



Aylesbury College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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130607

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Basic information about the college

Name of college: Aylesbury College

Type of college: General Further Education/Tertiary

Principal: Pauline Odulinski

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Chair of governors: Maurice Collins

Unique reference number: 130607

Name of lead inspector: Alan Marsh

Dates of inspection: 30 January – 3 February 2006

Background of the organisation

1. Aylesbury College is a medium sized further education (FE) college in Aylesbury town centre. Competition for students in this area is strong: there are five other FE colleges nearby; Buckinghamshire local authority (LA) operates a selective system of secondary education and all the local maintained schools have sixth forms. The LA provides adult education in and around Aylesbury. The college's mission is: "We will inspire learning and the achievement of excellence by encouraging participation and progression for all. We will release the social and economic potential of the community through innovative collaboration and partnership".
2. The population of the Aylesbury Vale is approximately 170,000. Minority ethnic groups form about 6% of the population. The region has a diverse economy with a strong entrepreneurial culture: there are many new businesses. Most businesses are small or medium sized enterprises. Most employment is within the services sector. The current unemployment rate is low, at 1%. The region is prosperous but there are small pockets of relatively low income. The area has been designated for growth: 18,000 new homes and 13,000 new jobs (a 25% growth) are planned by 2021.
3. The college offers provision in all 15 sector/subject areas, although the numbers in some areas are small. In 2004/05 there were 4,575 LSC-funded learners on roll at the college, of whom 1,178 were full-time and 3,397 were part-time; 26% were aged 16-18; 67% were female. Minority ethnic groups comprised 20% of the learner population. Apprenticeships are available in construction, hairdressing and health and social care, and there are approximately 340 learners on these programmes. There are 250 pupils aged 14-16 from 10 schools attending vocational courses.
4. Educational attainment in the local schools is high, with 65% achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs in 2004, 11 percentage points above the national average. Nearly 90% of school leavers remain in structured learning at age 16. The LLSC's 2005 report on 14-19 education and training in Aylesbury Vale states that "policies on providing college access to year 11 pupils vary widely. It is highly unusual for grammar school pupils to be told routinely about college courses by college staff."

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 visit; and data on enrolments and learners' achievements 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: health and social care; engineering; construction; information and communication technology; hairdressing and beauty therapy; hospitality and catering; sport, travel and tourism; preparation for life and work; business, administration and professional.

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

Health and social care	Good: grade 2
Engineering	Satisfactory: grade 3
Construction	Satisfactory: grade 3
Information and communication technology	Good: grade 2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory: grade 3
Hospitality and catering	Good: grade 2
Sport, travel and tourism	Unsatisfactory: grade 4
Preparation for life and work (literacy and numeracy, ESOL, SLDD)	Satisfactory: grade 3
Business, administration and professional	Satisfactory: grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

6. This is a satisfactory college. Three curriculum areas are good, five are satisfactory and one is unsatisfactory. Overall, learners' achievements are satisfactory. The proportion of learners who complete their courses successfully has risen and is now around the national average. Adult learners achieve better than those aged 16 to 18. Work-based learners' achievements are unsatisfactory but improving.
7. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Learners often benefit from good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching, but a few lessons are unsatisfactory. Practical skills are well developed. More able learners are not always sufficiently challenged. Initial assessment for adults is unsatisfactory.
8. The college offers a broad and balanced curriculum. Its response to the needs of learners and employers is good. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well served. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is satisfactory. Partnerships with local organizations and businesses are strong.
9. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Learners who need additional help are identified and supported effectively. Target-setting is often imprecise. Tutorials in a few areas lack structure and purpose.
10. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has improved significantly. Quality assurance is effective. Self-assessment is accurate. The lesson observation scheme is rigorous. Poor management information continues to hamper efforts to improve learners' performance. Staff turnover is high and affects learners adversely in a few curriculum areas. Financial management and value for money are satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

11. The college has made substantial and sustained progress over the past two years and has a good capacity to improve further. The college accurately identified many of its strengths and weaknesses in its self-assessment report. Quality assurance processes are effective. The new building programme is being well managed and will improve the learning environment considerably. Curriculum action plans need further improvement.

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

12. The college has taken effective steps to improve since the last inspection and most of the weaknesses that led to the judgement of inadequacy in 2004 have been remedied. Learners' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning have improved. Five curriculum areas have improved their grades. However, there are still weaknesses in the reliability and use of data, the effectiveness of setting targets for learners and the proportion of learners who complete their courses.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- high success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 at level 1 and for adults at level 3
- robust and effective lesson observation scheme
- good partnerships with local organisations and industry
- effective new management structure, personnel and governance
- rigorous and accurate self-assessment
- responsiveness to the needs of learners and employers

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low retention rates for learners aged 16 to 18 at levels 2 and 3
- the need to measure learners' progress from their level of attainment on entry
- unreliable data and its use to measure and improve performance
- low key skills achievements
- lack of challenge for more able learners
- unsatisfactory initial assessment for adults
- poor management and monitoring of the tutorial process.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grades:

Adult learners

Good: grade 2

Work-based learners

Unsatisfactory: grade 4

13. Overall, achievements are satisfactory. For adults they are good. For work-based learners they are unsatisfactory. The overall success rate has risen steadily over the last four years from 2001/02 and now stands at 67%, close to the national average for similar colleges. Pass rates are higher for adult learners, at 89%, than for those aged 16 to 18, at 81%. Retention rates differ similarly, and remain unsatisfactory for learners aged 16 to 18, at 72%. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are high at level 1 but are below average at levels 2 and 3. For adults, success rates are satisfactory at levels 1 and 2 and are above average at level 3. These rates are rising at almost all levels for both age groups. Success rates for all learners on short courses are high and rising. The data used for inspection were provided by the college and validated by inspectors; data for previous years were also verified, since data used and reported by the college in previous inspections were unreliable.
14. Success rates for work-based learners are unsatisfactory. They remain well below average, although more students now complete their full apprenticeship frameworks. Many school pupils aged 14 to 16 who attend vocational courses at the college achieve their qualifications. Success rates in key skills are still low, but improved markedly in 2004/05. Attendance for all learners in 2004/05 was below the national average at 76%, but at the time of the inspection it had improved.
15. The college does not systematically measure the progress made by learners on their courses from their starting points. Too many learners are not challenged to reach the levels of which they are capable. Standards of work on most courses are satisfactory and much is good. Many learners display particularly good practical skills, notably in ICT and hospitality and catering. They demonstrate an ability to apply theory in practice. Learners on foundation courses preparing them for life and work become more assured communicators and develop good social skills. As the standard of their work improves so do all learners' confidence, motivation and enjoyment in what they are learning.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

16. The college rightly judges teaching and learning to be satisfactory. Effective action to improve them has been taken since the last inspection. Teachers and managers now participate wholeheartedly in a comprehensive observation and

- evaluation programme. Feedback is thorough and training support extensive. Inspectors' findings matched those of the college. The proportion of teaching judged to be good or better is rising steadily.
17. In better lessons learners develop good practical and professional skills. Many lessons are well planned, stimulating and relate well to industry. Teachers are confident in their use of a wide range of strategies to engage learners in the classroom and workshop. Most learners now understand the vocational relevance of key skills. School pupils aged 14 to 16 experience vocational training which improves their confidence and skills. However, in weaker lessons the individual learning needs of learners are not always met and the more able are often not challenged to reach their full potential. Teachers do not make enough checks on what has been learned.
 18. The use of learning resources is improving. A new learning management system promotes independent learning well, although it is not used enough. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is underdeveloped in sport, travel and tourism and business. The learning resources centre is adequate and used well by learners.
 19. Initial assessment effectively identifies the literacy, numeracy and additional support needs of learners aged 16 to 18. However, initial assessment for adults is inadequate because too many adults are not assessed for their learning level and needs. Teachers and assessors monitor learners' progress and assess them satisfactorily on most courses. Feedback on the work of learners is mostly detailed and useful. In a few areas assessment practice is weak. Additional support in lessons is good. It helps those who receive it to improve the standards of their work.
 20. The college's response to the needs of learners and employers is good. It takes a satisfactory approach to social and educational inclusion. The college offers a broad range of courses at all levels and for all ages from 14 upwards, and provides good support for learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Progression opportunities are good, although there is a limited range of provision in engineering. Liaison with the local community is productive and courses are developed to meet the needs of local employers; particularly good links exist in health and social care, sports and construction. The college works as closely as it can with most schools and successfully shares some A-level provision with an adjacent grammar school. Vocational courses for school pupils aged 14 to 16 are well established and successful. The college has a diverse population of learners which fully reflects the local demography.
 21. The college provides a satisfactory range of enrichment opportunities. These are extensive in health and social care, engineering, hospitality and catering, sport, art and design and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In these areas learners participate and contribute positively. Work

experience is undertaken by many learners but in some curriculum areas the opportunities are underdeveloped.

22. The college provides satisfactory guidance and support to learners. It offers them clear initial advice and guidance and sensitively encourages them to disclose their personal needs for support. Full-time learners undertake a review after six weeks to ensure that they are on the right course. Good support is offered by specialists for a range of specific learning difficulties. The college offers effective help on a range of careers, social, health and financial matters through its very productive links with local agencies, including the Connexions service. A clear tutorial policy is in place, from which learners in some areas benefit, but its implementation is not monitored sufficiently to ensure that all learners have effective and useful tutorials. Some tutorials lack structure and purpose. Targets set for learners are often imprecise, although in some curriculum areas the progress and steps taken by learners to improve their performance are monitored well. Recent arrangements provide swifter action to rectify poor attendance and at the time of the inspection attendance had improved from an unsatisfactory rate of 76% in 2004/05. Although the college has sensible guidelines on challenging poor punctuality, not all teachers apply them. The college has sound arrangements for the protection of children and vulnerable adults, including good links with social services.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

23. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior management team has been restructured and enlarged. There is now a strong focus on teaching and learning. Five curriculum areas have improved their grades since the last inspection. Communications with staff are regular and productive and their morale is high. Governance is effective. New members have enhanced the skills of the Governing Body which is now more representative of the local community. Success rates have risen steadily and are now around national averages.
24. Quality assurance is good. Curriculum reviews identify strengths and weaknesses effectively in most curriculum areas, although the quality of action plans is variable. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and inspectors agreed with most of its findings. The lesson observation scheme is rigorous. It is used effectively to inform staff development but is less well used in the self-assessment process. Poor information management has afflicted the college for several years; it continues to inhibit efforts to improve learners' performance in some areas because the exact position remains unclear. The college is tackling the problem and the reliability of current data is much improved.
25. Staff are appropriately qualified for what they do; 83% are qualified to teach or are working towards a qualification. The college uses appraisal and the outcomes of self-assessment effectively to help it provide good professional development opportunities. Induction support for new staff and for those in

training is good. Staff turnover is high and adversely affects the experience of learners in a minority of subjects. The college has made significant efforts to address this issue including improved part-time contracts and better support for new staff.

26. The college provides a safe environment for all. Equal opportunities arrangements meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Measures to protect children and vulnerable adults under the Education Act 2002 (safeguarding children) are in place and staff and governors are aware of their responsibilities. The promotion of equality of opportunity is monitored by managers, although data are not yet used to analyse the performance of different groups. Access for people with restricted mobility is good.
27. Financial management is satisfactory. The college is moving to new buildings in September 2006 and the project is being efficiently and effectively managed. Learning resources are adequate. The average class size is about 9, slightly below the national average. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Curriculum area inspections

Health and social care

Good: grade 2

28. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to level 4. Courses include counselling, early years, care, health and social care, teaching assistants, oral health and public services. There are 54 learners on level 1 courses, 116 at level 2, 218 at level 3 and 12 at level 4. Of these 37% are aged 16 to 18. There are 10 school pupils aged 14 to 16 on a level 1 course in childcare. There are 9 learners on a work-based learning course in childcare.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- broad and flexible range of courses across all levels
- productive links with employers
- effective leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient monitoring of progress of learners on full-time courses
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Achievements and standards

29. Learners' achievements are good. Success rates are high on most courses. Success rates on the NVQ 2 in early years, the AVCE in health and social care and the diploma in childcare and education (DCE) are all well above national averages. Learners produce written work of a high standard with strong vocational links. For example, artefacts created by those on an early years course for a "story sack" assignment reflect their extensive knowledge of child development. Learners on work placements receive good reports and enjoy many opportunities to demonstrate their skills.

Quality of provision

30. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best lessons are carefully planned and teachers use a variety of teaching methods. They make full use of learners' practical experiences to help them learn. For example, in a lesson on counselling a teacher modelled good professional practice by keeping a sharp focus on the objective analysis of personal issues. In less effective lessons not all learners are fully challenged to reach their potential.
31. There is a good range of provision to meet the needs of learners and employers. Progression routes between courses are good. Close links with employers benefit all learners through interesting work placements,

stimulating visits, professional updating for staff and overall course development.

32. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners receive very good support and guidance from their tutors, particularly in relation to career progression. However, full-time learners are sometimes uncertain about their progress on a course because it is not well monitored. Target setting is not sufficiently rigorous or systematic. Learners' individual learning needs are identified clearly within lesson plans but are not always fully met in practice.

Leadership and management

33. Leadership and management are good. Issues arising from course reviews are considered at team meetings and effective action is taken. Communications between all staff are good, including between part-time staff who play a key role in the successful management of the curriculum area. Equal opportunity is well promoted. Work-based learning is well managed. The self-assessment report accurately identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, good practice is not shared effectively across all courses.

Engineering

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

34. The college offers a range of mostly full-time courses in vehicle engineering, with limited mechanical engineering provision at level 3 only. There are 101 learners aged 16 to 18 and 33 adult learners. The college also provides a course at level 1 for 49 school pupils aged 14 to 16.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses in 2004/05
- comprehensive monitoring of learners' progress
- good support in practical classes
- good curriculum management.

Areas for improvement

- low success rate on engineering entry level course in 2004/05
- limited range of engineering provision
- poor learning environment in the mechanical engineering workshop.

Achievements and standards

35. Learners' achievements are good. Success rates for 2004/05 are above national averages on most courses. Pass rates are particularly high. Most courses also show improving retention rates over three years to current rates

that are above national averages. The success rate for the engineering entry level programme offered to four local schools is low. Pass rates in key skills are low.

36. Most learners attend regularly, are punctual and enjoy their courses. They develop a good range of skills in preparation for work. The standards of learners' written and practical work are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

37. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some lessons are good. Most lessons are well planned and use a range of teaching methods to consolidate and extend learning. The better lessons involve more opportunities for practical activity. In weaker lessons little or no use is made of ILT to develop independent learning. Theory and practice are not always linked. Some supporting materials fail to stimulate learners.
38. Good levels of additional learning and technical support are provided in the workshops. These staff have good relationships with learners and are full members of the teaching team. Key skills are integrated well in vocational activities.
39. Learners' progress is very well monitored and includes regular self-evaluation by students themselves. Targets for learners are set regularly and reviewed carefully. Assessment is rigorous.
40. The range of provision is satisfactory. It is good in vehicle engineering but there is no provision in mechanical engineering below level 3. Full-time learners benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities.

Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are good. Almost all the weaknesses from the previous inspection report have been remedied. Most staff have joined the team since the last inspection in 2004. New staff are mentored effectively and receive extensive support from the curriculum leader and from the college teaching and learning team. Communications between staff are good. Staff development is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is assured effectively. Self-assessment is accurate and action planning well focused. The learning environment is good in the vehicle engineering workshops but poor in the mechanical engineering workshop.

Construction

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

42. The college offers a range of full-time construction courses at levels 1 and 2, with part-time courses up to level 3. Full-time courses are offered in wood occupations, bricklaying, plumbing and painting and decorating. Part-time learners can learn these trades; they can also train in electrical installation. There are 94 learners aged 16 to 18 and 91 adults, with 289 apprentices undertaking work-based learning. The college also provides a course at level 1 for 32 school pupils aged 14 to 16.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses in 2004/05
- effective response to local needs
- good progress reviews in work-based learning.

Areas for improvement

- low success rate of apprentices in plumbing and painting and decorating
- poor tutorial provision
- weak assessment practice
- ineffective use of management information.

Achievements and standards

43. Learners' achievements are good. Success rates for 2004/05 are significantly above national averages on most courses. Pass rates for all full-time courses are 100%, with improved retention rates. Success rates for part-time courses also improved significantly in 2004/05. Most of the 32 pupils from local schools successfully gained a qualification, as did over 70% of the 74 workers who sought recognition for their existing on-site skills. The completion rates for apprenticeship frameworks in painting and decorating and plumbing are unsatisfactory. Across both trades, only one apprenticeship has been successfully completed since 2002/03. Success rates in other trades are at or above national averages.
44. The development of learners' practical skills is satisfactory. Learners pay good attention to safe working both in college and on site. Attendance for 2004/05 is low at 71%.

Quality of provision

45. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better theory lessons, teachers use group work to encourage learners to participate. Teachers provide effective support in practical lessons, but some fail to check individual learning sufficiently. A few lesson plans do not address the individual needs of learners.

46. Much assessment does not record the levels of competence or development of learners sufficiently and provides little constructive feedback. There is insufficient assessment of some learners in the workplace. However, effective assessment in electrical installation produces well-focused action plans. Workplace reviews are good. The liaison between training officers and teachers is effective.
47. Resources are satisfactory, but much accommodation does not match current industrial standards. The layout of some workshops hampers the supervision of learners. Teachers have good vocational expertise and are appropriately qualified. New teachers undertake relevant training.
48. The range of provision is good. The college responds well to local needs: a successful scheme enables experienced construction workers to gain on-site accreditation for their skills; school pupils develop useful construction skills during enjoyable lessons and many progress to college courses.
49. Guidance and support for learners are unsatisfactory. Personal support is satisfactory but tutorial provision is unstructured and fails to promote learners' general welfare. Learners lack enrichment opportunities. Progress reviews are poor, resulting in unchallenging, ill-defined targets.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, the management of data is ineffective. Significant differences exist between centrally-held and locally-held course data. The recording and interpretation of data is inconsistent and confusing. New staff are supported effectively. Appraisal is managed well and linked closely to professional development. Self-assessment is accurate, leading to actions to improve both key skills and apprentices' achievements. The monitoring of actions to improve tutorial provision has been ineffective. There is good liaison with professional organisations, but there are few formal links with employers.

Information and communication technology

Good: grade 2

Context

51. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to level 4. Full-time courses include digital applications and IT practitioners in both software and systems options. There are 140 full-time learners, mostly aged 16 to 18. Over 160 learners, mainly adults, follow a range of part-time courses in the use of computers. There are 20 adults on a level 4 course in business information technology.

Strengths

- high and improving success rates on level 3 courses
- high success rates on CLAIT course in 2004/05
- good development of learners' practical skills
- stimulating teaching
- good personal support
- good curriculum management.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on GCSE IT
- ineffective target setting in tutorials.

Achievements and standards

52. Learners' achievements are good. Success rates on courses at level 3 are high and improving. Success rates on the CLAIT course were high in 2004/05. GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses that had poor success rates have been superseded by the diploma in digital applications course. Learners enrolled on this course produce work of high quality. Low retention on the GCSE IT has led to low success rates for this course; better recruitment advice has now reduced the number of learners leaving prematurely. Learners at all levels apply their skills well and make good progress. Many design and produce web pages of high quality.

Quality of provision

53. At the last inspection, teaching and learning was a weakness. Teaching and learning are now good. Lessons are well planned, include a wide variety of teaching approaches, motivate learners and promote the acquisition of skills well. In many lessons, learners are enthusiastic and their practical work is good. Teachers encourage them to be self-critical about the quality of their work. Assessments are used effectively. Teachers mark work promptly and give detailed advice as to how learners might achieve higher grades.
54. The range of provision is good and there are clear progression routes. Most level 3 learners proceed to university. Some level 3 learners are able to take an additional industry standard qualification.
55. Personal support for learners is good, both during lessons and at other times. Additional support needs are identified and effective help is given for literacy and numeracy. The retention rate of learners who receive support is high. Communications with parents are effective. Attendance has improved significantly over the last year. In tutorial reviews, learners are not set sufficiently specific targets to ensure their best advancement.

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management are good. The new curriculum manager has created a tightly knit team who work together effectively, communicate well and act as a successful, coordinated section with a clear focus on raising achievement. Data are used well to inform course management decisions. The manager provides good personal support for both learners and staff. Good practice and new skills are shared across the ICT team. The self-assessment report identifies strengths and weaknesses accurately. Action plans to remedy weaknesses are realistic.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

57. The college offers a range of full-time courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy, holistic therapy, theatrical and media make-up. Other courses include a range of part-time beauty and holistic therapy courses and a level 1 hairdressing or beauty therapy course for school pupils aged 14 to 16. Apprenticeships are offered in hairdressing. There are 226 full-time learners and 211 part-time learners.

Strengths

- very effective coaching in practical lessons
- good monitoring and feedback on progress
- well coordinated work-based learning.

Areas for improvement

- low and declining success rate in NVQ 2 hairdressing
- low success rate of apprentices in hairdressing
- lack of challenge in theory lessons
- insufficient clients in beauty therapy.

Achievements and standards

58. Learners' achievements are satisfactory. In 2004/05 most success rates improved to national averages or above. However, the success rate for NVQ 2 hairdressing has been low and declining for the past three years. The success rate for hairdressing apprenticeships is unsatisfactory. Learners develop good practical skills and demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of theory.

Quality of provision

59. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are good in practical lessons where teachers provide very effective individual coaching. They give clear explanations, check learning regularly and help learners develop independent skills as practitioners. Many theory lessons fail to address the differing abilities of learners and the more able are not sufficiently challenged. Not enough members of the public are available to learners on beauty therapy courses. Instead, learners have to act as clients for their peers, missing learning opportunities themselves. They do not develop customer service skills as well as they might.
60. The monitoring of learners' progress is good. Teachers check learning regularly and give detailed feedback. Progress is reviewed through self-evaluation and the teacher's assessment in every practical lesson. Learners are encouraged to learn independently by recording their achievements and planning for improvement.
61. The range of courses offered is satisfactory. However, in hairdressing full-time provision at level 1 and NVQ level 3 did not recruit sufficient numbers in 2005. Accommodation and equipment are satisfactory, but the area continues to suffer from staff shortages.
62. Guidance and support are good. Tutorials are used to monitor the progress of learners and to help them compile their portfolios. Course guidance has been improved to ensure learners are placed on the right course. All learners receive regular, comprehensive reviews and detailed progress reports. These are shared with parents and employers.

Leadership and management

63. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Most success rates improved in 2004/05 despite high staff turnover and some persistent staff shortages. Through new appointments and a revised staff structure the coordination of work-based provision has improved and is now well managed. Communications between the college and employers have improved and are now good. The consistency and quality of assessment at college and in the work place are assured effectively. Course reviews and overall self-assessment are detailed and evaluative but fail to consider the impact of high staff turnover and issues of equality and diversity in the area.

Hospitality and catering

Good: grade 2

Context

64. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in hospitality and catering from level 1 to level 3. Courses are also provided for school pupils aged 14 to 16. There are 29 pupils aged 14 to 16, 43 learners aged 16 to 18 and 189 adult learners.

Strengths

- high success rates on NVQ level 1 preparing and serving food and part-time courses
- high standards of learners' practical work
- good teaching and learning
- enthusiastic participation by learners in a wide range of enrichment activities
- effective actions to improve success rates.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking
- ineffective assessment.

Achievements and standards

65. Learners' achievements are good. Success rates are high on the NVQ level 1 preparing and serving food and on part-time courses. Success rates are low on the NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking. Progression to employment and higher education is good. Practical work in both the kitchen and restaurant is of a high standard. Learners take good care of customers and show a keen awareness of hygiene and health and safety. First year learners reach high standards working alongside those who are on the second year of their course.

Quality of provision

66. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and managed. Demonstrations in practical lessons are highly effective. Handouts are used very well. In theory lessons, teachers refer to practical situations regularly to help learners understand theory in context. The industrial experiences of both teachers and learners are used to clarify points, stimulate interest and reinforce relevance. Lessons are challenging and encourage students to perform to their best. First and second year learners participating in the same lessons work together very well at their own appropriate levels of learning.
67. The range of provision is good. Learners enjoy participating in a wide range of enrichment activities. First year learners undertake work experience during

which they may achieve an additional NVQ. Practitioners from industry regularly attend lessons to enhance learning.

68. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Students are given good vocational advice and receive strong personal support. However, assessment is ineffective. Some learners make slow progress towards their NVQ because assessment opportunities are missed by teachers. Individual target setting is weak and lacks specific detail; learners' prior industrial experience is not always taken into account. Records of reviews and individual learning plans do not give learners the information they need to improve.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management are good. Particularly effective changes to the curriculum to match the needs of learners and employers have improved retention and success rates on most courses. The monitoring of punctuality and attendance is good and has improved attendance. Communications are effective. Teachers have a good understanding of management information and use it well to plan the curriculum. Continual professional development is fully embedded in staff training. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is largely accurate.

Sport, travel and tourism

Unsatisfactory: grade 4

Context

70. The college offers a range of mostly full-time courses in sport, travel and tourism at levels 2 and 3. Courses include sport studies, coaching, travel and tourism. There are 56 learners on sports courses and 55 on travel and tourism courses. Of these, more than 90% are aged 16 to 18. There is also a small number of part-time courses.

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on most sports courses
- strong links between sports courses and local businesses
- effective strategies to improve provision in sports.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on travel and tourism courses
- low retention rates on most courses
- insufficient challenge for more able learners
- insufficient use of ICT to develop learners' awareness and skills for industry
- weak assessment practice in travel and tourism.

Achievements and standards

71. Learners' achievements are unsatisfactory. Pass rates have been outstanding on most sports courses for the past two years. However, retention rates are low on most courses. The standards of learners' work are satisfactory and those on sports courses demonstrate good levels of practical skills. Learners achieve additional industry-related qualifications. Attendance rates are satisfactory. There is a trend of low and declining success rates on travel and tourism courses. Success rates are low in key skills.

Quality of provision

72. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Not enough teaching is good or better. The more able learners are not challenged enough in most lessons and do not reach their full potential. Teachers make little use of ICT and learners have limited access to computer-based resources. This impedes their awareness of the skills needed by the industry. Assessment practices in travel and tourism are weak. The design and timing of some assignments and assessments are poor. Written feedback does not provide learners with enough advice on how to improve their work. Internal verification in travel and tourism lacks occupational validity. Some teaching areas are dirty, cluttered and have broken equipment. The shower used by male sports learners is unhygienic and regularly out of order.
73. The range of provision is satisfactory. The curriculum has been developed adequately to meet the needs of learners, with recent new courses and levels. There are strong links between sports courses and local businesses. These lead to good partnership work and the productive sharing of resources. Additionally, learners gain valuable work experience skills, complementary part-time employment opportunities and additional qualifications.
74. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Initial advice, induction, assessment for additional learning needs and support for literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Learners' progress is reviewed regularly by teachers.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a clear focus on raising standards and effective strategies have been introduced to address weaknesses identified through self-assessment. Attendance is closely monitored. Learners at risk of leaving their courses are identified and supported. The internal observation and evaluation of teaching and learning are well planned and actions identify areas for improvement. Staff appraisal is satisfactory; teachers receive good levels of support. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Attempts have been made to recruit students from under-represented groups and to tackle gender bias on some courses.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

76. The college offers ESOL courses from pre-entry level to level 2 and literacy and numeracy courses from entry level to level 2. Pathways programmes for learners with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided as part-time or full-time courses over one or two years. Most lessons are held during the day at the main site. Of the 208 ESOL learners, 178 are on part-time courses, 120 are female and 25 are aged 16 to 18. Most of the 136 literacy and numeracy learners are male. About half of 125 pathways learners are female and most are adults. Since September 2005, all ESOL, literacy and numeracy courses lead to national qualifications.

Strengths

- outstanding success rates on personal skills course for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good development of learners' confidence and motivation
- good support for learning.

Areas for improvement

- low attendance and success rates on ESOL programmes
- poor target setting for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners.

Achievements and standards

77. Learners' achievements are good. All learners improve their confidence and motivation. Success rates on personal skills courses for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have been outstanding for three years. However, success rates are low on ESOL courses. Achievements are well celebrated. Learners are encouraged to try challenging tasks and to share knowledge. They are attentive, enjoy lessons, make steady progress and develop a range of additional skills on most programmes. In literacy lessons, learners often improve their communication skills in their vocational context.
78. Attendance is high on courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but is low on ESOL courses.

Quality of provision

79. Teaching and learning are good. For ESOL learners it is satisfactory. Learners enjoy their lessons. Learning support assistants are managed well by teachers and valued by learners. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop good teamwork, communication and research skills through effective tutorials. On literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses, homework is welcomed by

learners who receive helpful feedback during lessons. However, in numeracy lessons learning is not sufficiently related to a vocational context.

80. Target setting is not sufficiently rigorous on literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses. Although learners review their progress and are encouraged to record their work at the end of lessons, they do not evaluate the development of their skills sufficiently nor identify their specific goals.
81. The range of provision is satisfactory. The full-time citizenship course leads to an exhibition in the town centre and helps learners develop good dramatic and creative skills.

Leadership and management

82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-assessment is critical and actions to improve are implemented effectively. Communications are clear and good practice is shared across courses. The management of courses for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved and is now satisfactory. Through careful review and planning of the curriculum a wide range of stimulating learning activities is now used. Teachers on these courses are well qualified and attend a range of training events. The learning environment is stimulating and reflects learners' personal achievements.

Business, administration and professional

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

83. The college offers a range of courses in business, administration, management, accounting, personnel and marketing. Currently, 84 learners aged 16 to 18 study mainly on full-time courses in business and administration. Of the 236 mainly part-time adult learners, approximately one third study business and administration whilst two thirds study for professional qualifications. Five school pupils aged 14 to 16 study administration.

Strengths

- high success rates on level 3 professional management courses and text production
- good provision for key skills.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on full-time accounting courses and AS Business
- ineffective target setting.

Achievements and standards

84. Learners' achievements are satisfactory. Success rates on level 3 professional management and text production courses are high and well above national averages. Success rates on many other courses have improved and are close to national averages. However, on full-time accounting courses and AS business, success rates are well below national averages. Current learners make adequate progress and the standard of their work is at least satisfactory. Some learners develop good skills in critical analysis and independent research, and most enjoy their learning. Achievements in key skills are good. Attendance and punctuality have improved and are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

85. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned but the individual needs of learners are not always met. In the better lessons, learners interact well and contribute confidently to discussions, producing some effective solutions to a range of business problems. Weaker lessons fail to engage or challenge learners. Assessment and feedback are satisfactory. Many classrooms do not have adequate ICT facilities.
86. The provision for key skills is good. Teachers who are experienced business practitioners integrate them carefully into their teaching. Initial assessment is used well to identify each learner's starting level. Learners are well motivated and effectively develop skills which enhance their chances of employment or progression.
87. The satisfactory range of provision provides adequate progression opportunities although the breadth of courses is not extensive. Visits and guest speakers enrich learners' experiences but there are insufficient opportunities for work experience.
88. Learners receive satisfactory advice and guidance but some are not fully aware of the support available from student services. The diagnosis of literacy and numeracy needs is adequate and appropriate support is given.
89. Target setting for learners is insufficiently specific and has not improved enough since the last inspection. Targets fail to focus on the development of learners' skills. Learners are not encouraged to be self-evaluative nor to negotiate challenging targets for themselves.

Leadership and management

90. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Information management, improvement plans and curriculum team targets are all used and monitored satisfactorily. Self-assessment is broadly accurate and all staff contribute to the process. Formal appraisals and lesson observations are clearly linked to staff development. Training and support for teachers has improved leading to

better teaching and learning and improving success rates. Communications are effective and good practice is shared. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2002 to 2004, 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	205	42	56	-14	566	55	55	0
	03/04	250	60	60	0	464	62	59	3
	04/05	442	70	-	-	378	65	-	-
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	32	56	60	-4	6	17	47	-30
	03/04	32	88	65	23	-	-	52	-
	04/05	28	75	-	-	1	100	-	-
NVQs	02/03	39	21	56	-35	9	22	57	-35
	03/04	44	57	61	-4	4	50	62	-12
	04/05	66	65	-	-	13	54	-	-
Other	02/03	134	45	56	-11	551	56	55	1
	03/04	174	56	60	-4	460	62	59	3
	04/05	348	70	-	-	364	66	-	-

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2002 to 2004, 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	826	43	52	-9	677	53	49	4
	03/04	861	48	56	-8	880	54	53	1
	04/05	928	49	-	-	714	55	-	-
GCSEs	02/03	270	41	57	-16	105	58	55	3
	03/04	229	51	61	-10	159	61	59	2
	04/05	322	54	-	-	145	61	-	-
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	67	63	59	4	17	65	53	12
	03/04	33	67	63	4	21	67	57	10
	04/05	41	56	-	-	24	58	-	-
NVQs	02/03	275	41	42	-1	264	59	49	10
	03/04	255	41	52	-11	290	50	53	-3
	04/05	214	43	-	-	272	60	-	-
Other	02/03	214	39	50	-11	291	44	48	-4
	03/04	344	49	54	-5	410	52	52	0
	04/05	351	48	-	-	273	46	-	-

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2002 to 2004, 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
3 Long	02/03	597	41	62	-21	672	48	51	-3
	03/04	601	53	64	-11	670	51	53	-2
	04/05	575	59	-	-	514	63	-	-
A/A2 Levels	02/03	81	44	82	-38	38	42	63	-21
	03/04	67	70	84	-14	34	62	66	-4
	04/05	86	84	-	-	45	64	-	-
AS Levels	02/03	217	43	61	-18	96	57	48	9
	03/04	274	55	63	-8	104	54	50	4
	04/05	180	62	-	-	71	65	-	-
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	210	31	50	-19	50	44	45	-1
	03/04	107	62	52	10	33	73	43	30
	04/05	119	57	-	-	23	65	-	-
NVQs	02/03	49	51	51	0	182	37	45	-8
	03/04	56	25	54	-29	203	54	47	7
	04/05	61	21	-	-	156	56	-	-
Other	02/03	40	55	55	0	306	52	54	-2
	03/04	97	38	56	-18	296	44	56	-12
	04/05	129	57	-	-	219	68	-	-

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 NVO rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	126	21	33	55	50
	Advanced	59	2	32	39	50
2004/05	Apprenticeship	73	10	35	33	47
	Advanced	57	4	30	42	45

- * 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 NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	139	4	16	29	27
	Advanced	53	0	19	40	33
2004/05	Apprenticeship	85	5	20	16	28
	Advanced	60	3	19	35	30

* 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'