



Carlisle College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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130634

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Carlisle College
Type of college:	Further Education College
Principal:	Moira Tattersall
Address of college:	Victoria Place Carlisle CA1 1HS
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Chair of governors:	Steve Griffiths
Unique reference number:	130634
Name of lead inspector:	Alan Winchcombe, ALI
Dates of inspection:	27-31 March 2006

Background of the organisation

1. Carlisle College is a small, general further education (GFE) College, serving the post-16 education and training needs of North Cumbria. The college campus, located in Carlisle, is the only GFE College within a 35 mile radius of Carlisle. It has cross-border arrangements with Scotland for learners living within the travel to learn area. The college's mission is "to achieve excellence by working in partnership to grow and meet the lifelong learning needs and aspirations of individuals and businesses in Carlisle and its surrounding areas".
2. Carlisle is a major regional centre for administration and distribution services. Across the region employment in non-service industries, such as agriculture, manufacturing and construction are all higher than the national average. The rate of unemployment in Carlisle, at 2.5%, is in line with the national average, and slightly lower than the regional average of 2.8%. The proportion of school leavers gaining five or more GCSE subjects at A*-C is 57.1% which is very close to the national average.
3. About 86% of learners live in Carlisle and the surrounding area of north Cumbria. Approximately 57% are female and some 2% belong to minority ethnic groups, above the representation of these groups in the local population (Cumbria 0.9%), and well below the 9.1% in England.
4. The college provides courses in 13 of the 15 subject sector categories at a range of levels from pre-entry to higher education (HE). The college enrolled 6,844 learners in 2004-05, of which 5,216 were studying part-time and 75% were adults. Some 83% of learners aged 16 to 18 years are enrolled on courses at levels 1 and 2. Most adults are enrolled on courses at levels 1 and 2. The college also caters for some 500 Year 10 and 11 school pupils drawn from local schools on a range of vocational courses, and 289 learners following modern apprenticeships.

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); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits 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

- specialist provision in: building and construction; engineering; hairdressing and beauty therapy; information and communication technology (ICT) for users; foundation programmes

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: grade 3

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.

Curriculum areas

Construction	Satisfactory: grade 3
Engineering & manufacturing technologies	Good: grade 2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory: grade 3
Information and communication Technology (ICT)	Satisfactory: grade 3
Foundation programmes	Satisfactory: grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

6. The college remains satisfactory. Learners' achievements are satisfactory overall. In 2003 and 2004 many success rates were below average but have now improved. For 16-18 year olds, success rates are satisfactory at levels 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory at level 3. Success rates for adults are above average at levels 2 and 3. Outcomes for work-based learners are satisfactory. 14-16 year olds achieve particularly well. Attendance is satisfactory. Progression to further and higher education and employment is good. Success rates for key skills are too low, although arrangements for delivering key skills in vocational areas are improving.
7. Teaching across the college is satisfactory. Most learners enjoy their lessons. However, some teachers do not challenge students sufficiently or focus enough on learning outcomes for individual students.
8. The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. A good range of courses with clear progression opportunities is provided. Very good provision is made for those aged 14-16. Employer engagement is extensive and the college is highly responsive to local business community needs. The college also works effectively with non-traditional learners from the travelling community. However, diversity is insufficiently promoted with learners.
9. Learners receive satisfactory support and guidance. Support arrangements are particularly good for those identified with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Initial assessment is generally effective. The college has recognised the need to improve its tutorial support arrangements. Although support is provided for the development of key skills, the wider literacy and numeracy needs of some learners are not met.
10. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and governors set a clear direction for the college and much has been achieved since the last inspection in 2002. The recovery plan has been effectively implemented and diligently monitored. Strategies to improve performance in retention and achievement have been largely effective. Restructuring has been carried out efficiently and effectively, and accommodation is being substantially improved. The college's self-assessment report is comprehensive and largely accurate. Overall, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

11. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve its provision. Its quality improvement plan provides a sound basis for monitoring and improving performance. Procedures for reviewing course performance are effective in identifying areas for improvement. Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning have been improved. Overall success rates have improved. Good improvements have been made in work-based learning. The self-assessment process is inclusive and rigorous, and the college's self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

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

12. The college has taken good steps to address most of the issues raised in the inspection of 2002. It has made significant changes and improvements in its management arrangements. The management of work-based learning is now good. Success rates on long courses are improving. Strategic curriculum planning is clearly aligned with funding body and regional and national priorities. The college continues to engage well with employers. There are challenging targets for the recruitment of learners aged 16-18. The college has been less successful in addressing low achievement of key skills.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- very clear strategic direction
- effective management actions to improve the quality of provision
- good management of work-based learning
- excellent employer engagement and responsiveness to employers
- wide range of courses available with good progression opportunities for most learners
- good provision in engineering
- good support in-class for individual learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
- well managed and successful development of 14-16 provision

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- attendance
- quality of teaching and learning
- retention and pass rates for level 3 programmes
- progress in achievement of key skills
- consistency of group tutorial support
- promotion of diversity
- differentiation in teaching and learning to respond to individual learners' needs
- meeting the needs of learners on mainstream courses requiring literacy or numeracy support

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grades:

Learners aged 14-16

Good: grade 2

13. Inspectors agree with the college's self-assessment that the standards achieved by learners are satisfactory overall. The college has been successful in improving success rates in many areas, although some weaknesses remain.
14. Between 2003 and 2005 success rates for 16-18 year olds on long courses increased significantly. At levels 1 and 2 success rates in 2005 were in line with national averages, but they remained below for level 3. Improving pass rates between 2003 and 2005 have contributed significantly to improving success rates at levels 1, 2 and 3. In 2005 pass rates were well above national rates at levels 1 and 2, and similar to national at level 3. Retention rates have not shown consistent upward trends, although they are in line with national rates at levels 1 and 2. There was a substantial improvement at level 1 between 2003 and 2005. At level 3 retention declined between 2003 and 2005 and is well below average. Success rates for key skills are low.
15. For adult learners, success rates for long courses have improved significantly over the three years up to 2005. At level 2 success rates have been consistently above average for three years. At level 3 success rates were well above national averages in 2005, and at level 1 they were average. Improved retention rates at all three levels have contributed to the rising success rates, and retention at level 2 is now above national averages. Pass rates have risen significantly at level 3 and remained similar to national figures at levels 1 and 2.
16. 14-16 year olds achieve well on a range of courses. They develop a range of skills and many gain relevant qualifications. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities gain social skills and confidence as well as practical skills. Males achieve slightly better than females amongst adult students, but the reverse is true for younger students. Students from minority ethnic heritages, who are few in number, do not achieve quite as well as white British students.
17. Success rates for NVQs are generally above averages for 16-18 year olds and adults. On many vocational courses, students develop good practical and vocational skills. Work-based learning achievements are satisfactory overall. Full framework achievement rates vary between vocational areas and are improving. More work-based learners gain NVQs than the national averages. Short course success rates are satisfactory.

18. Progression to higher level courses and employment is good. Overall attendance was broadly in line with national averages in 2004-05. Although college data for this year shows signs of improvement amongst the current cohort of students, with retention also improving in many areas, attendance in some areas of the college remains poor.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grades:

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: grade 2

19. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Most of the teaching across the college is satisfactory. The college's self-assessment of teaching and learning is accurate and has clearly identified where improvements are needed.
20. Most learners enjoy their lessons. Inspection confirms that students on vocational programmes produce high quality work and develop good practical skills which are valued by employers. Teachers draw effectively on their recent industrial and occupational experience to make learning relevant. In better lessons, teachers make good links between theory and practice, which effectively consolidate learning. Work-based trainees are well-supported in the workplace by assessors and employers.
21. Assessment of students' progress is generally effective and most teachers provide detailed comments on how learners can improve their work, and progress is reviewed regularly. However, some teachers do not focus enough on learning outcomes and in some theory sessions; teachers do not undertake sufficient formative assessment to check learning of new concepts. Parents receive progress reports three times a year, and work-based learners have formal reviews every ten to twelve weeks. Employers routinely receive progress reports.
22. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment that some aspects of teaching need further improvement. In weaker sessions, teachers do not plan sufficiently to use a varied range of resources and activities which stimulate and motivate learners. Insufficient use is made of ICT resources in some areas of the college. Some lessons lack differentiation and do not provide sufficient challenge for more able learners. The college has taken action to provide targeted staff development which focuses clearly on the improvement of identified weaknesses. It has also strengthened its arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning through collaboration with other colleges. However, these measures have not yet impacted fully on some teaching and learning.
23. The college recognises that many students do not make satisfactory progress in the development of their key skills. Some opportunities are missed to

engage students and to make the development of key skills more relevant. The college has responded to this weakness by moving to deliver key skills within curriculum areas and to contextualise learning materials to increase relevance for students. This is beginning to have an impact on the overall quality of provision.

24. The college provide a good range of provision for the learners it recruits, and progression opportunities are good. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is satisfactory. Clear policies and procedures are in place for child protection and the college complies with legislative requirements. The college has developed highly effective and responsive partnerships with local schools, and provision for those aged 14-16 has grown significantly. The provision is very well managed, and many learners show good achievement and progress into further education.
25. Employer engagement is extensive and the college is highly responsive to the local business community needs. Working collaboratively with employers and other local providers, the college has thoroughly reviewed its training portfolio, and has substantially reduced its franchised provision since the last inspection.
26. The range of enrichment activities is satisfactory and activities are tailored to meet learners' requests. There are very good opportunities for some students to make a positive contribution to the community. For example, for the second year the college is leading a three week expedition to South America to enable a group of learners to be involved in fundraising and work with underprivileged children and communities.
27. The college's provision for the advice, guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. Learners have good access to a range of support services such as welfare, personal counselling and high quality crèche facilities. Pre-entry support and guidance is effective. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure learners are placed on the right courses. Induction is successful in enabling learners to settle quickly into their courses. The college works closely with Connexions to deliver good career guidance and support.
28. Initial assessment is carried out effectively for full-time learners. Good support is provided in-class for individual learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Learning support assistants are highly skilled and work closely to encourage and support individual learners with a wide range of physical disabilities. However, the overall management of additional learning support lacks cohesion, and communication between staff delivering different aspects of learner support is insufficient to ensure that a comprehensive programme of support is planned effectively for all learners.
29. Learners value the regular one to one reviews with their personal tutors. However, the planning and quality of group tutorials are too inconsistent. Review processes in work-based learning are effective. Although the college

has improved its attendance monitoring systems, this has not yet been fully effective, and learner attendance remains a concern in some curriculum areas.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grades:

Learners aged 14-16

Good: grade 2

Work-Based Learning

Good: grade 2

30. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and governors set a very clear direction for the college. The recovery plan has been effectively implemented and diligently monitored by the governors, who are highly committed and understand the college well. The college's three-year development plan is closely aligned with the priorities set by the LSC and regional and national initiatives.
31. Quality assurance arrangements have been effective in directing improvements. Performance monitoring has been aided by accurate and well used management information. The principal and college managers meet regularly with staff to review progress against challenging targets. The lesson observation scheme has been considerably improved but this has not yet had a significant impact on teaching and learning.
32. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Staff appraisal arrangements are satisfactory, and staff have good access to continuing professional development. Accommodation and learning resources are adequate, and major building improvements are now underway.
33. The response of the college to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002, the Education Act (safeguarding children) 2002 is satisfactory. The college site is mostly accessible, and child protection procedures and those which relate to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults are satisfactory. Bullying and harassment policies are effectively applied. Financial planning, management and control strategies are effective and the college provides satisfactory value for money.
34. Curriculum planning is clearly focused on meeting the principal objectives identified in the development plan. Information for management is reliable and timely, and is effectively used by curriculum managers. However, although overall provision is satisfactory, some aspects of curriculum management are weak. Strategies to improve retention and success rates for learners aged 16-18 have not been effective in some areas. Management of the group tutorial programme is inconsistent across the college. There is insufficient coherence in the planning of provision to meet the additional

development and support needs of some learners. Management of assessment is inadequate in ICT.

35. The management of work-based learning is good. Managers work hard to raise the profile and aspirations of staff and learners towards improving success rates. Senior managers and governors effectively monitor the challenging targets set for work-based learning. Systems for tracking individual learner progress are highly effective. Employer engagement continues to be very good.
36. There is insufficient promotion of diversity. The college's self-assessment report recognises this as an area for improvement. Though the college has tackled gender stereotyping and inequality with some success, it has not sufficiently promoted cultural diversity. Curriculum resources do not always celebrate diversity and the traditions of different cultures and faiths sufficiently. Some tutors are not confident about delivering sessions on diversity in tutorials. Most staff have received adequate training in equality and diversity.

Curriculum area inspections

Construction

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

37. The college offers a range of courses including craft courses in trowel and wood occupations at foundation and intermediate level, plumbing courses at intermediate level and technician and site management courses at advanced and higher level. There are 288 learners on construction courses; 129 are full-time of which 50% are adults; and 159 are part-time of which 88% are adults. There are currently 43 apprentices and 38 advanced apprentices on work-based learning programmes. The college also attracts 115 pupils from local schools who are taking a foundation course.

Strengths

- good pass rates on the diploma in site management
- good practical skills development
- very effective 14-16 provision
- good management and delivery of work-based learning

Areas for improvement

- poor and declining pass rate on foundation construction award
- poor framework completion rate for advanced apprentices in plumbing
- very poor attendance in full-time brickwork
- insufficient planning of teaching and learning to meet individual learning needs

Achievements and standards

38. Learners' achievements are satisfactory overall. Learners develop and apply a good range of practical skills in all occupational areas. Pass rates are high on the diploma in site management. Apprenticeship framework completion rates are above the national rate in trowel and wood occupations. Success rates on the foundation construction award have been below the national average for three years and declined again in 2004-05. Although some NVQs have been achieved, there have been no framework completions for advanced apprentices in plumbing. Attendance on the foundation construction award in brickwork is poor with some learners not attending for extended periods of time.

Quality of provision

39. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. The self-assessment report accurately identifies key areas for improvement and lesson observations provide clear judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. Planning of the curriculum is insufficient to meet the individual needs of all learners. Some theory teaching lacks clear and measurable learning outcomes, appropriate variety or learner involvement. Where learners are undertaking long practical projects, too few short-term targets are identified to enable learners to improve. Insufficient recognition is given to the prior experience and learning of full-time learners on level 1 programmes in setting appropriate tasks.
40. Provision for 14-16 year old learners is very effective. Pass rates and progression from these initial programmes onto full-time college provision, work-based learning and employment are high.
41. Assessment and tracking of progress is satisfactory. Learners receive good formative assessment in plastering, which provides clear guidance for further development. Practical workshops and equipment are adequate for the programmes delivered, although some classroom accommodation is basic. Learner reviews in all of the occupational areas are very effective, and staff co-ordinate on-and off-the-job learning well. Learners are encouraged and supported to make effective use of work-based evidence. Tutorial support is not always provided promptly enough in brickwork, and many learners leave the course early.

Leadership and management

42. Leadership and management overall are satisfactory, and work-based learning in construction is well managed. An improvement plan for plumbing has been successful in addressing poor pass rates and the quality of plumbing provision. Teaching in plumbing is now good and learners are making good progress on their qualifications. However, progress in implementing actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning has been slow. Course reviews are not completed consistently and improvement plans at course level contain insufficient detail and set few measurable targets.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: grade 2

Context

43. The college offers a wide range of engineering programmes from levels 1 to 4. At the time of inspection there were 177 learners aged 16-18 and 221 adult learners. The full time vehicle engineering programme accounts for the most significant cohort of full-time learners. There are 147 work-based learners and 95 advanced apprentices. The college also provides programmes of study for 147 pupils aged 14-16 from local schools.

Strengths

- high success rates on most level 2 programmes.
- high success rates on engineering advanced apprenticeship programme in 2005
- good links with employers
- particularly effective additional support in vehicle engineering
- good progression

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on national diploma and certificate programmes
- little sharing of good practice

Achievement and standards

44. Learners' achievements are generally good. Success rates for level 2 programmes are high, and have been significantly above the national average for the last 3 years in vehicle engineering, and in NVQ food and drink manufacture. Success rates on the advanced apprenticeship programme are above national averages for 2004/05. However, success rates for the level 3 national diploma and certificate programmes have been below average for the last 3 years
45. Most learners enjoy their course, attend regularly, and are punctual. They progressively develop a good range of skills in preparation for work. The standard of learner work is satisfactory overall and high for the national programmes. Most portfolio evidence for work-based learners is of a satisfactory standard. Key skill achievements are improving.

Quality of provision

46. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a good variety of techniques to progressively develop the topic. In the best lessons learners are engaged in a range of activities which encourage them to take charge of their own learning. They are set challenging targets and are supported well to achieve. Most

classrooms are well equipped and some have interactive whiteboards, which are effectively used to support learning. Information and learning technology is well used on vehicle engineering programmes

47. All programmes have clear systems in place to support and effectively monitor learner progress. The provision of additional learning support in vehicle engineering lessons has been particularly effective in helping to raise achievement of learners who have additional learning needs. Assessment practice is rigorous and meets all external body requirements. Additional work-based assessment visits in all engineering programmes have impacted positively on success rates.
48. The range of provision in both engineering and vehicle is good and responds well to local demand. Good progression opportunities exist on all programmes. Progression through to higher levels is good, with 60% of level 3 learners progressing onto higher education.
49. Well developed employer links exist with over 100 companies. Many apprentices gain additional units in addition to their mandatory core units. All full-time learners have the opportunity to visit other companies and attend exhibitions.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are good. Good progress has been made in all areas identified for improvement since the last inspection. Communication within the sections is good, with meetings taking place on a frequent basis. However, of the good practice that exists, it is not shared sufficiently between the vocational areas. The approach to equality and diversity is satisfactory.
51. Effective internal verification is built into both college and work-based programmes. Staff development is satisfactory. Health and safety practice in workshop classes is good. The self-assessment report accurately reflects the provision, and action planning for improvement is effective.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Satisfactory 3

52. The college offers a range of courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy, holistic therapy and barbering from entry level to level 3. There are apprenticeships in hairdressing and beauty therapy and a range of part-time beauty and holistic therapy courses. Local school pupils, aged 14 to 16, attend courses in beauty therapy and hairdressing. There are approximately 284 full-time learners, 364 part-time learners and 77 apprentices.

Strengths

- good success rates in NVQ 2 hairdressing in 2004-05
- highly effective monitoring and feedback on progress for full-time learners
- a wide range of courses which meet learner and employer needs
- well planned and informative initial advice and guidance

Areas for Improvement

- insufficient clients to ensure good progress
- low success rates on NVQ beauty therapy courses
- inadequate focus on improving retention on part time courses

Achievements and standards

53. Achievements and standards attained by learners are satisfactory. Success rates were good in NVQ 2 hairdressing in 2004-2005 but below the national average for beauty therapy NVQ levels 2 and 3. Achievement of key skills in 2004-05 was low; however, progress made by the current apprentices is good. Achievement of apprenticeship framework has improved over the past two years, and in 2004-05 the timely success rate was above national average. Retention on part-time courses is low. Most learners demonstrate satisfactory practical skills and produce well presented assignments.

Quality of provision

54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better practical lessons, learning and assessment meet the varying needs of learners of different abilities very effectively. However, too few clients attend some practical sessions to satisfy learners' development and assessment needs, and commercial working practices and retail skills are underdeveloped. In less successful theory lessons, this aspect is underdeveloped. The hairdressing salons provide a good commercial environment. However, the beauty therapy salons are small, with insufficient couches for all learners to work at the same time.
55. Full-time learners receive good advice and guidance before enrolling. Well planned meetings provide them with useful information about the courses and financial support available. Learners also have an effective guidance interview and they undergo an initial assessment to establish their basic skills levels and

a vocational skills aptitude test in order to advise them on the most appropriate course.

56. The college has a broad range of courses to meet industry and learners' needs and interests, and to provide clear progression routes from entry level to level 3. Very effective relationships exist with partner schools, and good provision is made for 14-16 year olds.
57. Assessment and monitoring of full-time learners' attainment are rigorous. Teacher and learners keep detailed records of completed assessments. These records are used effectively to set targets for progress. Teachers mark work thoroughly, and provide constructive feedback which helps students to improve their work. This is less well-established for part-time learners.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication is good and all staff understand and contribute effectively to quality improvement planning, self-assessment and target setting. Although the self-assessment report is mostly accurate, the evaluation of success rates is insufficient. The effective management of work-based learning has been successful in improving success rates. Although low retention on part-time courses is identified by the self-assessment report, insufficient attention has been given to addressing this weakness. Insufficient emphasis is placed on raising awareness of diversity within the curriculum.

Information and communications technology

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

59. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time courses, from Foundation level to advanced and higher levels. Full-time courses include e-learning qualifications in ICT at level 2, first diploma for IT practitioners and GCE Advanced Supplementary (AS) level in ICT (double award). Part-time courses include the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) and advanced diploma for IT users. At the time of the inspection, there were 485 learners of which 75 were full-time. Of the full-time learners, 76% are aged 16-18. There are no learners aged 14-16. Fifty-six per cent of all learners are female and 3% are from minority ethnic groups.

Strengths

- good success rates on part-time courses
- good progression

Areas for Improvement

- inadequate assessment and monitoring of full-time learners

Achievement and standards

60. Learners' achievements and standards overall are satisfactory. Success rates on part-time courses are good. For 2004-05 they are above the national average and have been so for three consecutive years. Achievement rates for full-time learners are generally satisfactory; however, retention and success rates on some full-time courses are below the national average. Most learners develop effective practical skills in IT, and in workshop sessions staff and learners give satisfactory attention to health and safety.

Quality of provision

61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and learners enjoy their lessons. In better lessons, learners are set challenging targets. However, many lessons lack sufficient differentiation of learning activities to meet the individual needs of learners, and to challenge more able learners. Learning is supported through a satisfactory range of resources, such as interactive whiteboards, data projectors and specialist web design software. Specialist adaptive software and hardware are available to support the needs of individual learners. Online learning materials are good, and a virtual learning environment (VLE) is available to learners who are able to access learning materials from home. However, these resources are not always used effectively to motivate and engage learners. Enrichment activities are good and valued by learners.

62. Progression by learners is good. Courses are available from levels 1 to 3 and there are two foundation degrees offered by the college. Many learners who achieve at level 3 progress to the level 4 options.
63. In some areas, the use of individual learning plans and the monitoring of learner progress are effective. However, the assessment and monitoring of full-time learners is inadequate. In particular, the monitoring and recording of individual learner progress on assignments and coursework is poor. Some records are insufficiently detailed to monitor individual performance and to identify learners at risk of failing. Some written feedback to learners is insufficient to inform them on how they can improve. Progress reviews are held throughout the year, but target setting and action planning are insufficient to help full-time learners improve their grades. Scheduling of assessment deadlines is poor, and the workload for full-time learners is uneven.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management in ICT are satisfactory. Teams meet regularly and informal communication is good. Management information is used to improve retention, achievement and attendance. However, reviews of learner performance are not sufficiently recorded. Staff are appropriately qualified and have good opportunities for professional development. The promotion of equal opportunities and diversity is generally satisfactory. Self-assessment is mostly accurate, and some progress has been made in addressing weaknesses identified at the previous inspection in 2002.

Foundation programmes

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

65. The college offers a range of part-time and full-time foundation programmes. Provision includes discrete literacy and numeracy courses, literacy and numeracy learning support, key skills, ESOL and programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most programmes are offered on the main site and some in community and employer locations. There are currently 106 learners on discrete literacy and numeracy courses, 677 receiving learning support for literacy and numeracy through key skills, 185 learners on ESOL programmes and 41 learners on programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Strengths

- good achievement of individual learning objectives
- good teaching and learning on programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good in-class support

Areas for improvement

- insufficient literacy and numeracy support for learners on mainstream courses.
- weak management of individual support arrangements

Achievements and standards

66. Achievement of individual learning objectives is good. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve unit awards through Open College accreditation or national certification. Overall success rates are below national average for literacy and numeracy courses, although achievement rates are improving at level 1. The number of learners gaining national accreditation in literacy and numeracy has increased significantly. However, ESOL learners do not gain external accreditation. Learners' standard of work is satisfactory, and learners make real gains in confidence and social skills. Average attendance at lessons is low at 65%.

Quality of provision

67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Schemes of work and lesson plans take satisfactory account of individual needs, and in better lessons, differentiation is used effectively to plan for, and help achieve individual learning outcomes. Teachers check learners' understanding well at different stages of the lesson, and use positive verbal feedback effectively to encourage learners. However,

the formal recording in learner files is too inconsistent, and insufficient written feedback is provided to learners to help them improve.

68. Programmes generally meet the needs and interests of learners. Learners needing literacy and numeracy support have their short term needs met through assignment and portfolio work in key skills sessions. However, the wider, underpinning skills development needs of these learners are not sufficiently addressed.
69. In programmes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, activities are particularly relevant to learners' needs. Individual success is celebrated well through public music and drama performances, the making and selling of CDs containing learners' work and through public presentation of certificates. Learners receive a high level of personal support, which enables all learners to participate fully in planned activities.

Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management of foundation programmes are generally satisfactory. Staff are appropriately trained and qualified and staff development is well managed and effective. Sufficient resources are available to meet programme requirements. Equality of opportunity is adequately promoted and diversity is celebrated. Staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process, and the college's self-assessment report is mostly accurate. Plans for improvement are well developed.
71. Management arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of the support system are weak. Analysis and evaluation of management data, for example, the success rates of learner cohorts, is insufficient. Too few formal opportunities are provided for meetings of all staff involved in specific support activities, such as providing individual dyslexia support. The management of individual support given to mainstream learners for the development of their literacy and numeracy skills is inadequate. Learners receive literacy and numeracy support only through sessions which focus mainly on key skills awards.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	02/03	251	52	56	-4	1073	48	55	-7
	03/04	339	46	60	-15	1445	43	59	-16
	04/05	552	62			823	59		
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	*				*			
	03/04	*				*			
	04/05								
NVQs	02/03	75	53	56	-2	214	48	57	-8
	03/04	85	68	61	7	69	46	62	-16
	04/05	135	62			38	79		
Other	02/03	174	52	56	-4	859	47	55	-8
	03/04	254	38	60	-22	1376	43	59	-16
	04/05	417	61			785	58		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	02/03	452	44	52	-7	831	55	49	6
	03/04	474	55	56	-1	1023	60	53	6
	04/05	571	59			998	59		
GCSEs	02/03	23	48	57	-9	64	73	55	18
	03/04	47	47	61	-14	43	60	59	2
	04/05	40	45			40	52		
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	42	40	59	-18	*			
	03/04	15	47	63	-16	*			
	04/05	11	64			*			
NVQs	02/03	125	59	42	17	365	53	49	4
	03/04	140	53	52	1	398	62	53	8
	04/05	163	66			385	65		
Other	02/03	262	37	50	-13	394	54	48	6
	03/04	272	58	54	4	580	58	52	6
	04/05	357	57			571	55		

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts No - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate *	Diff	Starts No - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate *	Diff
Long 3	02/03	260	42	62	-20	699	39	51	-12
	03/04	345	52	64	-12	584	46	53	-7
	04/05	243	52		-12	686	59		6
AVA2 levels	02/03	*				*			
AVA2 levels	03/04	*				26	54	66	-12
AVA2 levels	04/05	*				*			
AS Levels	02/03	26	35	61	-26	40	58	48	10
AS Levels	03/04	*				*			
AS Levels	04/05	12	25		-38	16	38		-12
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	131	45	50	-5	50	58	45	13
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	86	42	52	-10	19	58	43	15
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	68	49		-3	15	53		10
NVQs	02/03	19	37	51	-14	200	23	45	-22
NVQs	03/04	31	68	54	14	146	32	47	-15
NVQs	04/05	33	67		13	321	60		13
Other	02/03	75	39	55	-16	397	42	54	-12
Other	03/04	211	55	56	-1	379	50	56	-6
Other	04/05	125	54		-2	332	60		4

* Fewer than 15 starts

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2003 to 2005.

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	44	32	32	57	47
	Advanced	73	16	31	68	48
2004/05	Apprenticeship	75	24	38	44	50
	Advanced	51	37	34	59	48

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

b) Timely success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVO rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	17	71	16	100	24
	Advanced	70	11	19	41	30
2004/05	Apprenticeship	95	15	21	33	29
	Advanced	71	4	21	17	31

* The number of learners who planned to complete their learning programme in the given year

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'