are only partially successful in bringing about meaningful improvements in teachers' classroom practice. Assessment is good in many areas of the college. Partnership working is a particularly strong aspect of the college's work which has a very positive benefit for the local community.

9. In the past, managers have not had a realistic view of performance overall or within many of the curriculum areas. The college has rectified some, but not all, of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Self-assessment is insufficiently self-critical and does not pay sufficient attention to data or a detailed analysis of teaching and learning in judging the quality of the provision overall. Within some college departments in 2011/12, good curriculum management and support for learners have helped to improve performance significantly.

## Main findings

- Too few learners complete their qualification successfully. Poor retention rates in 2010/11 show that many learners left their courses early, although most of those who stay until the end pass their qualifications, often with grades exceeding those that were predicted for them when they enrolled at the college. Retention has improved significantly during 2011/12 and is now satisfactory.
- Work-based learning success rates are satisfactory. Most learners on NVQs in the workplace complete their qualifications in the time allocated to them. Overall success rates for apprentices and those within the planned time improved significantly in 2010/11, but both were still below national rates. Learners on adult and community courses achieve a wide range of outcomes and develop good skills.
- Over the last three years, the proportion of learners who successfully complete their course has fluctuated with few clear trends of improvement. Success rates improved in 2009/10 to be satisfactory only to decline again in 2010/11 to their previous level. Learners' achievements in functional skills are high and the number of learners who achieve high GCSE grades in English and mathematics is significantly above the national average.
- The standards of learners' work and the development of both vocational and personal skills are good. Most learners make good progress during their time at the college. They leave with well-developed employability skills, improved self-confidence and enhanced critical thinking skills, all of which equip them suitably for progression to employment or to further study including higher education.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although some of the college's teaching is outstanding, too much is dull and uninspiring. A number of teachers understand the importance of varying teaching techniques and checking learning thoroughly, but many do not perform these roles well enough. Teaching is often focused on the completion of tasks and teachers do not always ensure learners make the progress expected of them in class.

- Teachers are well qualified and many have relevant and extensive vocational expertise which they share well with learners. As a result, most learners understand clearly the importance of working to high professional standards in the workplace.
- Teachers have yet to develop sufficiently appropriate strategies to promote issues relating to equality and diversity in lessons. Teachers' lesson plans often only make a cursory reference to equality and diversity and are frequently confined solely to references about learners' support needs.
- Assessment practices are good in most curriculum areas. Teachers monitor learners' progress conscientiously and ensure learners complete projects by the deadlines set. They give detailed feedback when assessing their work so that learners understand what they have to do to improve.
- The college offers a broad curriculum at intermediate and advanced levels, with a good choice of vocational and academic qualifications. The extensive range of adult and community learning courses meets a diverse variety of learning needs well within the local population. The provision for school pupils aged 14 to 16 has a demonstrable effect on raising their achievements and aspirations.
- The college has strong partnerships with an extensive range of organisations which lead to positive outcomes for learners and the wider community and contribute well to widening participation and social inclusion.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners value highly the academic and pastoral support they receive. Personal tutors make good use of tutorials to agree clear targets for learners and to monitor their subsequent progress.
- Staff identify learners' additional support needs promptly. Learners benefit from good access to a team of staff who provide effective additional teaching that improves their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal has set high expectations and a clear direction for the college. This has inspired staff to start to develop and improve the provision more effectively. They now have challenging targets and use data well to monitor progress. Retention rates, attendance and learners' behaviour have all improved noticeably in 2011/12. Curriculum management is good in some areas of the college, but satisfactory overall.
- The college's approach to equality and diversity is satisfactory, but their promotion thorough the curriculum is insufficient. The college has been successful in narrowing the significant achievement gaps between male and female learners that existed in 2010/11. Learners' behaviour is good and respect for their peers and for staff has improved greatly.
- Self-assessment is insufficiently thorough in identifying key areas for improvement and ensuring they are resolved in order of importance. Managers do not use judgements from their observations of teaching and learning and their knowledge of success rates well enough to give an accurate assessment of the provision. The resulting development plan lacks detail and omits important areas for development.

## **What does Bracknell and Wokingham College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve success rates for apprentices through closer monitoring of all aspects of the quality of the training they receive and more effective analysis of overall trends in performance.
- Ensure that staff are better trained so that they have the expertise and confidence to integrate the promotion of equality and diversity within their classroom practice.
- Provide training for lesson observers to ensure a greater consistency in the judgements they make and to provide the college with a much greater insight into the particular features of its better and less good teaching and learning and what inspirational teaching looks like to improve practice for all staff.
- Carry out a rapid appraisal and then much better implementation of self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements to provide a more accurate, ongoing and self-critical view of the college's provision and to reduce the inconsistencies in the standards of performance evident across most curriculum areas.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the friendly and supportive staff who care about learners' work being of a high standard
- teachers who have good up-to-date knowledge of their subject area and recent vocational experience in industry
- the good learning environment created by the modern and spacious main campus
- the very good facilities and standards of equipment
- the improvements in the standards of discipline and knowing what is expected of them
- being treated like adults and the mutual respect that exists between staff and themselves
- the safe environment provided by the college.

#### **What learners would like to see improved:**

- the size of the refectory area which can become very crowded at busy times
- the way in which study rooms can become very noisy
- access to computers in the study rooms
- learning objectives which sometimes need to be clearer so that learners can understand why they are studying a particular topic.

## **Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

### **What employers like:**

- the levels of support they receive for learners with additional needs
- the very flexible and responsive assessors who plan their visits to suit employers' needs
- the very responsive way in which the college provides customised courses in locations and at times that most benefit them
- the way in which the college keeps them very well informed of learners' progress
- the training which is up-to-date, well coordinated and provided by staff with good practical experience of industry
- the influence they have on how training is devised and taught.

### **What employers would like to see improved:**

- the opportunity to feedback to the college on a more regular and formal basis their views on the standards of training



## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 3**

10. Over the course of 2011/12, the college has strengthened its senior management and governance which is resulting in satisfactory capacity to improve. The college does not have a track record of sustained improvement, but rather an inconsistent one in which success rates improved in 2009/10 only to decline in 2010/11 to their previous level and below national averages. However, some good aspects of the college's work have contradicted this trend in performance and have continued to improve, significantly so in some cases. The principal has set a challenging agenda for change over the last 12 months, with a strong focus on increasing success rates and providing high quality education and training. This is starting to have a positive effect and has resulted in significantly improved retention rates, much better behaviour by learners and good assessment and support arrangements. Senior managers have implemented a number of productive working groups and curriculum reviews to respond quickly and effectively to particular issues of underperformance. The college now uses learners' views well to bring about improvements which most affect their experiences of college life.
11. The college's self-assessment process does not take sufficient account of many of the previously low success rates or provide an accurate and detailed analysis of the quality of teaching and learning. The resulting self-assessment report and grades based on the college's performance in 2010/11 are inaccurate. A recent self-assessment update produced for the inspection identifies a significant number of improvements made during 2011/12 and is generally more self-critical in identifying the reasons for the previous poor performance. Although the quality improvement and development plan is leading to improvements in leadership and management and support for learners, it is less effective in raising the quality of teaching and learning. The college has rectified some, but not all, of the areas of improvement identified at its previous inspection.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 3**

12. Outcomes for learners overall are satisfactory. Since 2008/09, success rates have fluctuated with few clear trends in improvement. They rose in 2009/10 only to fall back to their previous level in 2010/11 when they were below national averages. The decline was more marked for learners aged 16 to 18 than for adult learners. Whilst success rates in many curriculum areas declined significantly in 2010/11, in others they improved to be at, or above, the national average. The main cause of the decline in success rates in 2010/11 was poor retention. Significant improvements in learners' behaviour during 2011/12, coupled with many other effective strategies to bring about positive changes in the college's provision, have led to a sharp rise in retention of six percentage points to be at the national average. The improvement in retention has been particularly marked for adult learners. Pass rates have remained consistent for the last three years and are at the national average.

13. Learners' success rates on A-level provision for those aged 16 to 18 have declined and are low. They are satisfactory for the smaller numbers of adult learners. Achievement is particularly poor on AS levels but much better and above the national average for learners in the second year of their A-level studies. In 2011/12, the retention rate for AS-level courses has improved dramatically to 91%.
14. The prior attainment of learners studying at advanced level is generally below, or at, the average compared to similar colleges. Many of these learners make good, or very good, progress overall from their starting points, particularly on A levels and BTEC qualifications. Pass rates at grades A\* to C on the significant amount of GCSE provision are high. Success rates on functional skills qualifications are high and well above the national average.
15. The college has reduced the significant differences in retention that existed for male learners in both age groups during 2010/11 when compared with their female counterparts. It is too early to judge whether achievement rates have improved similarly.
16. Work-based learning success rates are satisfactory. Most learners on the large numbers of NVQs in the workplace gain their qualification in the time allocated to them. Overall success rates and those within the planned time on the much smaller number of apprenticeship programmes showed a significant improvement in 2010/11 but were still below national averages. Retention for the large numbers of learners on adult and community learning programmes is high as is the success rate for non-accredited courses. Success rates on the small number of long accredited courses are very low. School pupils aged 14 to 16 achieve well and progression to full-time further education is good.
17. Learners enjoy their courses and college life. Attendance and punctuality are generally good. They value the impact of the relatively new main college campus and the respect shown by learners to both their peers and staff. Learners feel very safe in the college environment. Standards of learners' work are high overall and learners develop good employability and personal skills. There is significant evidence to show that outcomes generally have improved markedly for learners during 2011/12.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 3**

18. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In adult and community learning, they are good. College managers judge that most lessons are good or better with very little inadequate teaching and learning. Inspectors judged too few lessons to be outstanding and too many were no better than satisfactory. Not enough teaching is inspirational.
19. The better lessons are characterised by confident and conscientious teachers who combine skilfully a varied range of teaching techniques that learners find

engaging and fun. A few teachers raise aspirations very effectively through using a good range of directed and targeted questions to check all learners have understood the carefully planned learning aims. This good teaching is characterised by enthusiastic, yet careful, probing and coaxing by teachers which develops learners' confidence.

20. Weaker classes are typified by dull teaching where teachers spend too long talking to learners who lose interest as a result. Too few teachers ensure all learners understand why they are doing various tasks or activities or what they will learn as a consequence. Learning aims are often unclear and focus too much on what learners have to do rather than what they will learn. Subsequent checking by teachers is then confined to whether learners complete tasks and activities and not what they have learned.
21. The college does not ensure that all teachers promote equality and diversity effectively during lessons. Many teachers' understanding of equality and diversity is limited to providing support and ensuring learners have equal opportunities to learn, rather than extending and promoting awareness of equality and diversity more generally.
22. Teachers assess work well and monitor the progress of learners in a supportive and encouraging way during lessons. Most teachers keep comprehensive records which show clearly how learners are progressing towards their qualifications. They use this information effectively during tutorials and reviews to ensure learners are on target to achieve. Written feedback to learners about their assessed work is detailed and helpful and learners are clear about what they have to do to improve their assignments.
23. Appropriate and effective initial assessment helps to ensure learners are on the right course to suit their abilities. Teachers receive detailed information about the outcomes of initial assessment, which many use well to plan lessons and set targets. Not all teachers however use this information well enough. Many learners benefit from good access to a team of specialist staff who provide useful additional teaching that improves learners' literacy and numeracy skills.
24. Resources for teaching and learning are good. Learners speak favourably about the good standards of the relatively new accommodation, which is maintained in excellent condition, and about the well equipped classrooms with modern learning resources. Many teachers enliven learning through good use of information and learning technology (ILT). Teachers are well qualified and, in vocational areas, many have extensive professional experience which they share generously with learners to bring topics to life and to make good reference to technical terms and current industrial practice.
25. The college offers a wide range of courses at intermediate and advanced levels, with a good choice of both vocational and academic qualifications. The college caters well for the diverse needs of adults through a large programme of courses in many community locations with good progression routes to

accredited learning. A well designed range of vocational options meets the needs of school pupils aged 14 to 16 well and has a demonstrable impact on raising their achievements and aspirations. The provision of apprenticeships is restricted to only a small number of curriculum areas. Opportunities for learners to benefit from work experience, visits and guest speakers are good on some courses, but are not consistently available to all learners who might benefit from this vocational reinforcement. The college has a wide range of more general enrichment activities including sport, international trips and volunteer programmes, but does not monitor fully learners' participation in this provision.

26. Good partnership working with a range of organisations, in particular employers, local authorities and schools, enables the college to achieve positive outcomes for many learners in the community and contributes significantly to widening participation and reducing social exclusion. The college targets some of its provision well at very specific groups within the local area, such as the Nepali and Traveller communities. Partners value highly the college's responsiveness and flexibility to meet their needs. Many college staff are involved in the successful management and operation of partners and are viewed as an integral part of that success.
27. Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners value highly the academic and personal support they receive. Induction is well designed and helps learners settle quickly into college life, but does not always incorporate learners who enrol late. The group tutorial programme gives learners a wide range of useful information about experiences relevant to their lives inside and outside college. Personal tutors make very good use of individual tutorials to discuss and agree realistic individual targets with learners and to monitor their performance more generally. The college has focused well in the last year on improving the quality of initial advice and guidance which are now good. Staff provide well-structured and supportive advice and guidance to learners wishing to apply for university or who want to progress to employment.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 3**

28. Since being appointed in September 2011, the principal has involved managers and staff well in pursuing a new strategic direction and vision for the college. The introduction of critical success factors within curriculum plans and appraisals has enabled the college to monitor performance much more accurately. Together with greatly improved access to more reliable data, managers are now able to challenge poor performance more regularly and with greater confidence. Retention rates have improved significantly in 2011/12 to be at the national average, and attendance is good. The ongoing restructuring of college management has improved communications and clarified line management responsibilities. Senior managers make good use of the findings from college working parties and curriculum reviews to successfully introduce new initiatives and courses. Some recording of team discussions during meetings about progress against targets and subsequent actions is insufficiently

thorough. Work-based learning managers have insufficient access to accurate in-year data to assess current performance and trends reliably.

29. The governing body has strengthened its position within the college over the last year through the appointment of new members with relevant skills, increased training at meetings and better working relationships with senior managers. These actions have enabled governors to challenge proposals and decisions taken by the college's senior leadership team more effectively than in previous years. Governors use their knowledge and expertise well to support and guide the college's strategic direction. A number of them have developed productive relationships with curriculum areas through the college's recently introduced link governor scheme.
30. The college has satisfactory arrangements in place to safeguard learners which meet statutory requirements. Managers and staff forge good links with external professional organisations to enable them to advise and refer learners who require assistance in respect of being safe at the college. Staff and governors receive appropriate training and understand their responsibilities for safeguarding. Learners receive insufficient information through the student handbook and the college's virtual learning environment about their own, and the college's, safeguarding responsibilities.
31. The college has successfully narrowed the gap in the performance of male learners in 2010/11 so that retention rates for men now exceed those for women and are above the national average. The college has a particularly strong emphasis on its respect agenda and student behaviour is good. Learners feel confident about being able to voice their opinions freely to staff. The promotion of equality and diversity through college publications, newsletters and a highly visible poster campaign around the college is good. Community development projects help particular groups of learners to integrate successfully with their local communities and to reduce social isolation. Equality and diversity are promoted well through college tutorials, but teachers do not yet have sufficient confidence or understanding to promote equality and diversity imaginatively through teaching and learning. Equality impact assessments are too infrequent. The college's published equalities objectives do not reflect the most important areas where it needs to take action to reduce inequality. The objectives make no reference to any actions or timescales through which they will be met.
32. Learners are able to feed back their views to the college in a variety of ways including focus groups, student surveys, course reviews and through course representatives. Managers take learners' evaluations seriously and use them well to bring about improvements to provision. Work-based learning managers are responsive to employers' individual feedback, but the college does not routinely gather their evaluations in a systematic way through surveys and other means.

33. The college has a well-established and inclusive self-assessment process that incorporates course reviews, data and feedback from a wide range of sources. Self-assessment in some curriculum areas is accurate. In others, however, the process is insufficiently thorough or self-critical and does not take account of important performance indicators. Managers do not use feedback on teaching and learning sufficiently well to form a detailed view of classroom practice. Arrangements to assure the quality of work-based learning are incomplete. The college's quality improvement and development plans lack sufficient emphasis on actions to improve teaching and learning.
34. The college's observations of teaching and learning provide managers with a reasonably accurate view of the quality of lessons across the college. Staff development is clearly linked to the outcomes from observations and identified areas for improvement. The college's team of lesson observers is proficient in identifying the main strengths and areas for improvement in lessons, but too often describes aspects of performance as outstanding when they are merely normal practice. Good practice exhibited by some inspirational teachers is not shared effectively with all teaching staff.
35. The college provides satisfactory value for money. The main campus occupies a prominent position in the town with good quality classrooms and resources. Staff are well qualified and experienced in the subjects they teach, with particularly high levels of vocational expertise in many areas. The good retention rates in 2011/12 and increased class sizes have improved value for money overall. Managers oversee college finances appropriately but have a number of challenges to overcome before the college is in a strong financial position.

## Subject areas

### Health, social care and early years

**Grade 2**

#### Context

36. Currently 167 learners, mainly aged 16 to 18 and female, study on intermediate and advanced level courses, the majority of which are health and social care programmes. Just fewer than 50 school pupils aged 14 to 16 from 13 schools in Bracknell and Wokingham study on foundation level early years and intermediate level health and social care courses. Work-based learning is provided to a small number of apprentices and a further 376 adult learners are enrolled on employer responsive provision in early years and health and social care.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good overall. Success rates on the full-time intermediate early years course are high and they are satisfactory on advanced courses in the same subject area. Most other success rates in the curriculum area declined in 2010/11 and were low, but retention has improved significantly in 2011/12 to be very high. Progression to further study and relevant employment is good. Functional skills achievements are high across all programmes.
- Learners make good progress during their time at college. Predicted high grades at this late stage in the academic year show significant improvement, building successfully on an already positive picture of progress made by learners in previous years.
- Success rates for apprentices and adults enrolled on work-related qualifications are high and improving. These learners acquire knowledge and skills which improve their professional and vocational practice in the workplace. Most learners progress to the next level of study and/or gain additional responsibility at work.
- Learners of all ages develop a wide range of vocationally relevant skills which enhance job opportunities. They have well-developed team working and problem solving skills and are encouraged to be reflective practitioners to improve their performance. Learners contribute purposefully to the college community and to initiatives in the wider local area. Learners on early years courses have few opportunities to gain confidence in the use of interactive whiteboards which are now widespread in the industry.
- Learners feel safe and demonstrate safe working practices. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding those with whom they work. Learners have ready access to support within the college to ensure their own safety and well-being. Placement coordinators assess and monitor all work placements for any risks.

- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many teachers use a wide range of learning strategies which incorporate good use of life and work experiences to explore topics. Group profiles are not always sufficiently detailed to assist in planning activities and strategies to check learning and to extend the more able learners. In less effective lessons, teachers do not sufficiently promote and reinforce learners' perceptions of equality and diversity.
- Assessment practice is good. Teachers plan assignments well and use detailed tracking systems to monitor learners' progress. Feedback is constructive with clear guidance on how learners can improve their work in future. The assessment of work-based learning is planned to meet individual learners' and employers' needs and provides clear evidence of the development of learners' knowledge and skills.
- The curriculum area has very strong and well-established links with a wide range of organisations and employers. The college works closely with two local borough councils, which results in provision for learners from 13 schools, including special schools. Good links with a number of higher education institutions provide progression routes for learners from advanced level courses.
- Support for learners at college and in the workplace is good. Learners value highly the personal and study support they receive from teachers and assessors. Staff use regular tutorials and reviews well to set and monitor individual targets which ensure timely completion of qualifications.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers provide a clear direction for the curriculum area, with a much improved recent focus on quality improvement. They use regular meetings well to monitor the provision and to raise concerns. In 2011/12, closer working with learners' parents and carers and earlier intervention to identify possible withdrawals have led to a dramatic improvement in retention. A culture of continuous improvement is now very evident within this area of the college resulting in inclusive, accurate and realistic self-assessment.
- Teachers and assessors are well qualified, experienced and very enthusiastic. The staff teams are drawn from a very wide range of relevant professions. Career and personal development opportunities for staff are good including, for example, shadowing duties in a local doctor's surgery.

### **What does Bracknell and Wokingham College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve teaching and learning through more targeted training and better sharing of good practice between staff to enable them to reflect on their understanding of equality and diversity and how they can apply particular strategies in relation to these concepts with confidence in the classroom.
- Enhance the meeting of learners' individual needs, particularly those who are more able, by ensuring that group profiles are more detailed and that they inform better planning of learning and assessment methods in lessons.
- Improve the employment opportunities for learners on early years courses through enabling them to gain confidence and competence in the use of



interactive whiteboards which are now a standard resource used in the childcare sector.

## Arts, media and publishing

## Grade 3

### Context

37. The college provides full-time courses in art and design, media, photography and performing arts at intermediate and advanced levels. AS and A-level courses are offered in art and design, film studies, media studies and photography, with the latter also being available as a part-time programme. Enrolments on full-time courses have increased slightly in 2011/12 to just over 300. Almost all learners on full-time courses are aged 16 to 18.

### Key findings

- Outcomes are satisfactory for learners overall. Success rates for learners on the second year of their A-level courses are outstanding at 100% and are also very high for learners aged 16 to 18 on full-time vocational programmes. Success rates for adults have been very low for the last three years. Retention in 2011/12 has improved significantly, mainly due to a ten percentage point increase in retention rates for adult learners. However, retention for learners aged 16 to 18 has declined by two percentage points in 2011/12. Progression rates between full-time vocational courses are good.
- Learners currently make good progress in all subject areas and their achievement of high grades is just above the national average and improving. Standards of work are good. Learners' detailed research supports the very effective development of practical artefacts. Learners develop good employability and work readiness skills.
- Learners in all subject areas benefit from, and enjoy, participating in a range of exciting projects within the college and local communities. These include murals painted at one of the college sites and in settings around the area, displays of art work in disused shops and performances at local schools.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers' well-planned activities lead to learners being highly motivated and confident, thereby challenging and extending their critical thinking abilities and their creativity. In the less good classes, learning outcomes are often not specific enough and are not linked clearly to lesson activities or checks on learning. Learners in these classes do not develop their critical thinking well enough to be able to evaluate their own, and others', work.
- The use of information and learning technology (ILT) is good in media lessons. Tutors encourage learners to use ILT creatively to show their work for peer assessment and to record feedback from group discussions. The use of the college's virtual learning environment is well established for providing access to course and assessment information, but insufficient use is made of online interactive materials to promote more independent learning.
- Assessment is good. Learners value the prompt way in which their work is assessed. The feedback they receive is linked clearly to grading criteria and supports them well to make improvements. On most courses, the types of

evidence submitted for assessment match learners' needs closely. On some media courses, learners are able to select their preferred way in which to submit evidence in order to support them achieving at high levels.

- Staff make good use of educational visits which integrate well with learners' assessments. Learners in media and performing arts attend professional master classes and experience a range of work environments and workshops through visits elsewhere in the United Kingdom and abroad. Links with local arts venues and businesses are insufficient for some learners and not enough use is made of work experience to enhance vocational courses.
- Tutorial support is good. Staff set realistic targets for learners at the beginning of their course and learners then receive regular progress reports, including feedback on their performance against predicted grade targets. The recent introduction of standardised tracking reports to monitor learners' progress has facilitated the better sharing of information between teachers and earlier interventions where learners' performance is a cause for concern.
- Managers have been ineffective in raising success rates over the last three years, particularly on AS levels and in part-time provision. The self-assessment process has not identified many of the key areas for improvement and managers have not carried out a detailed analysis of teaching and learning. More recently, the curriculum area's monitoring of performance has improved considerably through a range of different meetings and reviews. This has brought about significant improvements to many areas of the provision but has yet to impact sufficiently on the standards of teaching and learning.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Teachers do not routinely make references to equality and diversity within schemes of work unless directly required to do so by the syllabus for the qualification. Art and design and media learners participate in good projects such as sculpture for the blind and the development of a sign language video. The promotion of safeguarding is good.
- Learners have access to high standards of workshops and classroom areas across all of the college sites. Photography dark rooms are well equipped, the range of specialist facilities in art and design is good and the media editing suites provide learners with excellent opportunities for independent learning. The provision of ILT resources to enable learners to gain skills in the use of industry standard software is insufficient.

### **What does Bracknell and Wokingham College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning through the use of learning outcomes that are more directly related to measurable criteria linked to tasks and activities in order to bring about regular reinforcement of, and checks on, learning during lessons.
- Plan lessons in such a way that all learners are taught the skills necessary for critical thinking and to enable them to participate more fully in group discussions.

- Further develop links with local arts organisations to provide increased opportunities for work experience. Enhance learners' employability skills through the introduction of industry standard software for courses using digital media.

## Business, administration and law

## Grade 3

### Context

38. The college offers full- and part-time courses from foundation to advanced and degree levels in business administration, accounting, law, management and marketing. Of the almost 700 learners enrolled on courses at the college in this curriculum area, over 500 are adults. More than half are women. A small number of apprentices are enrolled on work-based training programmes in accountancy and business administration.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall, but show considerable variation between courses. Success rates on the BTEC national diploma in business, intermediate level certificate in accounting, foundation level award in computerised accounts and the advanced level diploma in accounting are high, but they are low for a similar number of courses including AS-level business studies. Most work-based apprentices achieve their qualification within the time allocated to them. Retention has improved significantly in 2011/12 and is now around the national average for most courses.
- The significant numbers of adult learners make good progress towards achieving their qualification, many with higher grades than predicted for them at the outset of their studies. Progress is noticeably slower for the smaller number of learners aged 16 to 18 on advanced level business courses.
- Learners develop good employability skills and enhance their self-confidence through working on realistic industry-related scenarios supported by relevant and up-to-date contributions from employers and guest speakers. Progression rates to appropriate employment are high.
- Learners feel safe in the college. They know what to do if they experience bullying or harassment. They have a good awareness of ways in which to improve their health and well-being. Behaviour is good in lessons and in social spaces within the curriculum area and mutual respect is evident between learners and staff.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many teachers use ILT well in the classroom to enhance learning. They provide good links to current topics and use a wide range of activities to stimulate learning and to gain learners' interest. In one class observed during the inspection, learners enthusiastically discussed the fate of the euro currency and its potential implications for their employment after viewing a number of video clips. Some teachers do not use questioning techniques sufficiently well to check learning or to challenge more able learners.
- The assessment of learners' work is generally good. Learners receive useful verbal feedback which ensures they are clear about what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their grades. On some courses, the range

of assessment methods is limited and teachers rely too much on the use of written evidence which fails to motivate learners to achieve their best.

- The range of courses is satisfactory. Staff ensure that all the programmes provide suitable opportunities for learners to gain relevant experience for their future employment and/or progression to higher education. A wide range of visits and trips to both local and national businesses helps to develop learners' knowledge of realistic working environments. Learners benefit greatly from guest speakers, some from within the college.
- Partnership working is satisfactory. The college works well with employers to provide work experience opportunities for learners on BTEC courses. Staff have negotiated a common timetable with local schools that have sixth forms to enable the learners to have wider access to a more varied range of curriculum choices. Learners enjoy visiting an outward bound centre during induction to develop team working skills.
- Learners receive good support. Staff identify those with additional learning needs promptly and provide them with well-targeted assistance so they are not disadvantaged in any way. Teachers have a good understanding of learners' personal situations and monitor their welfare closely. The monitoring of learners' progress is rigorous, but individual learning plans are not always used effectively to identify clear targets for further improvement.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent good appointments have led to more consistency and clear structure in curriculum management. A strong ethos of wanting to raise aspirations now exists in the department. Actions taken to bring about improvements have had a positive impact during 2011/12. The sharing of good practice is insufficient.
- Self-assessment is not sufficiently thorough and identifies strengths which are sometimes no more than normal practice. Managers do not always evaluate the quality of the provision in a sufficiently critical manner through course reviews. Targets in action plans are not specific enough to be able to assess the impact of steps taken to improve the provision.
- Resources to support learning are good. Staff are well qualified and many have recent and very relevant industry experience. Software used by learners is up to date and reflects the standards found in the workplace. Classrooms contain good resources and provide effective learning environments.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Managers have taken effective action during the last year to ensure male learners achieve as well as their female counterparts. Teachers are not sufficiently confident in their understanding of equality and diversity to incorporate the concepts fully into their classroom practice.

### **What does Bracknell and Wokingham College need to do to improve further?**

- Develop individual learning plans for learners that set challenging and rigorous targets and which staff monitor carefully to ensure more consistent success across the department.

- Share good practice between the different teaching teams to ensure that all teachers use a sufficiently wide range of imaginative teaching and assessment strategies that motivate and inspire learners.
- Ensure targets in course reviews are specific and challenging enough so that managers can fully assess the impact of actions they take to bring about more sustained and consistent improvement in the curriculum area.

## Information about the inspection

39. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's director of curriculum and quality, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding bodies, the previous inspection report, a good practice case study visit, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
40. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.



**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Bracknell and Wokingham College**  
**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>					
Full-time learners	1,135		964	171	
Part-time learners	3,132	474	149	1,393	1,116
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	-	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	3				
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	4				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>3</b>	-	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	-
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>				
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	4				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3				

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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