



# Sutton Coldfield College



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published June 2006	Provider reference 130466
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## Basic information about the college

Name of college: Sutton Coldfield College

Type of college: General Further Education

Principal: Graham Jones

Address of college: Lichfield Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 2NW

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Chair of governors: Cllr. Anne Underwood

Unique reference number: 130466

Name of lead inspector: Sue Harrison, HMI

Dates of inspection: 24-28 April 2006

## Background of the organisation

1. Sutton Coldfield is a large general further education college in northeast Birmingham. There are many other post-16 providers in the area. The college's mission is to put learners first, improve individual lives and increase prosperity.
2. The college has two main campuses, one in Sutton Coldfield and one in Great Barr, which was formerly North Birmingham College. It also has a Design Centre in Sutton Coldfield, one smaller campus at Erdington and delivers a range of provision in community based settings and in the workplace.
3. The total number of learners in 2004-05 at the college was just under 15,000. There are almost 3,700 16 to 18 year old learners studying full-time at the college and approximately 10,000 adults, mainly studying part-time. There are slightly more male students than female. The college caters for 50 LEA funded 14 to 16 year olds and a further 150 part-time 14 to 16 year olds are studying on the increased flexibility programme. 43% of 16 to 18 year old learners and 27% of adults are from minority ethnic groups. There are just over 200 trainee apprentices studying mainly accountancy, which is delivered via a franchise partner, engineering and a small number in care. There are 2,500 enrolments on Learndirect provision.
4. Learners travel from across the city and the West Midlands and come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Approximately 50% of the college's learners come from areas of widening participation. The proportion of young people who continue in education beyond the age of 16 in Birmingham is slightly below the national average. In 2004, the percentage of school leavers who achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A\*-C was 51% in Birmingham and 60% in Solihull. Learners enter advanced courses in the college sixth form with average prior attainment at GCSE.
5. Birmingham still has a large engineering and manufacturing sector but the economic growth in recent years has been in professional, leisure services and new technology. The college offers courses in 14 out of 15 subject sectors with a full range from entry level through to higher education. Construction was largely transferred to South Birmingham College in 2005. The college is organised into three directorates: the sixth form centre, an adult directorate and a business directorate. The college has a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in engineering and a shared CoVE in business.

## Scope of the inspection

6. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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: health and social care and public services; engineering and manufacturing technologies; information and communication technology (ICT); creative and performing arts and media; English and modern foreign languages; and literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: grade 2
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: grade 1
Achievements and standards	Good: grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: grade 2

*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 and public services	Good: grade 2
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Outstanding: grade 1
Information and communication technology	Good: grade 2
Creative and performing arts and media	Good: grade 2
English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory: grade 3
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Good: grade 2

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

7. This is a good college, with some outstanding features. Standards and achievements are good. Success rates have improved and are now above national averages for much of the provision. Success rates on GCE A-levels are broadly satisfactory and a few AS levels have pass rates below national average. There is high achievement for the majority of learners in employer based provision. 14 to 16 year old learners achieve and progress well. Attendance is satisfactory overall.
8. Teaching and learning are good. Efforts to address weaknesses have been successful. The college has a rigorous system to monitor teaching and learning and effective action is taken where necessary. The majority of teachers now take effective account of the needs of individual learners and plan lessons which stimulate and engage their interest. ICT is well used to enhance teaching and learning. Punctuality is poor in a minority of lessons.
9. College responsiveness to meet the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. A wide range of courses has been developed to meet the needs of young people, adults and employers. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is excellent. Provision for learners on Foundation courses and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well planned to help them develop their skills and progress. The business directorate is highly successful in delivering provision to a range of employers. The college is very effective in working with partners.
10. Learners receive excellent guidance and support. There is an extensive range of services, which is well used and valued by learners. Transition arrangements for younger learners are very good. A high proportion of learners progress to higher education. Additional learning support is very effective in helping learners to be successful.
11. Leadership and management are good. The college has made good progress since the last inspection and has managed a merger with another college extremely well. Self-assessment procedures are rigorous, though some strengths are over-stated and a few curriculum areas do not clearly identify areas for improvement. Governance, financial management, value for money and the capacity for further improvement are all outstanding.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: grade 1

12. The college demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve its provision. At the core of the college strategy is a focus on continuous improvement, which is driven through commitment, enthusiasm and constructive self-criticism by governors, managers and staff. The college management information system provides accurate supporting data. Improvement is underpinned by robust

accountability and performance review. Staff development is good, including effective lesson observation. A range of effective quality improvement activities has produced significant increases in success rates. Most significant weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Strong financial management provides the capacity for investment in facilities to support quality improvements. The effectively managed merger with a neighbouring college is a specific example of capacity to improve provision for large cohorts of learners.

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

13. The college has made good progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The low retention rates on some GCE A-level courses improved rapidly and substantially. The previous significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced very effectively. The new sixth form centre is an excellent facility. There remains a problem of noise intrusion in one area in an old building. Sharing of good practice is now extensive. Unreliable management data at the last inspection has been replaced by reliable and widely used information to inform actions for improvement. Punctuality remains a problem in a few curriculum areas.

Key strengths of the college

#### *Strengths*

- good and improving success rates
- high achievement on employer based programmes
- high percentage of learners progressing to university
- good teaching and learning on the majority of courses
- extensive range of provision with good progression opportunities
- highly responsive to needs of employers, particularly in engineering and care
- outstanding guidance and support systems
- outstanding educational and social inclusion
- good leadership and management
- outstanding capacity to improve
- some excellent specialist resources
- excellent collaborative partnerships.

Areas for improvement

#### *The college should address:*

- pass rates on a few AS courses
- success rates on short courses for 16 to 19 year olds
- punctuality in arriving for the start of lessons
- ensuring learners are fully engaged in all lessons
- quality of provision in ESOL.



## Main findings

### Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

14. Achievements and standards are good, as evidenced in the college self-assessment. Success rates at the college have improved significantly. In 2004-05, success rates for both 16 to 18 year old learners and for adults were above the national averages for all levels of long qualifications. Retention rates are well above average for all ages for courses at levels 1 and 2 and 7% above average for advanced courses. Achievement for 16 to 18 year olds is 7% above average at level 1, slightly above at level 2 and broadly satisfactory at level 3. Adult achievement is good at level 2 and slightly above average at other levels. Generally, learners do better on vocational courses. Retention and achievement on GCE A-level courses are satisfactory overall. Pass rates on AS courses in a few subjects are below national average. The college monitors individual student progress against target grades but this is not aggregated into a value added analysis for the whole college.
15. Learners enjoy their work and achieve a good standard on most courses. Young people involved in the college's 14+ provision are achieving high standards, especially in engineering, and are making good progress. Learners aged 16 to 18 and adults are developing confidence and good communication skills and many are able to work in teams effectively. The rate of progression to university is very high. Many learners are developing healthier lifestyles, although this is promoted more on some courses than others. There are many examples of learners participating in projects which enable them to make an effective contribution to the community.
16. In employer based provision, there is good development of practical and professional skills, particularly on the large NVQ programme. Trainees on the apprenticeship scheme generally make good progress; framework achievement is high in accountancy but in care learners are making slow progress. There is a good level of completions on Learndirect courses. Achievement of key skills qualifications across the college is satisfactory and improving.
17. Success rates on short courses are improving; they are now slightly above average for adults but are still below average for 16 to 18 year olds. Attendance is satisfactory overall but punctuality is an issue in some classes.

### Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

18. The college judged the quality of provision to be outstanding. Inspectors judge it to be good overall, with some outstanding features. Teaching and learning have improved and are good. This is in line with the college's own judgement in its self-assessment report. The college monitors the quality of teaching and learning through a rigorous lesson observation process. Outcomes of lesson

observations are well used to inform staff development. Good use is made of teaching and learning mentors to improve teaching.

19. Most lessons are well planned with resources that are carefully chosen to match the needs of the group. Well paced activities challenge learners and maintain their interest. Learners' involvement is good in many lessons, with effective opportunities for them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and to clarify areas of uncertainty. In many lessons, the excellent rapport between staff and learners promotes a good learning atmosphere. Teachers are generally skilful in their use of questioning techniques. In the better lessons, integration of the topic with vocational and real life situations is good.
20. In the less successful lessons, strategies to engage learners are ineffective. The pace of learning is slow and there is a lack of focus on the completion of tasks. Some poor attendance and punctuality hamper group work and adversely impact on learners' achievement. The delivery of key skills is effective within an increasing proportion of lessons. Staff training is good and curriculum schemes of work clearly identify evidence gathering opportunities. The college has acknowledged that key skills are not fully integrated into subject areas.
21. Staff are well qualified. Resources used for teaching and learning are good and information and learning technology (ILT) is used well in the classroom. In addition, good use is made of the college intranet to allow learners to access learning resources outside lessons. Specialist resources are generally good and some, for example in engineering, are excellent. Most of the accommodation is of a high standard, providing a good learning environment.
22. Assessment of learners' work is effective in helping them to improve. There is outstanding assessment practice in much of the work carried out on employer premises. The quality of assessments is subject to rigorous scrutiny and moderation and verification processes are good. Staff generally mark work within the tight deadlines set. The monitoring of learner progress is good. The college makes good use of a 'target minimum grade' system to monitor progress. Parents and employers are kept well informed about learners' progress, where appropriate.
23. Additional learning support is delivered in a number of ways to suit the individual's needs. It is well managed and very effective for learners who undertake it. Much support is embedded within lessons. Additional support is also available outside lessons; take up of this is good and has been improved continually over the last three years. The self-assessment report acknowledges that there are a few learners who would benefit from additional support who choose not to take it up. Learners receiving additional support consistently achieve well.
24. The college is outstanding at meeting the needs and interests of learners. It provides an extensive range of academic and vocational qualifications and offers effective progression routes. Progression rates to further courses within

the college and to higher education are high. Some learners choose to attend the college despite having to travel long distances. Recruitment is from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds. Enthusiastic coordinators and the students' union run a comprehensive range of successful enrichment activities. Most courses provide relevant opportunities to broaden learners' experience. Additional qualifications to enhance employment prospects are readily available and many learners undertake work experience.

25. The college has played an active part in developing a good range of provision for 14 to 16 year old learners across many vocational areas. Liaison with schools is extensive and effective. The college works closely with a wide range of community partners. It collaborates well with the adult education service and voluntary groups. The college is highly responsive to employers' needs, working closely with many companies. The CoVE in integrated manufacturing technology and the shared CoVE in business excellence are very well developed. Over 3,000 learners are following NVQs based in companies. The train2gain employer training pilot has been very successful. The four Learndirect centres have recruited over 2,500 learners and many have successfully completed their courses. The numbers of learners on apprenticeship programmes are relatively small.
26. Support and guidance systems are very good, with outstanding provision for 16 to 19 year old learners. The college provides learners with an extensive range of support opportunities. These include advice and guidance centres, a specialist support facility for adults, and a support centre for sixth form learners. The service these centres provide is very effective. Links with external specialist agencies are good. The college provides a very good range of counselling, information, childcare and welfare services including financial help.
27. Initial advice and guidance are excellent, with specialists readily available to help learners choose courses. Advice for learners from Years 10 and 11 in local schools helps them to make a successful transition to college. Specialist advice for adults returning to education is excellent. Comprehensive induction activities ensure learners settle into their courses quickly. The careers advice and guidance provided by the college are extensive and well valued by learners.
28. The tutorial system provides effective monitoring and support to help learners succeed. The group tutorial programme delivers good personal, social and health education. Monitoring of attendance is rigorous and attendance has improved to become satisfactory overall. The college recognises the need to improve attendance and punctuality on a few courses.

## Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

29. Leadership and management are good as identified in the college self-assessment. The principal and managers are very effective in communicating and implementing college strategy. Curriculum management is generally good, but there is need for more critical leadership in a few areas. Responsibilities are

clear. Accountability and performance review systems are operated rigorously. Staff morale and commitment to a quality improvement culture are good. The college's reputation in the community, with learners and employers, is very good. Collaboration and partnerships with other colleges, schools and employers are excellent.

30. The quality assurance system is mostly effective in securing improvements. Strong elements include comprehensive teacher observations; teacher support and professional development programmes; sharing of good practice; and a standards board which investigates under-performing provision. Self-assessment is comprehensive and involves all staff. The self-assessment report is mainly accurate and self-critical, although some claimed strengths are normal practice. The college is generally aware of areas for further improvement. The management information system provides accurate, reliable data, which is used widely to inform decisions and actions.
31. Equality, diversity and inclusiveness are at the heart of the college. There is outstanding success in attracting minority ethnic learners in much greater proportions than in the local population. Staff numbers from minority ethnic groups have also increased significantly. Learners are well supported in a safe, secure and harmonious environment, although a few learners at Great Barr perceive a need to improve security. There is good celebration of diversity across the college. The college's response to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2002 is good. Data and performance are analysed by sub-groups, by both managers and governors. The college complies with legislation and guidelines for child protection. There is a designated senior manager and staff action group. A named governor has yet to be appointed. Staff and governors have received relevant training.
32. Teaching and support staff are well qualified and experienced. Teachers and assessors have relevant professional qualifications, or are working towards them. Recruitment processes are effective, including involvement of learners in the exercise. Most teaching accommodation is good. Some specialist areas and resources are excellent. Rooms and corridors are clean and free of litter. Most areas of the college are accessible to wheelchair users. Resources used for teaching and learning are good.
33. Financial management is outstanding. Systems and controls are strong, resulting in regular annual surpluses which are used effectively to support the improvement strategy. Capital investments are well-managed. With its good and improving success rates, generally good or excellent facilities, efficient use of resources and very high learner satisfaction, the college provides outstanding value for money.
34. Governance is outstanding. An experienced and well informed board sets a clear strategic direction. The planning and execution of mergers have been handled well with due diligence for the mission and character of the college,

and for maintaining the college's good financial health. Monitoring and review of senior manager and college performance is extensive and has an appropriate focus on the learner experience.

## Curriculum area inspections

Health and social care and public services

Good: grade 2

### Context

35. The college provides a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in caring, health studies, counselling, public services, early years care and education. Qualifications in all areas are at levels 1, 2 and 3. There are 1,465 learners and enrolments are evenly divided between full-time and part-time courses. 40% of learners are aged 16 to 18. Two hundred and fifty three learners are male. NVQ qualifications in early years and care are offered in the workplace. There are 290 NVQ learners and 13 apprentices.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high and much improved success rates on many courses
- effective development of vocational skills
- much engaging teaching to promote good learning
- effective curriculum management.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- declining success rates on a minority of courses
- slow achievement of apprenticeship frameworks.

### Achievements and standards

36. Success rates on many courses at both levels 2 and 3 are high and much improved since the last inspection. There is good development of professional and practical skills: care learners become skilled at communicating with older people; early years learners can provide for the developmental needs of young children; and access to health learners become skilled at managing and organising their studies. Many NVQ learners, already in employment, develop confidence and knowledge, gain promotion and are given more responsibility. There is a declining trend on a minority of courses where success rates have fallen in recent years. The small group of learners on care apprenticeship frameworks have made slow progress and remain in learning significantly beyond their planned completion dates.

### Quality of provision

37. Much teaching engages learners and they make good progress. Teaching methods take account of the different needs of learners and their preferred ways of learning. In the better lessons, imaginative tasks help to involve the learners and ensure they remain motivated. Teachers' and learners' experiences provide interesting illustrations. NVQ learners, who are employed, make a rich

contribution to discussions when sharing their work experiences. In lessons, questions are used effectively to extend and challenge learners. Teachers make good use of information technology and choose learning materials skilfully to meet the needs of learners in the group. Learners work well independently or in pairs and effective use is made of both independent and team work. Staff help learners to develop their confidence and skills to make an effective contribution to group assessments. Teachers and tutors provide very good levels of support and guidance. Learners clearly demonstrate values and beliefs expected of those who work with clients in care services.

### Leadership and management

38. Curriculum management is good and quality improvement is effective. Weaknesses identified lead to a recovery plan which is implemented and monitored. Recently, particular emphasis has been placed on the improvement of teaching and learning. Actions have been effectively managed leading to improvements in the provision. Course files are comprehensive and provide good evidence of teamwork, of shared good practice and of close monitoring of work placements. The self-assessment report is accurate and informs the development plan.

## Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Outstanding: grade 1

### Context

39. There is full-time and part-time provision in engineering, manufacturing and technology providing progression from levels 1 to 4. Programmes include mechanical manufacture, maintenance, electrical and electronic engineering, computer control, computer aided design, welding and fabrication. Currently, there are 1,604 engineering learners, 20% of whom are aged 16 to 18 and 80% are part-time learners. There are 84 modern apprenticeships, 61 of which are advanced. There are 1,280 learners enrolled on in-company NVQ programmes. There are 246 female learners on engineering programmes. The engineering centre was granted full CoVE status in December 2003 for integrated manufacturing technology.

### *STRENGTHS*

- outstanding success rates on most programmes
- good teaching and learning
- extensive range of provision
- outstanding employer engagement
- excellent support for in-company and work-based learners
- very effective curriculum leadership and management
- excellent specialist resources.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- insufficient diagnostic initial assessment for in-company NVQ learners.

### Achievement and standards

40. There are outstanding success rates on most programmes. Many full-time courses have success rates of over 90%. Equally high success rates are achieved by adult learners on in-company programmes. Most learners develop a good standard of workplace skills in college and the workplace. The standard of project work of young people aged 14 to 16 on the increased flexibility programme is excellent. There is good progression of learners into employment and higher levels of study. Apprentice framework achievement is good.

### Quality of provision

41. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are well planned with a good range of learning activities to stimulate and develop learning. There is good use of information technology, including internet resources, in most lessons. In a few lessons, teachers do not closely monitor learner progress during the learning activities and fail to provide the individual help some learners need.



42. There is an extensive and responsive range of provision enabling learners to progress from levels 1 to 4. The college provides a substantial amount of training on in-company programmes for adults employed in industry who wish to achieve nationally accredited qualifications. A substantial short course programme provides bespoke courses to meet specific training needs of local employers. Some specialist courses are available at weekends and evenings. In 2004-05, over 40 companies and 1,500 learners benefited from NVQ programmes ranging from manufacturing, fabrication and welding, mechanical engineering, technical services and engineering maintenance.
43. Support for learners to achieve their qualifications is excellent. In-company and work-based learners benefit from regular assessor visits, in some cases on a weekly basis. Assessment is available on demand to assist learners working at some distance from the college to collect evidence when opportunities are available in the workplace. There are regular progress reviews and some employers run mentoring schemes where learners are placed with an experienced practitioner. Assessors with basic skills qualifications currently provide 42 in-company NVQ learners with additional learning needs support. However, there is insufficient diagnostic initial assessment for in-company NVQ learners.

#### Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management are very effective. There has been good improvement in retention and achievement rates. Most courses are now well above the national average. New staff are well supported with learning mentors to provide advice and guidance on effective teaching and learning practice. Course team leaders have a good focus on learner progress and take effective action to maintain high performance. Staff are fully involved in the production of the self-assessment report which provides an accurate reflection of the quality of provision. The management of work-based learning is very good.
45. The engineering workshops have a wide range of specialist resources at the highest industrial standard. The college provides outstanding support for skills development to West Midlands engineering manufacturers through its CoVE for Integrated Manufacturing Technology.

## Information and communication technology

Good: grade 2

### Context

46. Full-time and part-time ICT courses provide progression from level 1 through to level 4. Full-time courses include GNVQ Intermediate level IT, AVCE in IT and the BTEC national diploma for IT practitioners in both the software and systems options. These courses are taken by around 520 learners, mostly aged 16 to 18. Over 450 learners, mostly adults are enrolled on part-time courses such as the European computer driving license (ECDL) and computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT). Some 15 learners are enrolled on the higher national diploma and certificate courses in business information technology.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high success rates on level 3 vocational courses
- effective teaching which motivates learners
- good development of learners' practical skills
- good support for individual learners
- good curriculum leadership and management.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- low retention on a minority of courses
- punctuality and attendance.

### Achievements and standards

47. Success rates on level 3 vocational courses are high and rising. Success rates on the European computer driving license (ECDL) course were high in 2004-05. Retention rates on a few level 2 full-time courses are low and, on the GCE AS computing course, retention rates have been low for the past three years.
48. Learners at all levels enjoy their learning, make good progress and apply their skills effectively. Learners on a GCE AS computing course produced very sophisticated and elegant programming solutions to a village hall booking task. In an ECDL lesson on charts and graphs, adult learners acquired skills very quickly and were able to apply them to new situations.

### Quality of provision

49. Teaching and learning are good. At the last inspection, teaching and learning was a weakness. Lessons are now well planned, include a wide variety of teaching approaches, successfully motivate learners and promote the good acquisition of skills. In many lessons, learners are enthusiastic and their practical work is good. They are encouraged to review the quality of their work and to be self-critical. Assessments are used effectively. Marked work is

returned quickly and teacher comments are detailed enough to advise learners how to achieve a higher grade.

50. The range of courses gives clear progression routes. Most level 3 learners progress to university and some follow a level 4 qualification at the college. Support for students is good. Additional support needs are identified and support with literacy and numeracy is effective. Retention of students who receive support is particularly good. Teachers provide good personal support for students both during lessons and at other times. In tutorial reviews, students are set challenging targets and progress towards these is carefully monitored. Communication with parents is effective. Attendance is too low in a few lessons, and punctuality at the first lesson in the morning is poor.

#### Leadership and management

51. Leadership and management are good. Teaching staff form a well coordinated team that works effectively across campuses and communicates well. Data is analysed carefully and used well to inform decisions on course management. Good practice and new skills are shared across the ICT area. The self-assessment report is accurate and identifies the strengths and weaknesses. Action plans to address weaknesses are realistic and successful.

## Creative and performing arts and media

Good: grade 2

### Context

52. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time courses from levels 1 to 4. Art and design courses, which comprise the biggest part of the provision, are at the Design Centre, 15 minutes walk from the main site, where some performing arts are based. Dance and music courses are located at an adjacent site and the majority of media courses are at the nearby Emmanuel Court. There are currently 1,215 full-time and part-time students enrolled; 89% are aged between 16 and 18.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high success rates on most courses
- good teaching that engages and sustains learners' interest
- extensive and responsive range of provision
- excellent resources and specialist accommodation at the Design Centre
- good curriculum management.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- success rates on AS fine arts
- punctuality in some classes
- promotion of professional practice.

### Achievements and standards

53. There are high success rates on most courses although AS fine arts success rates have been consistently below national averages. Progression internally is good as it is to higher education with students gaining places at prestigious institutions. Learners understand and can apply acquired creative techniques and skills. The standard of learners' work is often good, especially in art and design, but the lack of off-stage discipline detracts from some performance work. Punctuality is erratic; in some classes learners are assiduous in ensuring that they are on time but in others learners are often late.

### Quality of provision

54. Teaching and learning are mainly good, especially in vocational art and design classes. Teachers are patient and supportive with often challenging learners and devise topics that engage and sustain interest. Good techniques are established on level 2 courses to prepare learners for progression to advanced courses. Interaction between staff and learners is good. There is outstanding use of ILT in history of art. Assessment is clear and comprehensive and the accuracy and integrity of college assessment is endorsed by external verifiers. In a number of classes, there is insufficient rigour in implementing professional practice, for example wearing inappropriate clothes for dance lessons. Specialist

accommodation and facilities are excellent for art and design, satisfactory for performing arts and media but poor for popular music.

55. The range of provision is extensive. Learners can choose from a programme of academic and vocational courses. There are good opportunities for progression within the college. Effective use is made of additional specialist qualifications providing extra progression routes. There has been good learner uptake for recent additions to the provision. Enrichment activities support and enhance learning.
56. There are very good arrangements to support learners with specific needs. Advice, guidance and personal and academic tutorial support are good. Learners appreciate efforts made on their behalf by teachers and tutors. Parents have good opportunities to be kept informed about learner progress.

### Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management are good. Managers recognise and address weaknesses swiftly and robustly. Separate subject areas are encouraged to develop their own sense of identity. Staff share good practice and feel supported by their managers. They are encouraged to develop their professional expertise and several are external verifiers and examiners. Communications are effective and staff are involved in the self-assessment process that accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses. There is a commitment to improve media and performing arts accommodation to be the same standard as that in art and design.

## English and modern foreign languages

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

58. Approximately 1,230 learners, mainly full-time 16 to 19 year old students, study in this area. Three hundred and sixty four are on GCSE English courses, 416 are taking A or AS levels in English language, literature, or language and literature. Forty six study French, German or Spanish A or AS level and 26 travel and tourism students are preparing NVQ language Units in Spanish. Of the 381 part-time adult learners, 170 take certificated (ABC) courses in French or Spanish at 3 levels, and 211 are studying GCSE Spanish, English, or AS English language and literature.

### *STRENGTHS*

- good levels of retention
- good range of provision
- good support to meet individual needs
- good accommodation and resources in English
- effective team building.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- pass rates on AS courses
- pace and challenge in lessons
- the amount of study outside lessons
- insufficient rigour in self-assessment.

### Achievements and standards

59. Success rates are mainly satisfactory and retention is good. Pass rates at A2 are also good, but on many AS courses they are below national averages. ABC languages pass rates for adult learners are low. However, many of these learners are interested in acquiring the skills rather than the qualification, and many are developing good speaking ability. Spanish results for travel and tourism for 16 to 18 year old students are good. GCSE English results are in line with national averages. These students enjoy working collaboratively and are developing good communication skills.

### Quality of provision

60. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are enthusiastic and well qualified. Work is marked promptly and constructively, and learners are aware of what they need to do to succeed. Learners aged 16 to 18 have target grades based on previous achievement, and these are helpful in reviews to measure their progress. In the best lessons, a supportive atmosphere is created, and enjoyment, variety and collaborative work are strong elements. In many lessons, however, slow pace

and insufficient challenge make teaching less effective. Outside the classroom, many students are not developing independent study skills and not enough work is expected of them. In some foreign language lessons, far too much English is being spoken by teacher and students and progress is limited.

61. Learners receive very good individual support, and relationships in teaching groups are excellent. English and languages subject teachers are approachable and generous with their time, and well used "drop-in" workshops provide extra practical help.
62. The range of provision is good, offering choice and progression. Extra activities in English, such as theatre trips and public speaking competitions, bring courses to life. English is well resourced. Well-equipped rooms and displays make for an attractive environment. IT is being well used to support learning, and course handbooks and handouts are clear and helpful.

### Leadership and management

63. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Team building is good and there is a shared ethos of equality of opportunity and open access. Day-to-day management is efficient and effective. However, though quality assurance systems have identified some low performing courses, analysis and action planning by managers and teams have not been sufficiently thorough and rigorous to lead to improvement.

## Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Good: grade 2

### Context

64. The college offers literacy and numeracy embedded into Foundation (level 1) vocational programmes for young people and learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are also discrete literacy and numeracy classes for adults, discrete ESOL classes and additional learning support across the college at entry level, level 1 and level 2. Provision is offered on the three main college campuses, in the workplace and in several outreach centres in partnership with other agencies. There are 357 full-time learners enrolled on level 1 vocational Foundation courses, 322 on provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, 530 in part-time adult literacy classes and 186 on adult numeracy. Eighty three learners have literacy and numeracy provision in the workplace. There are 472 learners on ESOL provision, mostly part-time.

### *STRENGTHS*

- good achievement on the majority of courses
- wide range of opportunities to achieve accreditation
- good teaching and learning on Foundation programmes
- good management of learning in literacy classes
- excellent support for the 14 to 18 age group.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- limited use of an appropriate range of learning resources
- some poor attendance
- teaching in adult numeracy and ESOL.

### Achievement and standards

65. Achievement is good on adult literacy and numeracy at level 1. Learners make good progress and achieve well on Foundation programmes. They develop good communication and personal skills and progress to higher level vocational courses. There is a wide range of opportunities to achieve accreditation at all levels; learners take a test when they are ready and progress to the next level. Achievement is poor for the small number of adults at level 2 numeracy. ESOL learners do not develop good speaking and listening skills. Attendance is low in adult literacy and numeracy.

### Quality of provision

66. Teaching and learning are good in Foundation and adult literacy provision and on, courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Young learners work hard, concentrate well and enjoy lessons. Standards of work are good and learners are well motivated. Learning is managed well in literacy classes, where mixed level learners work effectively on differentiated group



tasks on the same topic. In the best lessons, tutors use a range of teaching strategies, use ICT in a creative way and develop interesting materials on relevant topics to motivate learners. All learners have individual learning plans and work towards their targets in lessons. In good lessons, individual targets are used effectively to plan learning, standards of work are good and learners evaluate the effectiveness of their own learning.

- 67. Support for learners is good and for 14 to 18 year olds it is excellent. Their literacy and numeracy needs are well supported in class through embedded learning and they can also book individual support sessions in a study centre. Learners feel that the support they receive from all tutors is outstanding.
- 68. There is some poor teaching and learning in the areas of adult numeracy and ESOL. In weaker lessons, there is a worksheet-based approach with little variety of activity. In these lessons there is limited use of learning resources. There is little use of real materials for ESOL and little use of equipment for numeracy. Resources are poor in outreach centres.

#### Leadership and management

- 69. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. They are good in Foundation provision and courses for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, where curriculum change is being effectively managed and clear direction is set. The self-assessment reporting procedure is thorough and involves managers and tutors. Self-assessment reports are mainly accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development but action plans sometimes lack specific detail.

## 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	823	44	55	-11	3504	39	54	-15
	03/04	1001	63	59	4	2286	61	58	3
	04/05	1124	74			1770	70		
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	179	53	56	-3				
	03/04	256	63	62	1	1	0	55	-55
	04/05	165	69			1	100		
NVQs	02/03	92	46	58	-12	65	34	66	-32
	03/04	64	48	60	-12	139	85	69	16
	04/05	62	61			85	82		
Other	02/03	563	41	55	-14	3439	39	54	-15
	03/04	691	65	59	6	2147	60	58	2
	04/05	897	76			1684	70		

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	2360	50	51	-1	2279	36	50	-14
	03/04	2058	54	55	-1	1930	56	54	2
	04/05	2163	66			1873	67		
GCSEs	02/03	1326	55	58	-3	276	47	54	-7
	03/04	1005	62	64	-2	229	59	58	1
	04/05	961	75			221	64		
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	233	55	53	2	7	14	50	-36
	03/04	154	58	57	1	2	100	57	43
	04/05	162	77			4	50		
NVQs	02/03	207	42	41	1	686	49	53	-4
	03/04	256	34	50	-16	639	59	55	4
	04/05	262	54			839	80		
Other	02/03	594	41	48	-7	1310	27	48	-21
	03/04	643	50	51	-1	1060	54	52	2
	04/05	778	57			809	56		

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 – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	02/03	5514	53	58	-5	2772	39	49	-10
	03/04	4856	59	60	-1	1862	53	52	1
	04/05	1925	65			1823	59		
A/A2 Levels	02/03	1059	77	79	-2	241	63	65	-2
	03/04	1158	80	83	-3	188	69	68	1
	04/05	1247	78			154	66		
AS Levels	02/03	3180	51	57	-6	356	40	47	-7
	03/04	2844	54	59	-5	267	49	49	0
	04/05	2649	61			264	49		
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	602	18	47	-29	123	17	45	-28
	03/04	213	44	50	-6	22	55	43	12
	04/05	208	64			18	61		
NVQs	02/03	15	20	47	-27	266	63	45	18
	03/04	18	28	47	-19	237	54	47	7
	04/05	18	67			352	68		
Other	02/03	647	55	48	7	1786	33	50	-17
	03/04	613	53	49	4	1147	51	52	-1
	04/05	803	61			1035	58		

Table 4

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

#### a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	2***	0***	32	0	47
	Advanced	37	57	31	68	48
2004/05	Apprenticeship	51	37	38	63	50
	Advanced	42	55***	34	57***	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'

\*\*\* Figures under discussion with LSC

## b) Timely success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	3***	0***	16	0***	24
	Advanced	30	30	19	37	30
2004/05	Apprenticeship	54	61	29	61	29
	Advanced	51	41***	21	41***	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'  
 \*\*\* Figures under discussion with LSC

## Outcomes for Employer Training Pilots and National Employer Training Programmes managed by the college 2002 to 2005.

Year	Number of starts in year	Planned learning completed *	Still in learning
2002/03	115	73	29
2003/04	412	335	71
2004/05	765	286	431

- \* These are key learning objectives identified for each learner following an ETP or NETP programme