



Stockton Riverside College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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130576

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Stockton Riverside College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal and Chief Executive:	Sujinder Singh Sangha
Address of college:	Harvard Avenue Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6FB
Telephone number:	01642 865400
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College website:	www.stockton.ac.uk
Chair of governors:	Dr Frank King
Unique reference number:	130576
Name of lead inspector:	Fred Brown, ALI
Dates of inspection:	8-12 May 2006

Background of the organisation

1. Stockton Riverside College serves local communities, employers and organisations across the Tees Valley. The new purpose-built college opened fully in January 2003. The college has funding for additional classrooms, workshops and leisure facilities, adjacent to the main site, scheduled to open in September 2006. The college delivers courses at many other centres and outreach sites.
2. The unemployment rate across the Tees Valley is 2% above the national rate. The college's catchment area includes several disadvantaged wards. In 2005, 54.9% of Stockton-on-Tees school leavers achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C, which is below the national average of 57.1%.
3. At the time of inspection, there were 2,003 learners aged 16-18 and 7,530 adult learners on courses leading to externally accredited qualifications. Around 224 learners aged 14-16 from local secondary schools were following a vocational course at the college. The college offers a small apprenticeship programme for 13 learners. There are 213 learners on employer training pilots (ETP) and 34 on entry to employment (E2E) programmes. The college has three Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in performing arts, adult social care, and playwork and early years.
4. Since the last inspection in October 2001, enrolments of learners aged 16-18 have increased significantly from 3,600 to over 5,900. In 2004-05, about 12% of the 21,729 enrolments were full-time, 67% were adults and 56% of the full-time learners were aged 16-18. Around 58% of learners were female and 6% were from minority ethnic groups.
5. The majority of learners are enrolled on entry level, level 1 and level 2 courses with around 21% of full-time equivalent learners on level 3 or higher. Courses are offered in 13 of the 15 qualifications and curriculum authority (QCA) subject and sector areas. The college works in partnership with three universities to deliver higher education courses to 295 learners.
6. The college's mission is to provide "excellence in education". Strategic objectives include raising aspirations and learner achievement, widening opportunities for more diverse groups of learners, and excellent teaching and learning.

Scope of the inspection

7. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the

period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the college
- its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

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	Outstanding: grade 1

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

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

8. This is a good college with many outstanding features. College data for 2005 confirms that learners' achievements are good overall. Success rates have continued to improve at all levels since 2002/03 and improved faster in 2004/05 than the national rate. Success rates at levels 1 and 2 for learners aged 16-18 and adult learners are consistently high. Learners' progression to higher level courses is good. Learners make very good progress in developing their study and practical skills. The progression rate for E2E learners to further education or employment is high. Key skills retention rates at levels 1 and 2 are low but success rates are improving.
9. Inspectors agree strongly with the college's evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning in vocational courses is good. Teachers use effective teaching methods, including information and learning technology (ILT), to develop learners' skills well. Learning resources are very good.
10. The college offers a broad range of courses with good progression opportunities. Its approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. It works very closely with partner organisations. The college's approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners is good. Enrolments of full-time learners aged 16-18 have increased. The work-based learning provision is underdeveloped.
11. Learners benefit from good guidance and a broad range of welfare and support services. Specialist support is particularly good for learners with dyslexia, autism, physical mobility difficulties and sensory impairment. The additional learning support needs of part-time learners are not fully met.
12. Leadership and management are outstanding. The governors, the principal and senior managers promote a strong culture of equality and improvement. The college assesses its performance against the highest achieving colleges in the sector. Self-assessment and quality assurance are effectively used to plan for further improvement. The self-assessment report is accurate. The college's financial management is good and it provides good value for money.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: grade 1

13. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the college's capacity to improve is outstanding. Quality assurance arrangements have been very effective in monitoring and securing improvements. There are improved success rates in all areas of the curriculum and most are well above national averages. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and arrangements to monitor the work of teachers are very thorough.
14. Inspectors have a high degree of confidence in the accuracy of the college's self-assessment report. Curriculum audits have been successfully used to support improvements in many areas. The report is evaluative and analytical. The college accurately graded the quality of its teaching and learning.

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

15. The college has made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement noted in the last inspection in 2001. Course reviews are rigorous. Teachers make effective use of learning strategies including ILT to sustain learners' interest. Learners benefit from a wider range of work experience opportunities. In key skills, learners enjoy better teaching although their attendance and retention is uneven. Overall success rates have improved in all areas.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- high success rates for learners on levels 1 and 2 long courses
- significant improvements in success rates in 2005
- good progression to higher level courses
- very good use of ILT to enhance learning
- good arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning
- excellent accommodation and learning resources at the main site
- good arrangements to ensure that the college responds to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda
- outstanding Prince's Trust provision
- highly effective response to employer and community needs
- good guidance and support for learners
- outstanding leadership and governance of the college
- strong promotion of equality and the culture of respect for learners and staff
- very effective measures to improve the provision
- well-managed programmes for learners aged 14-16

The college should address

- weak monitoring retention in key skills
- insufficient use of teaching observations to inform staff appraisal and to disseminate good practice
- low recruitment to provision in work-based learning
- ineffective arrangements for identifying the additional learning support needs and learner progress of adult learners
- the need to increase staff training in child protection.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

Contributory grades:

Learners aged 19+

Outstanding: grade 1

Work-based learning

Satisfactory: grade 3

16. Achievements and standards are good overall. Since the last inspection, success rates for learners aged 16-18 on long courses at levels 1 and 2 have been high. At level 3, they have improved steadily over the three years to 2005 and are now around the national average.
17. Retention rates for learners aged 16-18 improved between 2002/03 and 2004/05 by between 10 and 15% at levels 1 to 3 on long courses. In 2004/05 retention rates were high at level 1 for learners aged 16-18 and for adult learners at level 2. College data for 2005/06 show improved in-year retention in 7 of the 10 college curriculum schools.
18. Key skills pass rates are improving steadily in most areas although in 2005 retention rates at levels 1 and 2 fell to below national averages. Success rates for learners with a learning difficulty or disability improved in 2005 and now match the overall college rate. Success rates for minority ethnic learners were mostly at or just below the overall college rate in 2005.
19. There were significant improvements in success rates in 2005 from the previous year in nearly all categories. For learners aged 16-18 at levels 2 and 3, there were improvements of around 10%. At level 4 success rates improved by 16%. On short qualifications of 5-24 weeks, success rates are very high. Success rates on NVQ courses improved at level 1 but declined at level 3.
20. Success rates are high for adult learners who form more than 75% of college learners, particularly on long courses at levels 1, 2 and 4 and on short qualifications. None of the learners on the newly established employer training pilots or the apprenticeship programmes has yet successfully completed.
21. Many learners successfully progress to higher levels of study. The proportion of E2E learners on Prince's Trust programmes who progressed to further education, training or employment in 2004/05 was high. Of all learners who completed courses at the college in 2004/05, almost half returned to further courses in 2005/06.
22. Learners make good progress in developing their practical and vocational skills, as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners aged 14-16 acquire valuable experience of realistic working environments. Care and early years

learners develop good professional skills through work experience. Performing arts learners develop presentation techniques and the discipline required to become a successful performer. Learners on foundation programmes improve their literacy, numeracy and study skills. Average attendance rates are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

23. The quality of teaching is good and improving. The college accurately assesses the quality of its teaching and learning. The inspection of 2001 found some unsatisfactory teaching, particularly at entry level. The quality has improved through an extensive programme of graded lesson observations. Outcomes from observations are effectively moderated. Staff development is offered where poor teaching is identified. The links between observations and the staff appraisal system are not fully developed and good teaching practice is not routinely shared across the college.
24. The college sets high standards for its teaching. Learning objectives are adapted to suit individual learning needs. Many learners make good progress in their lessons. Teachers in health and social care effectively address equality and diversity issues. Teachers ensure that learners adopt safe working practices. The teaching of learners aged 14-16 is good.
25. Excellent resources on the main campus contribute to better learning. Teachers have been trained to be competent in the use of ILT to enliven their lessons. Learning is supported with good technology in classrooms. Off-site facilities are well resourced. A number of vocational teachers use e-portfolios with learners in the workplace.
26. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory. Vocational and key skills tutors work collaboratively to ensure that learning materials are matched to the literacy and numeracy skills of learners. Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) support are good. Some learners find the timetabling arrangements for key skills unclear and have been unable to attend planned lessons.
27. Assessment practice is well planned. Most learners have a clear idea on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Parents of 14-19 year old learners receive regular reports on their progress.
28. The college makes good provision to meet the needs and interests of learners, employers and the community. Effective work with partners has contributed to the success of a good range of initiatives to widen participation. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. Strong links with schools have encouraged many 14-16 year olds to continue in post-16 learning in vocational areas. The college successfully attracts disadvantaged groups such as young offenders, people who are homeless and those leaving

care. There are well designed initiatives to challenge gender stereotyping such as encouraging males into childcare.

29. A highly effective employer engagement strategy helps local businesses to update the skills of their employees. Literacy and numeracy training is delivered at learners' workplaces. The CoVEs in adult social care and play work and early years have successfully attracted over 100 employers into training. Local employers have donated equipment to enhance the college's resources.
30. There is a very wide range of courses with good progression opportunities in nearly all curriculum areas from entry level to levels 3 or 4. Almost half of learners who completed courses in 2005 returned to further courses. There is close cooperation with local sixth form colleges about the range of post-16 courses that each provides.
31. The college has recognised in its self-assessment report that there are insufficient work-based learning opportunities. The apprenticeship programme and the national employer training pilots have low numbers. Numbers on the Entry into Employment programme, partly delivered by the Prince's Trust, have declined from 115 in 2004/05 to 31 in the current year.
32. All learners receive good impartial advice, guidance, induction and personal support from their tutors. Particularly well resourced support and welfare centres help learners make informed choices about courses. Support for learners aged 14-16 is particularly good. Child care facilities are excellent. Very good specialist support is offered to learners with dyslexia, autism, physical mobility difficulties and sensory impairment. The arrangements for identifying the support needs of full-time learners are good but they are less effective for part-time learners.
33. Tutorials are highly valued by most learners. Tutors closely monitor full-time learners' progress and routinely challenge poor attendance and punctuality. Records of part-time learner progress are uneven in quality. Careers education, guidance and counselling services are effective. Insufficient management data are used by support and welfare services on issues such as learner attendance and course transfers to assess the effectiveness of the service. The college offers very good support to disaffected and disadvantaged young people and adults on the Prince's Trust programme.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: grade 1

16-19 learners:

Good: grade 2

34. Leadership and management are outstanding. Since the inspection in 2001, success rates have continued to improve significantly. At levels 1 and 2, the rates are in the top 10% of colleges nationally. The principal is supported ably by senior managers and governors and provides strong leadership to staff.

Clear strategic vision enables the college to make a very active contribution to the shaping of the local post-16 education agenda. Governance is outstanding. Governors rigorously monitor learner performance and promote a culture of continuous improvement. They monitor their own performance well and focus on the needs of the local community and employers. Links with partner schools and partnerships are particularly good. Financial management and control are good. With rising and some outstanding success rates, the college provides good value for money.

35. Robust curriculum management has contributed to the effective monitoring of learner performance trends. Provision for learners aged 14-16 is managed very well. There are good arrangements to ensure that the college responds to the 'every child matters' agenda. There are very good facilities to encourage learners to consider healthy options. Learners make good progress and are supported by good teaching. Staff are well qualified and benefit from extensive staff development opportunities.
36. Quality assurance arrangements are very good. Review and self-assessment processes are very effective. Underperformance is challenged by managers through monitoring of action plans. Challenging targets for improvement are set. The self-assessment report is accurate, analytical and supported by a good range of evidence. The observation of teaching and learning is thorough, although observation outcomes are not linked sufficiently to staff appraisal. Insufficient use is made of data to evaluate the effectiveness of learner support and welfare services. Systems for the tracking of key skills provision are weak.
37. Accommodation and resources on the main site are outstanding. The pioneering design makes very effective use of space to create an inclusive learning environment. The college is a safe environment for learners and staff. Resources and technical support are excellent and the investment in ILT has improved the quality of teaching and learning. Resources in outreach centres are good.
38. The monitoring of equality and diversity is very good. The college's response to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 is very good. Curriculum resources are kept under review and equality and diversity targets inform the course review process. Child protection policies and those for vulnerable adults are well documented although not all staff have received sufficient training. There are effective policies on bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2002/03 to 2004/05, 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	343	60	56	4	1011	63	55	8
	03/04	558	65	60	5	1051	78	59	19
	04/05	426	74	-	-	702	82	-	-
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	38	50	60	-10	2	100	47	-
	03/04	58	72	65	7	2	100	52	-
	04/05	52	69	-	-	-	-	-	-
NVQs	02/03	43	67	56	11	14	57	57	0
	03/04	59	75	61	14	38	71	62	9
	04/05	57	72	-	-	32	84	-	-
Other	02/03	262	60	56	4	995	63	55	8
	03/04	441	63	60	3	1011	79	59	20
	04/05	317	75	-	-	670	82	-	-

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2002/03 to 2004/05, 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	479	52	52	0	1289	56	49	7
	03/04	532	60	56	4	1398	68	53	15
	04/05	515	69	-	-	1062	68	-	-
GCSEs	02/03	200	55	57	-2	194	58	55	3
	03/04	208	61	61	0	153	61	59	2
	04/05	77	68	-	-	87	60	-	-
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	83	53	59	-6	5	40	53	-
	03/04	79	67	63	4	5	40	57	-
	04/05	55	75	-	-	6	50	-	-
NVQs	02/03	90	48	42	6	429	49	49	0
	03/04	89	57	52	5	690	71	53	18
	04/05	125	62	-	-	543	69	-	-
Other	02/03	106	51	50	1	661	60	48	12
	03/04	156	56	54	2	550	66	52	14
	04/05	258	72	-	-	426	70	-	-

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2002/03 to 2004/05, 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	437	52	62	-10	1120	46	51	-5
	03/04	479	55	64	-9	928	52	53	-1
	04/05	441	66	-	-	833	54	-	-
A/A2 Levels	02/03	16	63	82	-19	17	65	63	2
	03/04	20	45	84	-39	3	33	66	-
	04/05	15	80	-	-	10	90	-	-
AS Levels	02/03	89	45	61	-16	81	32	48	-16
	03/04	81	53	63	-10	65	45	50	-5
	04/05	42	69	-	-	24	54	-	-
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	219	54	50	4	20	60	45	15
	03/04	235	60	52	8	50	48	43	5
	04/05	192	75	-	-	22	59	-	-
NVQs	02/03	7	87	51	36	58	36	45	-9
	03/04	29	52	54	-2	158	47	47	0
	04/05	43	56	-	-	237	36	-	-
Other	02/03	106	50	55	-5	944	47	54	-7
	03/04	114	46	56	-10	652	55	56	-1
	04/05	149	56	-	-	540	60	-	-