



South Tyneside College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post sixteen

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130555

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	South Tyneside College
Type of college:	General Further Education/Tertiary College
Principal:	Jim Bennett
Address of college:	St George's Avenue, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE34 6ET
Telephone number:	0191 427 3500
Fax number:	0191 427 3535
Chair of governors:	Alan Brewster MBE
Unique reference number:	130555
Name of lead inspector:	Jan Bennett HMI
Dates of inspection:	14 to 18 November 2005

Background of the organisation

1. South Tyneside College is a large tertiary college with its main campus in South Shields. There is another major site in Hebburn which is six miles away and a Marine Safety Training Centre on the riverside at South Shields. It is the major provider of post-16 education in the Borough of South Tyneside.
2. The college offers courses in all 15 of the QCA sector/subject areas. In 2004/05, the college had over 16,500 learners of which almost 40% were on engineering courses. The college has had a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in nautical science and marine engineering for four years. It offers specialist marine engineering courses that attract learners from all parts of the United Kingdom and from different countries around the world. The college offers over 30 GCE A levels and a wide range of vocational courses. Around 2,500 of learners are full-time 16 to 18 year olds. There are 95 apprentices on work-based learning courses, mainly in hairdressing. The college has recently started working in partnership with the local authority to provide adult and community learning courses, mainly in information and communication technology (ICT). This provision currently caters for around 460 learners.
3. South Tyneside has the fourth highest unemployment rate of the 376 local/unitary authorities in England and Wales and nine wards in the borough are amongst the 10% most deprived in England and Wales. The borough has a population of around 153,000 of which 97.3% are white. Around 8% of learners at the college are from minority ethnic groups. In 2004, 45% of school leavers in the borough obtained at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to C, which is below the national average of 54%.
4. Since the last inspection in January 2002, the college has experienced severe financial problems and four different principals. Following the first change of principal in December 2002, an investigation into unreliable internal data identified a £6.5million budget deficit. This resulted in the resignation of the new principal and nine governors, with over 100 staff redundancies. An interim senior management team, including an interim principal, was appointed in the summer of 2004. This team focused on the major difficulties facing the college and much routine work was suspended or delayed. A new principal and senior management team are now in place prioritising the development of a new vision and strategic direction for the college. They are also in the process of introducing many new operating systems and procedures.

Scope of the inspection

5. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:
- overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
 - achievements and standards
 - quality of provision
 - leadership and management.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: grade 3
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Inadequate: grade 4

Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

6. Learners' achievements have remained satisfactory despite the recent upheaval and success rates are around national averages. The achievement of work-based learners is satisfactory and improving. Attendance rates are generally good.
7. Although in most lessons teaching and learning are satisfactory or better, there are too many pockets of unsatisfactory teaching. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Learning resources are good in some curriculum areas but inadequate in others.
8. There is a satisfactory range of vocational and academic courses to meet the needs of the local community, industry and partner schools. There is no centrally managed enrichment programme although there are some good opportunities within individual faculties. Learners in several curriculum areas are actively encouraged to contribute to the local community. A wide range of Skills for Life courses is offered and the college is active in local partnerships and developments. There is a successful range of vocational programmes for 14 to 16 year olds including those who are outside mainstream education and the college is expanding its provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. The high recruitment of overseas learners to maritime programmes enhances the cultural diversity of the college and the local area but course teams are just beginning to analyse equal opportunities data. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is satisfactory.
9. Support and guidance for learners is satisfactory. Initial information is clear and induction is well planned. Individual tutorials and pastoral support for full-time learners are good but tutorials for part-time learners are less effective.
10. Leadership and management are inadequate. Quality assurance procedures are still in the early stages of implementation and insufficient attention has been given to monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Systems for performance management are not in place and there are significant weaknesses in the management of health and safety. The college has been slow to ensure that it complies with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and with section 175 of the 2002 Education Act (safeguarding children). Financial management has improved significantly; arrangements for governance are also much improved.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: grade 3

11. The college demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve its provision. Successful action has been taken to address a number of key issues facing the college. Large staffing and budget reductions have been made whilst maintaining the achievements and standards of learners. Improvements have been made to the accommodation in some areas and there are plans for further refurbishment. The accuracy of management information data is much improved.
12. New self assessment procedures have been introduced but some reviews are not yet sufficiently evaluative. The new system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has not had sufficient impact in some areas of the college. Staff morale has improved and there is a growing confidence in the capacity of college managers to effect further improvements.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

13. The college has made inadequate progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection. Retention rates on adult programmes have improved at level 1 but not at level 3. Improvements to the management information system have been too slow as have improvements to the estate with many teaching areas still experiencing unsatisfactory accommodation. Success rates in 2005 indicate that the development of key skills is improving especially at level 2.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- high success rates on level 3 courses for 16 to 18 year olds
- very good progress in addressing the serious financial problems
- effective pastoral support for full-time learners
- positive attitude and commitment of staff
- strong and improving links with industry.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- the significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- poor health and safety management
- lack of compliance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and legislation to safeguard children
- under-developed quality assurance and self assessment processes
- inadequate systems for performance management
- some poor quality accommodation and learning resources.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

14. Achievements and standards have remained satisfactory in difficult circumstances: success rates are around the national average overall. On level 3 courses for 16-18 year olds, success rates are good; they are improving on short courses which are now mostly above the national average. Success rates on key skills courses were very low in 2003/04 but improved in 2004/05 particularly at level 2. On work-based learning courses, achievement of the full apprenticeship framework is satisfactory and improving. Success rates on courses for adults in the community are declining.
15. Pass rates on GCE AS and A-level courses are good although the percentage of learners obtaining high grades is low. Value added measures, which compare learners' results at GCE AS and A level with their performance at GCSE, show that overall they have achieved significantly lower grades than might be expected in the last two years, although there has been an improvement in 2005. Similar data for learners on courses leading to non-graded qualifications show that they make satisfactory progress.
16. Success rates for adults on courses at level 1 are higher than those for 16-18 year olds, however, the reverse is true for courses at levels 2 and 3. There are significant differences between the success rates of male and female learners. On courses for 16-18 year olds, success rates for males are higher than those for females but the reverse is true for adults. There are also significant differences in the success rates of learners from different ethnic backgrounds. For example, they are very high for Indian learners and these are considerably better than those for both white and Bangladeshi learners.
17. Attendance at lessons is good overall at 87.6%. Standards of work are generally satisfactory and learners enjoy their courses. In particular, they value the practical nature of activities within many programmes and the direct experience gained through work placements. Learners are generally encouraged to stay healthy.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

18. Inspectors agreed with the college's self assessment that, whilst the majority of classes are satisfactory or better, there are a significant number of lessons which are unsatisfactory. The weaknesses in the teaching of level 2 courses, identified in the last inspection, remain. The use of ICT to enrich the learning experience is poor.
19. The most successful lessons are well-planned with an emphasis on learning outcomes. Teachers use an appropriate and varied range of activities and

techniques to maintain interest, and they make good use of students' own experiences to enrich the learning of others. Lessons are adequately resourced, and opportunities to gain key skills are clearly defined and relevant to the subject.

20. In unsatisfactory lessons, there is weak planning and insufficient attention paid to learning. There is a lack of variety in the teaching methods used and learners can lose their concentration. The consolidation of learning is not well developed and resources are insufficient. In a few lessons, attendance is unsatisfactory and is affecting the progress of learners. Latecomers are not always appropriately challenged.
21. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory and meet awarding body requirements. The college's assessment policy is adequate but it is not monitored consistently and a few staff are unfamiliar with it. The majority of teachers assess the progress of their learners regularly. However, on a few courses there have been too few assessments since the beginning of the academic year. The quality of marking is generally good. Most teachers mark thoroughly and give sufficiently detailed feedback to enable learners to improve. The teaching of key skills is inconsistent across the college. Their development is not sufficiently integrated into lesson planning and college lesson observations seldom cover the effectiveness of key skills delivery. The best teaching of key skills makes effective use of vocationally specific examples and learners' experiences within the workplace. In weaker lessons, key skills are not sufficiently contextualised to enable learners to see their relevance.
22. All full-time learners are assessed for additional support needs on entry. The process is paper-based, however, and the results are taking too long to process. The testing of part-time learners is under-developed.
23. The college offers a satisfactory range of vocational and academic courses to meet the needs of the local community, industry and partner schools. Specialist provision in marine engineering and nautical science makes a significant contribution to meeting national and international needs. Links with industry are exceptionally close in this area and there are strengthening industrial links in other curriculum areas. There is a good range of vocational training opportunities for 14 to 16 year olds and many of these pupils progress onto college training programmes post-16. The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities is expanding. Links with local community groups have been maintained and a large number of community outreach centres provide a range of learning opportunities for adults.
24. There is no centrally managed programme of enrichment activities but there are good opportunities within some faculties that are open to all learners. Learners are encouraged to join course teams and other committees within the college and they have the opportunity to make a contribution to the local

community. The programme of additional courses in marine engineering and nautical science increases the skills, knowledge and employability of the learners but the programme of enrichment for residential learners is limited.

25. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. A wide range of advice on housing and welfare issues is provided; careers guidance and counselling facilities are satisfactory. Two absence officers give effective support to those learners at risk of leaving early or being excluded. Initial information is clear and learners are carefully guided onto appropriate courses. Induction programmes are well planned and provide learners with useful information about their rights and responsibilities and the demands of their course. Learners are given appropriate advice on staying safe. All full-time learners have a personal tutor and have regular and effective individual tutorials but those for part-time learners are less effective. Pastoral support is good on full-time courses and is particularly effective for those learners with mild and moderate learning difficulties and for learners on maritime programmes. Most learners are set clear targets and progress is closely monitored. Additional learning support is good but too often there is a delay before the support starts.

Leadership and management

Inadequate : grade 4

26. Leadership and management are inadequate. The previous principal focused on the implementation of the college's financial recovery plan and the college has operated without a strategic plan. In consultation with governors and college staff, the new principal is in the early stages of revising the mission, vision and values to inform the future strategic direction of the college. The new vice principals have made considerable progress in addressing the key issues that the college faces. Financial management has improved significantly and a number of key policies and procedures are in the early stages of implementation. Arrangements for the governance of the college have improved but governors do not receive suitable reports to enable them to monitor the performance of different groups of learners.
27. The quality assurance policy is not sufficiently detailed and there has been insufficient priority given to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Systems for quality assurance and self assessment are not well-established. Recent developments ensure that the self-assessment process involves staff at course and department level in systematically reviewing the effectiveness of their provision. New formats to record the outcomes of the process are fit for purpose but the quality of the reports produced is variable and many are not sufficiently self-critical. At cross-college level, arrangements to clearly identify strengths and areas to be improved are not well developed.
28. Systems for performance management are not in place. There is no annual operating plan against which the performance of the college can be measured. As a result of the decision of the previous senior management team to halt the staff appraisal programme, the performance of individual

staff is not measured. There are serious weaknesses in the management of health and safety. The health and safety committee is ineffective and actions from inspection reports are not routinely followed up.

29. The college's response to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 has been satisfactory but it has been very slow in taking action to ensure that it complies with section 175 of the 2002 Education Act (safeguarding children) and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. All staff working with 14 to 16 year olds have been subject to enhanced criminal record bureau (CRB) checks although this is not yet the case with staff working with 16 to 18 year olds. Key policies are either very new or are not yet approved by the corporation. Insufficient training has been provided for governors, senior managers and designated child protection officers.
30. The college provides satisfactory value for money. It has made significant improvements in financial management and has reduced its operating costs whilst maintaining standards of learners' success.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Table S-1: College success rate for level 1 long qualifications by qualification type, expected end year and age

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	01/02	1,027	65	53	12	2,970	47	50	-3
	02/03	1,089	50	56	-6	1,303	54	55	-1
	03/04	742	61	60	1	558	51	59	-8
GNVQs and precursors	01/02	47	74	54	21	0		41	
	02/03	58	62	60	2	2	100	47	
	03/04	83	72	65	7	1	0	52	
NVQs	01/02	27	63	52	11	10	30	49	-19
	02/03	26	58	56	2	15	40	57	-17
	03/04	43	86	61	25	20	35	62	-27
Other	01/02	953	64	53	12	2,960	47	50	-3
	02/03	1,005	49	56	-7	1,286	54	55	-1
	03/04	616	58	60	-2	537	51	59	-8

Table 2

Table S-2: College success rate for level 2 long qualifications by qualification type, expected end year and age

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	01/02	1,713	61	50	10	1,679	57	48	9
	02/03	1,504	57	52	6	897	50	49	1
	03/04	1,414	58	56	2	744	47	53	-7
GCSEs	01/02	591	62	54	8	163	48	53	-5
	02/03	528	61	57	4	159	53	55	-2
	03/04	425	59	61	-3	94	54	59	-4
GNVQs and precursors	01/02	232	57	56	2	6	67	50	17
	02/03	196	65	59	7	4	25	53	
	03/04	159	75	63	12	5	60	57	
NVQs	01/02	369	67	43	24	383	72	45	28
	02/03	295	58	42	16	235	58	49	9
	03/04	254	63	52	11	337	29	53	-25
Other	01/02	521	56	49	7	1,127	54	48	5
	02/03	485	49	50	-1	499	46	48	-2
	03/04	576	51	54	-3	308	64	52	11

Table 3

Table S-3: College success rate for level 3 long qualifications by qualification type, expected end year and age

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	01/02	4,060	66	60	6	1,128	57	50	7
	02/03	4,392	72	62	10	1,677	61	51	10
	03/04	4,105	70	64	6	1,825	58	53	4
A/A2 levels	01/02	950	88	80	8	32	91	57	34
	02/03	1,237	86	82	4	49	57	63	-6
	03/04	1,313	87	84	4	36	89	66	23
AS levels	01/02	2,256	70	60	10	95	40	47	-7
	02/03	2,407	68	61	7	138	38	48	-10
	03/04	2,041	66	63	4	86	44	50	-5
GNVQs and precursors	01/02	384	39	47	-8	90	49	43	6
	02/03	290	53	50	3	46	35	45	-10
	03/04	212	49	52	-3	31	68	43	25
NVQs	01/02	369	20	49	-28	406	57	41	17
	02-03	320	67	51	17	378	69	45	25
	03/04	139	61	54	8	444	56	47	9
Other	01/02	101	47	54	-7	505	59	54	5
	02/03	138	70	55	15	1,066	63	54	9
	03/04	400	47	56	-9	1,228	58	56	3