



Rotherham College of Arts and Technology



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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130527

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Rotherham College of Arts and Technology
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal and Chief Executive:	George Trow
Address of college:	Eastwood Lane Rotherham S65 1EG
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Chair of governors:	Joan Brier
Unique reference number:	130527
Name of lead inspector:	Fred Brown, ALI
Dates of inspection:	13-17 November 2006

Background of the organisation

1. Rotherham College of Arts and Technology is a general further education college in Rotherham. Its main centres are in the town centre and at Dinnington. The college also uses a number of community based learning centres. Rotherham College of Arts and Technology merged with Rother Valley College in August 2004 and took over the Rotherham Managing Agency work-based learning provision in March 2004. The college offers programmes in 14 of 15 subject sector areas and is the lead college for the South Yorkshire consortium for Train to Gain. The college employs some 600 staff.
2. The college offers courses from foundation to under-graduate degree level in most of its 14 subject sector areas. The total number of enrolments in the college in 2005/06 was 31,316. Of these, 81% were adults and 85% were part-time. Of the 2,042 full-time 16-18 learners, 18% are at level 1, 44% at level 2, and 38% at level 3. The highest numbers of enrolments are in health, care and public services, retail and commercial enterprise, arts, media and publishing and preparation for life and work. More than 76% of learners aged 16-18 are full-time. Just over 65% of learners are women. Around 7% are from minority ethnic groups. The college had 337 work-based learners in six areas of learning in 2005/06. The college has recognised status in four consortium centres of vocational excellence (CoVE) in construction; care as part of a consortium; hospitality and catering; and manufacturing as the lead provider.
3. Rotherham is a metropolitan borough of about 250,000 people with a diverse blend of cultures and communities. The local economy is improving but still depends strongly on manufacturing and other growing sectors such as construction and communications. Transport links are good. The black and minority ethnic population is 3.1%. There are about 1,000 refugees and 660 asylum seekers. Deprivation remains high but is reducing and unemployment has fallen below 4%. The number of pupils leaving school in 2006 with five GCSE grades A* - C is 51.5% against a national average of 59%. The number of adults with no qualifications is higher than the national average. Nearly one third of adults are without functional literacy and numeracy to level 2. The proportion of the working age population with national vocational qualifications (NVQ) at level 2 has increased but remains about 6% below the national average.
4. The college's mission is '*dedicated to your learning*. Together we value: the power of learning, the potential of learners, and the professionalism of staff. The college will demonstrate this by: being responsive to the skill needs of employers and individuals, delivering high quality teaching, learning and support services, and expecting the highest aspiration and achievement from learners and 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 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, public services and care; construction; engineering and manufacturing technologies; information and communication technology; arts, media and publishing; and preparation for life and work.

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, public services and care	Satisfactory: grade 3
Construction	Inadequate: grade 4
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Satisfactory: grade 3
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: grade 3
Arts, media and publishing	Good: grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

6. This is a satisfactory college with some good features. College data for 2006 confirms that learners' achievements are satisfactory overall. Retention rates improved significantly in 2005/06 and are now satisfactory in many categories. Success rates for 16-18 year olds on long level 1 courses and adults on level 3 courses are good. Success rates on long level 2 and 3 courses for 16-18 year olds remain low. Success rates for learners aged 14-16 are good. For apprentices and in key skills they are low but improving. Learners' progression to higher level courses is good. Standards of work and the development of study skills are satisfactory.
7. Inspectors confirmed that the college's evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is thorough and robust although some lessons are overgraded. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there is too little outstanding teaching. Information technology (IT) and specialist learning resources are good. The assessment of work is satisfactory. There is some uneven practice in monitoring learners' progress.
8. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. Effective strategies recruit a high proportion of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and asylum seekers. Access for learners with mobility difficulties is good. The wide range of provision offers very good progression opportunities. The college has effective collaborative links with schools and partners. Through the CoVEs and work-based learning, employer engagement is improving. Most full-time learners participate in enrichment activities but some have insufficient opportunities for work experience. The college's approach to safeguarding learners is satisfactory.
9. Learners benefit from satisfactory guidance, welfare and personal and academic support. Learners receiving additional learning support achieve their main learning goals well. Tutorial arrangements are satisfactory.
10. Leadership and management are satisfactory and some aspects are good. There is strong strategic leadership and a successful merger has been well managed. Measures to improve retention are working well. Governors monitor college performance effectively. Most curriculum management is satisfactory. Financial management is excellent and the college provides satisfactory value for money. Self-assessment and quality assurance are effectively used to plan for further improvement.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

11. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that the college's capacity to improve is good. Quality assurance arrangements have been particularly effective in improving success and retention rates and securing improvements.

Arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are very thorough. The college has successfully recovered from a serious financial deficit. Management data is accurate and readily available to support the stringent monitoring of learner performance.

12. The self-assessment report accurately assesses the quality of provision in nearly all areas. Curriculum audits are successfully used to support improvements. The report is evaluative and the process is rigorous. In a few places it is too descriptive. The college is aware that it over-graded the quality of teaching and learning. The self-assessment report has successfully engaged all staff in supporting improvements in retention and success rates. It does not fully recognise weaknesses in construction.

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 areas for improvement in the last inspection. There are significant improvements in the monitoring of performance by governors, in financial management, the quality of accommodation and learning resources and retention rates. There remain some low success rates for 16-18 year olds at levels 2 and 3 and the quality of teaching has not improved sufficiently.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- very good learner progression to higher levels
- the significant improvement in retention rates in 2005/06
- good and extensive 14-16 provision
- good additional learning support leading to better success
- well used and accessible curriculum learning centres
- wide range of responsive and collaborative provision
- effective strategies to remove barriers to learning and to improve retention
- successful management of the merger and investment in high staff morale
- strong strategic leadership
- excellent financial management and recovery.

Areas for improvement

The college should address

- the low success rates at levels 2 and 3 for 16-18 year olds on long courses
- low retention rates
- low key skills success rates
- the quality of provision in construction
- the management arrangements and success rates for work-based learning
- the limited amount of outstanding teaching

- the extent of the enrichment and work experience programmes
- the insufficiently thorough analysis of data in the self-assessment report
- the need for better sharing of good practice.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grades:

*Learners aged 14-16
Work-based learning*

*Good: Grade 2
Inadequate: Grade 4*

14. Achievements and standards are satisfactory overall. Success rates are good and improving for 16-18 year olds on long level 1 and for adults on long level 3 courses. Success rates are good for adult learners on short course franchised provision on employer training pilots and for those studying through distance learning. Success rates on long level 2 and 3 courses for 16-18 year olds remain low. Retention rates were low in many areas in 2004/05 following the merger but improved considerably in 2005/06. In 2005/06, retention rates improved on long courses at all levels by between 2% and 7%. Success rates for learners aged 16-18 at all levels and for adults at levels 1 and 2 also improved during this period. Success rates for 14-16 year olds are good. Success rates for learners with a learning difficulty or disability are satisfactory. Success rates for minority ethnic learners are improving but still below the college target. Success rates are low but improving in key skills and for apprentices. Learners and apprentices enjoy their courses and the opportunity to develop their skills in practical settings. Many learners make a positive contribution through their voluntary work in the community and by participation in college voice and influence groups.
15. There is very good progression to higher levels including to college courses by 14-16 year old school-based learners. Many learners have progressed from level 1 to higher education in the college. Many learners with low levels of prior attainment achieve at a higher level than predicted. Attendance rates were satisfactory in 2005/06.
16. Most learners make satisfactory progress in developing their vocational skills. Health learners are able to assess the quality of group work in teams. Some construction learners acquire a good understanding of theory and produce well designed portfolios; others make slow progress and have poor practical skills. Learners on information and communication technology (ICT) courses gain good knowledge of IT applications. Arts learners produce work of a high standard, some of which has won external competitions. Literacy learners confidently find their way around a dictionary and numeracy learners become proficient at calculating volume and ratio. The self-assessment accurately assesses learners' skills development.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

17. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there is too little outstanding teaching. Teaching is good in the arts and engineering. Many arts

learners, stimulated by challenging assignments, produce imaginative work during lessons. The better teachers set clearly defined tasks and learners make good progress in completing them. Less successful lessons fail to challenge learners, are poorly structured and rely on a narrow range of teaching methods. Some teachers fail to give learners opportunities to discuss their own ideas. Learners have good access to well used curriculum learning centres. The college offers training and personal laptops to encourage greater staff use of information and learning technology (ILT). Teachers use ILT skilfully in engineering and art and design lessons. Newly developed learning resources are placed on the college intranet.

18. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that arrangements to monitor the quality of lessons are rigorous and the process is thorough. Detailed feedback is given to teachers and additional training needs are clearly identified. Inspectors' judgements matched closely those of observers in lessons sampled during inspection. The college has not analysed sufficiently the distinctive features of good practice in teaching or summarised sufficiently where improvements are needed; for example, in the teaching of 16-18 year olds.
19. Arrangements for the assessment of work are satisfactory, although there are not enough assessors in work-based learning. Most learners are made aware of how to improve their work, although some written feedback is too brief. There is uneven practice in target setting and monitoring learners' progress. In work-based learning, learner targets are not precise enough. Parents of younger learners are kept well informed of their progress. Learners make better progress now that key skills are integrated into vocational courses.
20. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. Effective strategies are used to recruit a high proportion of hard to reach learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and asylum seekers. Access for learners with mobility difficulties is good. Additional learning support is good and contributes effectively to the success of learners receiving it.
21. A diverse range of courses in the community meets the needs of part-time learners. The progress and achievements of these learners is not monitored sufficiently. The wide range of responsive provision, including franchised and distance learning, effectively meets the needs of the local area and supports the vocational mission of the college. Learners benefit from very good progression opportunities and there are a growing number of foundation degrees.
22. The college has good collaborative links with most secondary and special schools. The numbers of students aged 14-16 on college courses is extensive and growing and their pass rates are good. The college delivers some young apprenticeships. There are few collaborative links post-16.

23. The college works effectively with a wide range of partners. It makes a very effective contribution to the 14-19 strategy. Employer engagement is improving; there are good links with public and private sector companies. The college successfully manages the employer training pilot programme. Numbers are growing and success rates are good.
24. Most full-time learners participate in curriculum based enrichment activities but few attend the college-wide sport and leisure activities. Some full-time learners have insufficient work experience opportunities. The college promotes a wide range of healthy living events on topics such as sexual health and staying safe.
25. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Initial guidance and induction programmes are satisfactory. Literacy, language, numeracy and learning support needs are effectively diagnosed. Take up is good but support is sometimes slow to commence. Learners receiving support achieve at a similar rate to all learners.
26. Learners receive appropriate pastoral, welfare, academic and childcare support. They benefit from a range of advice including financial management and counselling. Mentors support learners with their course work. Learners on low incomes receive good support.
27. Tutorial arrangements are satisfactory including for part-time learners. Attendance in about a quarter of tutorials is low. A significant minority of learners have not had group tutorials or subject reviews since the beginning of term. The use of short term targets is insufficiently developed.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

28. Leadership and management are satisfactory and some aspects are good. Strategic leadership by the principal, senior managers and the governors is strong and there is a sharp focus on improving the experience of learners. Since the last inspection, the college has successfully managed the merger with Rother Valley College and Rotherham Management Agency. All staff are committed to raising standards. Success rates are improving for 16-18 year olds on long level 1 courses and adults on level 3 long courses. Success rates on long level 2 and 3 courses for 16-18 year olds remain low. Retention rates are just below the national average but improved considerably in 2005/06. Governors understand well the strengths and weaknesses of the college. They set the strategic direction and monitor college performance effectively. Most curriculum management is satisfactory. In arts, media and publishing it is good. The provision in construction is inadequate. The college's franchised provision is well managed.
29. Quality assurance arrangements have been strengthened. There is a coherent cycle of review and action planning and senior managers monitor outcomes closely. Anomalies in the college data, following the merger, have been

resolved. Current college data is accurate and used routinely to monitor college performance particularly for retention and attendance. The analysis of data is insufficiently rigorous in the self-assessment report. A few judgements in the self-assessment are not sufficiently self-critical. Development plans prioritise college targets and are monitored regularly. Some action points are too general to enable accurate measurement of progress.

30. The college gives priority to improving the quality of teaching and learning. It recognises that it over-graded lessons in 2005/06 and arrangements for monitoring their quality are now more robust and thorough. Lesson observation outcomes are linked to individual performance reviews and used to inform training programmes. There is insufficient summary analysis of the quality of teaching and learning to identify actions needed to address weaknesses in areas such as the retention of 16-18 year olds and the quality of key skills. Opportunities for staff development are comprehensive. The college makes good provision for unqualified staff to gain teaching qualifications. Many staff benefit from the support of the learning champions.
31. The college is socially and educationally inclusive and provides a wide range of learning opportunities for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. The statutory requirements of the amended Race Relations Act and the Disability Discrimination Act are met. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the achievement of minority ethnic groups. Access for those with restricted mobility is good, particularly at the Rother Valley Campus. The college site is a safe environment for learners and staff. There are secure arrangements for child protection. Staff and governors have undergone child protection training.
32. Teachers are suitably qualified. Resources for learning are good. The curriculum learning centres (CLCs) are well used by learners. Access to computers is generally good. There is a good range of specialist equipment in engineering, the arts and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college makes effective use of its accommodation despite the limitations of the town centre campus. Accommodation at the Rother Valley campus is good.
33. The college has made an excellent recovery from serious financial problems and is now in a very strong financial position. Resources are used effectively. Retention rates are below average but improving. Attendance is now monitored closely. The college offers satisfactory value for money.

Curriculum area inspections

Health, public services and care

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

34. There are 314 learners on full-time courses in health and childcare at foundation level to level 3. There are 2,153 learners enrolled on part-time courses including 222 on NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in care and early years. Fifty six learners attend counselling courses. A range of short courses and distance learning provision is offered to employers and the wider community. In work-based learning, there are 21 apprentices and eight advanced apprentices.

Strengths

- high success rates on full-time level 3 programmes and NVQ level 2 in care in 2005/06
- good learner progression to higher levels
- good partnership working to enhance the learner experience.

Areas for improvement

- poor success rates on level 2 full-time programmes in early years and NVQ level 3 in care
- insufficiently varied assessment methods in the workplace for apprentices.

Achievements and standards

35. Learners' achievements are satisfactory. Success rates are consistently high on the full-time level 3 national diploma in health studies and NVQ level 2 in care courses have been consistently high. Success rates on full-time level 2 programmes in early years and NVQ level 3 in care are low. Framework apprenticeship success rates are satisfactory and improving.
36. Standards of written work and contributions by learners in class are satisfactory. Apprentices acquire a good knowledge of safe working practice which they apply in their work place. Learners develop skills that enhance their employment prospects. Learners acquire satisfactory key skills. Progression is good on all courses with 80% of level 3 full-time learners gaining employment or places in higher education. Thirty eight per cent of current apprentices are employed prior to the end of their training.

Quality of provision

37. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The majority of lessons are well planned to meet individual learning needs with a good range of differentiated learning materials. Teachers and support workers collaborate effectively to

provide individual support. More able learners who finish their tasks are given additional assessed activities. Some teaching methods are insufficiently varied and fail to inspire learners to develop new skills.

38. Assessment of NVO portfolios relies too heavily on written work and there is not enough direct observation in the workplace. Generally, clear guidance is given to learners on how to improve their work. Through good feedback, learners on work placement are encouraged to develop their workplace and communication skills. Arrangements for guidance, learner support and tutorials are satisfactory.
39. Good partnership working with local health and early years organisations enhance the learner experience and help meet employer needs. They provide good opportunities for learners to participate in additional enrichment activities such as a programme to raise the awareness of primary school children of further education. Partners and employers influence the purchase of scientific equipment to ensure it meets current National Health Service requirements. They help ensure that teachers remain up-to-date in their knowledge of the industry.

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good collaborative working between the separate curriculum areas that manage the curriculum. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. The arrangements to measure the quality of teaching and learning are insufficiently robust. Managers use success data appropriately and are taking steps to improve work-based learning, and to increase representation of men in childcare. Equality and diversity issues are appropriately addressed.

Construction

Inadequate: grade 4

Context

41. Construction courses run in: electrical installation; plumbing; painting and decorating; trowel trades; plastering; wood occupations and diploma technical courses. Crafts programmes include work-based learners and provision for around 100, 14-16 year old school students. About a third of the 1,130 learners, mostly on levels 2 and 3 programmes, are work-based. Training is subcontracted to the college by the Construction Industry Training Board and Joint Training Limited. There is a CoVE partnership with two other colleges.

Strengths

- good learner progression
- wide range of provision
- effective additional learning support
- effective measures to improve retention.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates
- low apprenticeship success rates
- no work experience for full-time learners
- no employability training for full-time vocational learners
- unsatisfactory work-based learning provision.

Achievements and standards

42. Learner success rates are poor and particularly poor on level 2 and 3 long courses. In spite of improvements in 2005/06, the success rates remain more than 10% below national rates. Apprenticeship success rates are poor but improving.
43. The progression of learners to higher levels is good. Most 14-16 year olds, level 1 and level 2 learners progress to the next level. Approximately 80% of the HNC building studies learners have progressed from craft programmes.
44. The standard of learners' written and practical work is satisfactory. The best learners acquire highly developed practical skills and a good understanding of theory. Less successful learners make slow progress and have poorly developed practical skills.

Quality of provision

45. Teaching and learning in practical and theory lessons are satisfactory. The better learning sessions benefit from well organised teachers who give clear instructions and guidance. Teaching is unsuccessful where learning sessions

suffer from poor resources, confusing tutor instructions and insufficient written feedback to learners about their progress.

46. Resources are satisfactory. CoVE funding has enabled the area to improve resources for learning and teaching in classrooms and in the new curriculum learning centre.
47. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses at all levels from pre-apprenticeship and the pilot specialist diploma to HNC.
48. Learners who need help with literacy, numeracy or dyslexia benefit from effective additional learning support. Specialist staff work closely with tutors on methods of helping learners progress and achieve.
49. Full-time group tutorial sessions are satisfactory but tutorials for part-time learners are infrequent. Learners benefit from informative visits to trade shows and competitions.
50. Assessment and the monitoring of learner progress are mostly satisfactory. There is not enough work-based assessment for apprentices and learners are delayed in gaining their framework. Full-time learners have no work experience. There are no arrangements to provide employability training for full-time learners on vocational programmes.

Leadership and management

51. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A range of measures have improved retention rates on many programmes by 20% between 2004/05 and 2005/06. Level 2 retention rates were low at the last inspection and have improved but are still significantly below national rates. Attendance and learners' progress are monitored scrupulously.
52. The college has introduced measures to improve the management of work-based learning and to address the history of poor success rates. There are recent improvements to the teaching of key skills and the resources for on-site assessment.
53. Self-assessment is satisfactory.
54. Arrangements for the promotion and development of learners' understanding of equality of opportunity are satisfactory.

Engineering and manufacturing

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

55. The provision covers full-time, part-time and short courses in: mechanical and electrical engineering; welding and fabrication; and craft and technician automotive studies from level 1 to level 3. Of the 637 learners in 2006/07, 268 are aged 16-18, and 369 are adult learners. Of these, 135 are full-time learners and 502 are part-time and evening only learners. There are 70 work-based learners in mechanical, electrical and automotive engineering. Links with local schools help promote engineering to 14-16 year old pupils.

Strengths

- high success rates on most programmes in 2005/06
- good teaching and learning
- good resources.

Areas for improvement

- low retention rates on level 2 performing engineering operation courses
- low but improving key skills success rates
- low success rates in work-based learning.

Achievements and standards

56. Success rates in 2005/06 for most engineering programmes are considerably higher than the national average. Success rates in 2004/05 were low on many programmes. There are still some low success rates on level 3 programmes for 16-18 year old learners. Success rates for apprenticeships are poor. There are poor but improving key skills success rates.
57. There are low retention rates on level 2 programmes in performing engineering operations (PEO) for the past three years. Many of these learners leave when they gain employment and return later on day release programmes.
58. The standard of learners' work in practical and theory lessons is good. Learners make good progress towards their qualification aim.

Quality of provision

59. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers make good links between theory and practical and industrial applications and this sustains learners' interest. Theory lessons develop learners' knowledge well. Lessons are well planned and managed. There is some good use of ICT to enliven learning. Particularly good use is made of additional software to calculate tables and graphs.

Lesson notes are copied to the college intranet for learners to use at home. In some lessons, there is insufficient recording of individual learning.

60. Resources and accommodation are good. Many classrooms are well equipped with ICT projection and smart boards. Workshops and specialist laboratories are well equipped and there is a well used engineering learning resource centre. Resources in motor vehicle are satisfactory, although there are no modern vehicles for learners to practise their skills.
61. Staff shortages have delayed the start of work-based learning programmes. There is inadequate monitoring of work-based learners' progress.
62. Assessment practice is satisfactory. A wide range of programmes attract learners from a wide area. Programmes adequately meet the needs of employers, learners and the wider community.
63. Support for learners is satisfactory. There is improved tutorial support for full-time learners and for some part-time learners. Enrichment activities have recently been introduced for full-time learners.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers use data well to monitor learner progress and success and to plan improvements. Key skills are now taught at the start of programmes by a specialist tutor. Arrangements to manage work-based learning between faculties are insufficiently clear. All staff are involved in self-assessment. Initiatives to promote more equal participation by women in engineering have met with some success.

Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

65. The information and communication technology (ICT) provision is managed by two curriculum areas. In November 2006, there were 272 part-time learners on information technology (IT) applications courses and 173 full-time learners on computing courses. The IT applications curriculum area offers word processing, CLAIT and CLAIT Plus courses. Eighty five per cent of these learners are female and 92% are over 19. The computing curriculum area offers full-time courses from level 1 to level 3. Over 80% of these learners are male and 85% are aged between 16 and 18.

Strengths

- high success rates on level 3 courses
- good progression.

Areas for improvement

- very low retention rates on part-time programmes
- narrow range of teaching methods.

Achievements and standards

66. Success rates on full-time level 3 computing courses are good. The success rates on BTEC National and access to higher education (HE) courses have been well above national averages for the last three years. Retention rates on part-time courses are very low. In 2005/6, the retention rate on OCR CLAIT courses was more than 15% below the national average.
67. Progression to higher levels is good. In 2006, 88% of the Higher National Diploma (HND) learners have progressed from level 3 courses. Some learners on HE programmes started at level 1 in the college. Some part-time learners have progressed to the full-time mature Access course.
68. Learner attainment is satisfactory. Level 3 learners are able to confidently write a short routine in a programming language. Learners on all courses enjoy their courses, acquire basic computing skills and have made progress since the start of their course.

Quality of provision

69. Teaching is satisfactory. Successful teachers plan well and clearly identify learning aims and the resources needed to support successful learning. In many lessons, teachers do not sufficiently allow learners to find their own solutions or answer questions in depth. In part-time classes there are

insufficiently varied methods and many learners are left to work through course materials on their own.

70. The monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. The feedback given to learners varies in quality. Full-time learners benefit from a termly progress review and regular progress checks.
71. There is insufficient use of e-learning. Use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to support learning is developing and course materials are easily accessible to learners in the college and from home.
72. There is a wide range of courses including "vendor qualifications" for full-time learners and local employers. There is a Microsoft Academy at the Rother Valley campus.
73. Learners develop their employability skills by working with local employers through the Rotherham Vision project. There are insufficient opportunities for work experience.
74. Initial advice, guidance, induction and tutorial programmes are satisfactory. The parents of younger learners receive copies of progress reviews on full-time courses.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers are asked to contribute to self-assessment and planning improvements. Arrangements to assure the quality of teaching and learning are sound, although some lessons are over-graded. Learners with disabilities have access to a good range of adaptive technology.
76. Teachers are suitably qualified and many have improved their vocational skills by taking "vendor qualifications". Many are supported to complete post-graduate qualifications. Resources in the ICT suites are good. The good working environment includes a purpose built network laboratory and the opportunity to use control technology. Library resources are good.

Arts, media and publishing

Good: grade 2

Context

77. In performing arts, there are 141 full-time learners aged 16-18 and 47 adult learners. In art and design, 31 of the 162 full-time learners are over 19. There are many full-time and part-time courses from levels 1 to 3 in a wide variety of arts and craft subjects. The majority of courses take place at the town centre campus.

Strengths

- good progression
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of courses
- good external partnerships that enhance learning
- effective curriculum management.

Areas for improvement

- low retention rates on some art, design and media courses
- low key skills success rates
- insufficient numbers in some groups for effective learning.

Achievements and standards

78. Success rates are satisfactory overall, for full-time programmes. Pass rates are good on GCSE, BTEC First and National Diploma courses. There are low retention rates on some art and design and media courses. Key skills achievements are poor. There is very good progression by individual learners between levels and to higher education. Some former learners are now staff members. Attendance rates are satisfactory. Learners produce work of a high standard and many have successfully won external competitions.

Quality of provision

79. Teaching and learning are good. Learners are expected to be actively involved in all classes. Learners new to the college manage their own learning well and are able to work effectively without supervision. Most learners acquire good skills and are able to demonstrate a good understanding of techniques and subject matter. They apply confidently good performance techniques to enhance their public performances. Teachers are assiduous in checking on learning and understanding. Assignments are interesting and demanding. Learners respect and respond to the demands from teachers for high standards. The use of ILT is particularly good in art and design. Assessment is satisfactory. In some classes, group sizes are too small and this limits the opportunities for collaborative learning and sufficiently varied learning styles.

80. The range of provision is good. Most courses are offered full-time or part-time to suit the needs of learners. Full-time learners take additional subjects that help prepare them for advanced study and employment. Productive partnerships with local employers provide opportunities for learners to enhance their vocational knowledge. Some media learners work with professional performers to make promotional videos. Graphics learners won a contract to supply commercial stationery for a local solicitor. Learners contribute positively by performing and exhibiting their work in local schools, hospitals and hospices.
81. Support for learners is satisfactory. Level 1 learners receive literacy and numeracy support and all learners aim to achieve level 2 English qualifications by the time they leave. Learners are well supported through tutorials.

Leadership and management

82. Leadership and management are good. Performing arts managers promote a strong sense of corporate identity and all learners wear distinctive clothing. The arts provision has a high profile in the college and local community. Art and design managers promote learners' work through stimulating displays. Resources and accommodation are good. Equality matters are integrated into teaching materials. Staff feel valued and supported. Course teams are given responsibility for addressing concerns raised by learners. The self-assessment report recognises the need to improve success rates. It is mostly accurate, although some areas for improvement were not identified and some strengths are standard practice.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

83. The inspection included: literacy; numeracy; English for speakers of other languages (ESOL); courses for learners with learning difficulties and support for literacy; and language and numeracy. Full-time and part-time courses are offered on college sites and in the community. Twenty eight of the 122 learners on discrete courses are part-time. There are 225 learners in literacy and numeracy and 273 taking ESOL courses. The college offers accessible courses to adult learners in the community through franchise partnerships. Learners are able to take nationally recognised qualifications.

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills
- very high success rates on Edexcel skills for working life qualifications
- successful measures to remove barriers to learning.

Areas for improvement

- poor retention on many literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses
- insufficiently thorough evaluation of learners' progress
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Achievements and standards

84. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Learners acquire good skills in most lessons. Literacy learners acquire good dictionary and scanning skills. Numeracy learners show good skills in calculating volume and ratio. ESOL learners develop good knowledge of IT applications. Many learners with learning difficulties take responsibility for their own learning and are able to record when they complete tasks. They make successful independent visits to the college curriculum learning centres.

85. Success rates on Edexcel skills for working life qualifications are consistently high. Retention rates on many literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses are low but improved in 2005/06. Many learners on full-time discrete courses progress to higher levels or to mainstream courses. Attendance rates are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

86. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Successful teachers plan varied activities to motivate learners and help them achieve. Group discussions are well managed. Learners know what they need to do to meet their targets, although some targets are not sufficiently individual. Not all teachers take sufficient account of the full range of learners' individual needs.

87. There is insufficient thorough evaluation of learners' progress. Some individual targets are not sufficiently precise for learner progress to be monitored effectively. There is unsatisfactory progress monitoring in literacy, numeracy, ESOL and a small number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) lessons. Some learners struggle with tasks because they have not understood sufficiently the content of the previous lesson. Assessment practice is satisfactory.
88. The wide range of courses meets satisfactorily the needs of learners. An ESOL citizenship course helps migrant workers and asylum seekers settle into the community. Provision is accessible locally through a wide range of community venues. Partnerships help extend the limited range of work experience opportunities.
89. Initial advice, guidance, induction and support are satisfactory. Good levels of personal support in lessons contribute to good learner behaviour. Learners appreciate the help they receive from mentors and volunteers. Learners have regular individual progress reviews but their quality is uneven.

Leadership and management

90. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has successful measures to remove barriers to learning. Very good links with parents, carers and other agencies help remove barriers to learning for those with learning difficulties. There is some improvement in success rates although on several courses they are still low. Satisfactory progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses of the last inspection. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, although some weaknesses are not identified. The promotion of equality and diversity are satisfactory. Staff, specialist resources and accommodation are satisfactory. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between specialist teams.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	03/04	992	68	59	+9	3358	57	59	-2
	04/05	898	65	62	+3	3242	55	61	-6
	05/06	816	68	-	-	2245	63	-	-
NVQs and precursors	03/04	26	73	63	+10	3	67	53	+14
	04/05	27	63	64	-1	4	50	54	-4
	05/06	56	66	-	-	1	0	-	-
NVQs	03/04	132	62	61	+1	92	76	66	+10
	04/05	133	71	65	+6	50	72	71	+1
	05/06	157	68	-	-	44	77	-	-
Other	03/04	834	68	59	+9	3263	57	58	-1
	04/05	738	64	61	+3	3188	55	61	-6
	05/06	603	68	-	-	2200	63	-	-

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	03/04	1203	51	56	-5	2338	51	54	-3
	04/05	1262	50	60	-10	2741	57	59	-2
	05/06	1083	52	-	-	2753	64	-	-
GCSEs	03/04	243	57	64	-7	271	49	57	-8
	04/05	313	50	65	-15	185	58	63	-5
	05/06	263	55	-	-	208	69	-	-
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	96	61	60	+1	21	48	56	-8
	04/05	71	55	66	-11	33	64	62	+2
	05/06	30	80	-	-	32	72	-	-
NVQs	03/04	312	48	50	-2	517	53	54	-1
	04/05	352	43	56	-13	715	60	62	-2
	05/06	301	49	-	-	778	60	-	-
Other	03/04	552	47	53	-6	1529	51	53	-2
	04/05	526	54	58	-4	1808	56	57	-1
	05/06	489	51	-	-	1735	65	-	-

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	03/04	734	51	61	-10	1408	59	53	+6
	04/05	696	55	65	-10	1361	59	56	+3
	05/06	675	58	-	-	1156	57	-	-
A/A2 Levels	03/04	5	80	84	-4	22	59	69	-10
	04/05	2	0	85	-85	27	78	73	+5
	05/06	6	50	-	-	16	81	-	-
AS Levels	03/04	170	39	60	-21	124	53	50	+3
	04/05	138	54	64	-10	90	50	53	-3
	05/06	103	50	-	-	69	52	-	-
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	60	40	50	-10	48	52	43	+9
	04/05	43	33	59	-26	22	36	51	-15
	05/06	54	59	-	-	25	52	-	-
NVQs	03/04	57	63	50	+13	389	56	48	+8
	04/05	62	56	53	+3	415	58	54	+4
	05/06	52	63	-	-	387	57	-	-
Other	03/04	442	55	51	+4	825	62	54	+8
	04/05	451	58	56	+2	807	61	56	+5
	05/06	460	60	-	-	659	58	-	-

Table 4

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	43	21	32	56	47
	Advanced	6	50	31	83	48
2004/05	Apprenticeship	126	26	38	42	50
	Advanced	30	40	34	70	48

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

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

b) Timely success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	65	14	16	37	24
	Advanced	21	10	19	24	30
2004/05	Apprenticeship	127	6	21	6	29
	Advanced	30	20	21	23	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'

Table 5

Outcomes for Employer Training Pilots and National Employer Training Programmes managed by the college for 2004/05.

Year	Number of starts in year	Planned learning completed *	Still in learning
2002/03	-	-	-
2003/04	-	-	-
2004/05	218	175	23

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