



# Lakes College



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

Better  
education  
and care

## Inspection report

Audience  
Post-sixteen

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130632

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## Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Lakes College
Type of college:	General Further Education College/Tertiary
Principal:	Pat Glenday
Address of college:	Lillyhall Business Park Hallwood Road Workington Cumbria CA14 4JN
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Chair of governors:	Dr Neil Smart
Unique reference number:	130632
Name of lead inspector:	Deborah Vaughan-Jenkins, HMI
Dates of inspection:	4 – 8 December 2006

## Background of the organisation

1. Lakes College is a medium-sized general further education college located on the west coast of Cumbria between Workington and Whitehaven. The college draws its students from a wide geographical area. It operates predominantly from a modern purpose-built site with additional buildings for construction just under half a mile away. The main catchment area falls within the district of Cumbria and includes the boroughs of Copeland and Allerdale, with a population of around 170,000. Much of the area is sparsely populated and has pockets of socio-economic deprivation. Unemployment rates are lower than the national average. A small range of franchised and adult community provision is offered within the Cumbria area. The college also runs a small number of higher education courses, including four foundation degrees.
2. The college offers programmes in 14 out of the 15 sector subject areas. In 2005/06, the total number of learners was 5,640 with the majority of enrolments on level 1 and level 2 courses. In 2005/06, there were 1,016 learners enrolled on full-time courses, most of whom were aged 16-18. Of the 4,337 enrolled on part-time courses, most were aged 19 or over. The college offers work-based learning programmes in health, public services and care, engineering, construction, retail and commercial enterprise, catering and business administration. Work-based learner numbers increased in 2005/06 to 193. Just over 2% of the student population are from minority ethnic groups; double that of the local community. In 2005, 57.1% of pupils in Cumbria achieved 5 or more GCSEs grades A\*-C, slightly higher than the national average for England.
3. The college is a part of the Cumbria Colleges Collaboration initiated in 2002, which includes all four of the regional general further education colleges. The mission of the College is 'to provide excellent education and training, and play a leading role in the economic and community development of West Cumbria'.

## Scope of the inspection

4. 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 visit 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; engineering; hairdressing and beauty therapy; hospitality, leisure and travel; and literacy and numeracy.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
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	Good: grade 2
Engineering	Good: grade 2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good: grade 2
Hospitality, leisure and travel	Satisfactory: grade 3
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory: grade 3

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

5. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for learners aged 16-18 have fluctuated over time and although they are now broadly in line with the most recent national averages, improvements have yet to be sustained. Success rates for adult learners are consistently high. Work-based learning provision is good. Learners' vocational and personal skills are developed very effectively. Most learners make the progress expected of them.
6. Teaching and learning are good in most curriculum areas. Many teachers provide interesting and challenging activities that effectively engage learners and encourage them to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. In a minority of lessons, not all learners are given work that is sufficiently challenging. The use of individual target setting is too variable and is not always used meaningfully to extend and motivate learners.
7. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. Its approach to meeting the needs and interests of learners is also good. The range of provision is responsive to local needs. Productive partnerships exist with local schools, employers and other providers. The college supports learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well and they make good progress.
8. Guidance and support are good. The tutorial system is well structured and managed and includes good promotion of learners' health and wellbeing. Very good opportunities exist for learners to make a positive contribution to the college and their community.
9. Leadership and management are good. The principal provides effective leadership and clear direction. A wide range of quality assurance procedures is in place and is beginning to impact. Aspects of quality assurance, however, are not consistently rigorous. Collaborative arrangements with the other three Cumbrian further education (FE) colleges are outstanding. Accommodation is maintained to a high quality and the environment it creates is greatly valued by learners. The college provides good value for money.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

10. The college shows good capacity for further improvement. The self-assessment report is accurate. Development and improvement planning provides an effective framework, strongly supported by staff, governors and stakeholders, to respond imaginatively to changing local needs and national initiatives. Recent changes to college management structures are already demonstrating improvements, particularly in key skills, curriculum and course

management and work-based learning. Aspects of quality improvement systems are not applied evenly. The collaborative arrangements with the other three Cumbrian FE colleges bring about significant benefits in quality improvement, sustainable operation and countywide responsiveness.

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

11. The effectiveness of steps taken to improve since the last inspection are good. The quality of teaching and learning has significantly improved. Adult pass rates are consistently very high in most areas but pass rates for learners aged 16-18, although improved, require sustained improvement. Quality assurance processes are more structured and effective and are bringing positive gains for learners. A high level of accountability exists throughout the college. Course and curriculum management have significantly improved with increased accountability for staff at all levels. Support for literacy and numeracy has improved with an increased focus on integrated support.

Key strengths of the college

#### *Strengths*

- high success rates for adult learners
- good development of learners' personal and work-related skills
- good work-based learning provision
- productive partnerships with local schools, other providers and employers
- good support for learners
- outstanding collaborative arrangements with the Cumbrian colleges
- highly effective leadership
- excellent accommodation which learners value and respect.

Areas for improvement

#### *The college should address*

- sustained improvements in success rates for learners aged 16-18
- individual target setting for all learners
- consistency in the rigour of quality assurance.



## Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

*Contributory grades:*

*Work-based learning*

*Good: grade 2*

*Learners aged 19 or over*

*Good: grade 2*

12. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. In its self-assessment report, the college correctly recognises the strengths and areas for improvement in achievements and standards, although it does not give sufficient weighting to its provision for learners aged 16-18 in its grading. Success rates on long courses for those aged 16-18 have fluctuated over time but are satisfactory. Up until 2005/06, success rates at level 2 were rising more slowly than the national rate and at level 3 were declining. However, in 2005/06, success rates on all long courses improved and were broadly in line with the most recent national averages. From 2006, the college has withdrawn or replaced its consistently underperforming provision and the in-year retention rate for learners aged 16-18 has improved. The college's value added system indicates that most learners make the progress expected of them.
13. Retention rates at levels 1 and 2 for those aged 16-18 are broadly in line with the national average. Retention at level 3, which was declining over recent years, improved in 2006 to be satisfactory. In the same year, pass rates for those aged 16-18 improved considerably. Success rates on short courses of 5-24 weeks duration are unsatisfactory.
14. Achievements and standards for learners aged 19 and over are good. Adult learners' achievements are consistently high and the overall success rate is in the top 10% of similar colleges. Retention rates have continued to improve and remain high. Pass rates, particularly at levels 2 and 3, are outstanding.
15. The provision for work-based learning (WBL) is good. Overall, framework success rates for apprentices are good. Timely success rates for both apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are satisfactory and improving. The number of learners successfully completing their key skills portfolios has also increased considerably since 2003. Overall, key skills success rates have improved and compare favourably with the low national average, although this is still an area for improvement.
16. The college analyses and monitors effectively the performance of different groups of learners. The self-assessment report identifies accurately that there are no significant differences in learners' performance by ethnicity or gender. Learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally achieve well and make good progress.

17. Learners enjoy being at college and develop good levels of confidence, including those within WBL. Learners' vocational skills develop very well in all areas of learning and they are encouraged to work safely. Standards of learners' work, including written work, are at least satisfactory and are good in some areas. Around two thirds of learners progress into further education, higher education or employment. Learners' attendance and punctuality are good.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

18. The inspection of 2003 found much mundane and uninspiring teaching. Since then the college has made changes to its management structure that have been particularly effective in supporting the improvements required.
19. Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that teaching and learning are now good in most curriculum areas. Inspectors observed some good partnership teaching where subject teachers and support specialists work well together in class to provide effective and sensitive additional support for learners. The college priority to improve the use of information learning technology (ILT) in lessons is beginning to take effect. In the best lessons teachers plan thoroughly and implement these plans well. Many teachers provide interesting and challenging activities that effectively engage learners and encourage them to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.
20. The college correctly identifies that, despite the improvements made since the last inspection, some of its teaching still fails to inspire learners and does not provide them with sufficient challenge. Inspectors agree with college observers that in the less effective lessons, the pace of learning is often too slow to engage the more able learners. Although lesson plans provide space for teachers to state how they will meet individual learning needs, comments made can often be superficial, repetitive and inhibit differentiation. Target setting for many learners is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not consistently set targets that motivate and challenge learners to do the best they can to develop their knowledge and skills.
21. Quality assurance has been effective in securing improvements in teaching and learning. Managers observe lessons well and the process helps teachers to improve. Learners' surveys show continuous improvement in their satisfaction with teaching, learning and assessment. Managers share good practice within and outside the college. Assessment is fair, accurate and reliable and feedback from most assessors helps learners to improve their performance.
22. The college's approach to meeting the needs and interests of learners is good. The range of courses from entry level to level 3 is wide in most curriculum areas. Close liaison with other colleges in the region ensures a balanced curriculum offer with good progression routes in most areas. Provision in work-based learning is expanding and enables learners and employers to

choose appropriate programmes and funding pathways. The college is responsive to the needs of employers. Managers analyse feedback from employers' questionnaires and meetings carefully and use the outcomes to improve provision. Good links exist with local schools and other providers to offer appropriate programmes for those aged 14-16. Progression for this group of learners into college and work related training is very good. Learners have access to, and enjoy, a broad enrichment programme.

23. Specialist staff effectively support the integration of key skills into vocational courses. After a rigorous two-week induction, which includes diagnostic testing, learners enter for key skills at a level appropriate to their ability and potential.
24. Advice, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good written information about their programme including progression routes. Full-time learners have a two-week induction and initial assessment before they enrol to help them select the most suitable programme and to identify any learning support needs. Support staff have a wide range of skills which they use effectively to provide for the academic, personal, medical and behavioural needs of learners. Learners receive support as soon as they begin their programmes.
25. The tutorial system is well structured and managed. Most learners are very positive about the support they receive from their tutors and about the content of the tutorial programme. This includes a good promotion of learners' health and well-being. There are excellent opportunities for learners to make a positive contribution to the college and their community and they are actively supported and encouraged to do so. The college seeks learners' views regularly and acts on them. Attendance monitoring is very good. Tutors closely monitor learners' attendance and maintain close contact with parents and employers. Training advisors support work-based learners well.
26. The student services centre is welcoming and offers a wide range of services including counselling and careers guidance, which learners use well.

#### Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

27. Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection, the performance of the college has improved considerably. Governors and the principal set a clear strategic direction. High expectations and well conceived plans have resulted in a self-reflective culture. Not all quality assurance is consistently robust and strategies to improve success rates for those aged 16-18 have yet to prove sustainable.
28. Teaching and learning have significantly improved since the last inspection. Adult success rates are consistently high in most areas. Although overall success rates for learners aged 16-18 rose to national averages in 2005/06, achievement trends in this area have been erratic. Retention and

achievement of learners aged 16-18 are satisfactory. The college is aware that the management of key skills, literacy and numeracy has been enhanced but it is too early to judge the impact of recent measures for improvement. A high level of accountability exists throughout the college; self-assessment processes are well established and mainly accurate.

29. Course and curriculum management are mainly good and contribute well to improving trends in learners' achievements. A wide range of quality assurance procedures is in place and the availability and use of management information has improved. The college has correctly identified that some areas require further action to ensure the consistent attainment of high standards. Clear and measurable targets are in place at most levels but the college acknowledges that targets set at individual course level require further development.
30. Communication throughout the college is good. Managers seek and act upon staff, learner and stakeholder views regularly. The management of work-based learning has improved and is now good.
31. Resources are good, accommodation is excellent and the college manages both well. The qualifications and experience of staff match well with the requirements of the programmes offered and the range of learners' needs and abilities. Well planned staff development opportunities are extensive and closely aligned to strategic and quality improvement plans. Effective performance management systems support improvement processes and facilitate the regular monitoring of the college's key performance indicators.
32. The college demonstrates a high commitment to the active promotion of equality of opportunity; the response to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002, and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 is good. Safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and recruitment and vetting procedures are compliant with recent guidance. Staff and governors have received appropriate training.
33. Links with partner schools and stakeholders are very strong and the college is highly regarded in the community. The collaborative arrangements with the other three Cumbrian FE colleges are outstanding and bring about significant benefits in quality improvement, sustainable operation and countywide responsiveness. Governors successfully use their wide range of expertise and maintain good oversight of the college. The college is in a healthy financial position and offers good value for money.

## Curriculum area inspections

Health and social care

Good: grade 2

### Context

34. Full-time courses in health and social care and childhood studies are available at entry level to level 3 and include vocational qualifications such as the CACHE diploma in childcare and education. Part-time courses range from levels 1-4 and include distance learning courses and a foundation degree. Of the 836 learners, 133 are aged 16-18 and 703 learners are studying on part-time courses.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high success rates on many courses
- good teaching and learning
- highly effective support for learners
- good curriculum management.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- ineffective use of individual learning plans and target setting.

### Achievements and standards

35. Achievements and standards are good. Overall success rates are high on many courses. Success rates on the GNVQ intermediate course in health and social care were below the national average in 2004/05 and 2005/06. The college recognised this as an issue and replaced the programme with an alternative qualification.
36. Learners produce work of a high standard. Learners' files are well organised and they develop good vocational skills. Many learners make good progress, particularly in childhood studies. Attendance and punctuality are good.

### Quality of provision

37. Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons well and make good links between theory and vocational practice. In the most successful lessons, a wide range of teaching and learning styles is used to engage and challenge learners effectively. Teachers use questioning techniques effectively to support and extend learning. Assessment practices are satisfactory, with timely feedback which provides learners with clear actions for improvement.

38. Individual learning plans are brief and do not take account of individual learning needs. They are not always followed through or signed by learners. Target setting for learners is unsatisfactory. Teachers set insufficiently demanding targets and do not review them frequently. When learners meet targets, teachers do not always set new ones in their place.
39. The range of provision is good with clearly structured progression routes. Learners are able to progress from entry level to the foundation degree in childhood studies and from entry level to level 3 in health and social care. The college meets employers' needs well through the wide range of distance learning and work-based learning programmes. Opportunities for enrichment are effective and include a residential outward-bound course. All learners from the childhood studies department attended this, and it encouraged them to generate much of the evidence needed for their key skills portfolios.
40. Support for all learners is good. Staff visit learners who are located in the workplace and provide individualised support. This support is flexible in order to meet learners' work patterns and employers' operational needs. The subject learning coach is particularly effective in providing academic support to both learners and staff.

#### Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are good. Curriculum management is good. Regular team meetings produce clear actions that inform the quality course review, the self-assessment process and curriculum development. Staff development opportunities include the subject learning coach programme and regular industrial updates. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Self-assessment is an inclusive process and involves all staff. The self-assessment report is accurate and the college has identified many of the strengths and areas for improvement.

## Engineering

Good: grade 2

### Context

42. The college offers courses from entry level to level 4 in motor vehicle and manufacturing engineering. Engineering courses account for around 30% of the full-time equivalent learners. There are 91 full-time learners, mostly aged 16-18, and 180 part-time learners on engineering programmes. About 60 learners are on work-based learning (WBL) programmes. In addition, practical training courses are provided for learners aged 14-16 on work-related motor vehicle programmes.

### *STRENGTHS*

- very high success rates on level 3 national certificate programme
- good motor vehicle apprenticeship achievement
- high standard of learners' practical skills
- highly effective links with local employers
- highly effective tutorial support.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- low and declining success rates on the award in motor vehicle maintenance and repair
- insufficient checking of individual learners' understanding in lessons.

### Achievements and standards

43. Achievements and standards are good. The success rates on the level 3 national certificate engineering course are very high and have been significantly above the national averages for four years. The success rate on motor vehicle work-based learning provision has improved and is high. There are low and declining success rates on the motor vehicle level 1 award in maintenance and repair. Learners develop a high standard of practical skills. Standards of written work are generally satisfactory. Many full-time motor vehicle learners progress into relevant employment. Attendance is high.

### Quality of provision

44. Inspectors agree with the judgement that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff are enthusiastic and are appropriately qualified for the range of current programmes. They use electronic tracking of individual progress effectively for motor vehicle learners. Vocational staff integrate key skills successfully in most engineering programmes. There is insufficient direct questioning to check if individual learners have a clear understanding. Assessment is fair and accurate and contains constructive feedback for learners.

45. The range of courses to meet learners' needs is wide. The practical training workshops and equipment meet learners' needs. There is a limited number of machine tools in manufacturing. Significant investment in new technology has benefited the curriculum, although the use of information learning technology (ILT) in lessons remains limited.
46. Guidance and support are good. Tutorial support is very effective. The tutorial system is available for all learners, including those on part-time courses. The system is robust and includes effective motivational interviews arranged for learners who are underperforming. All learners receive a comprehensive induction at the start of their training programme followed by an additional personal interview to ensure programme suitability.

#### Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are regular team meetings to discuss and monitor curriculum issues. Managers observe lessons by each teacher annually and provide support. However, the peer observation scheme is informal and unco-ordinated. Highly effective partnerships exist with local employers and a managing agent, resulting in scheduled meetings to discuss learners' progress and curriculum issues. The department operates a supportive staff development programme and encourages industrial updating for long-serving staff. The self-assessment report accurately identifies the main strengths and weaknesses of the provision.



## Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Good: grade 2

### Context

48. The area provides full- and part-time courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy. There are 84 full-time and 32 part-time learners in hairdressing and 87 full-time and 15 part-time learners in beauty therapy. Nearly 85% of the full-time learners are aged 16-18. Full-time courses in beauty therapy are available from levels 1-3 and part-time provision is available in holistic therapies. Full-time courses are available in hairdressing from levels 1-3. Fifty eight local school pupils, aged 14-16, attend courses in beauty therapy and hairdressing. Hairdressing and beauty therapy courses are also available in the community.

### *STRENGTHS*

- outstanding pass rates on national vocational qualification (NVQ) levels 2 and 3 courses in beauty therapy
- high success rate on the NVQ level 1 hairdressing course
- effective use of information learning technology (ILT) in practical lessons
- good integration of literacy and numeracy
- successful management strategies to support continuous improvement.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- low retention rates on the NVQ level 1 beauty therapy course
- low retention rates on the NVQ level 2 hairdressing course.

### Achievements and standards

49. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. There are outstanding pass rates on the full-time levels 2 and 3 courses in beauty therapy. In 2005/06, the success rate on the NVQ hairdressing level 1 course was high. Success rates for apprenticeships on work-based learning frameworks have continuously improved. The retention rate on the NVQ level 1 beauty course is low and the retention rate is also low on the full-time NVQ level 2 hairdressing course. The standard of learners' work is high and the development of vocational skills is particularly good. However, some NVQ level 3 learners are not sufficiently challenged and encouraged to achieve their full potential in their practical application.

### Quality of provision

50. Teaching and learning are good. There is effective development of ILT in practical lessons in hairdressing and beauty therapy to support progression. Good assessment practices support learners in both their practical and written work, which is marked and returned promptly. Some assessment practice in

hairdressing is less robust. Good learning resources are available that enable learners to develop their commercial skills and match industry's requirements.

51. The area offers a wide range of courses. The integration of key skills assignments into the hairdressing and beauty therapy curriculum is having a positive effect on learners' understanding and achievements. The hair and beauty section offers additional enrichment activities to all learners. Work experience is an integral part of the full-time hairdressing programmes, but this is not the case for beauty therapy learners.
52. Support and guidance are good. There is good integration of literacy and numeracy in both hair and beauty provision. Learning support tutors work well alongside vocational staff in theory lessons to reinforce and develop the individual learner's reading and writing skills. Learners acknowledge the improvement this has made to their reading and writing ability. All full-time and a substantial number of part-time students are offered one-to-one and group tutorials although target setting is not always used in a meaningful way to support the most able learners.

#### Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are good. There is good management of the hairdressing and beauty therapy curriculum. Strategies to improve the provision are showing success. Actions taken are starting to impact positively on retention and standards in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. For example, staff identify learners who are at risk of leaving their programmes early and take appropriate action. There is insufficient attention given to professional practices within the hairdressing salons. The self-assessment report in hairdressing and beauty therapy over estimates some strengths but overall, is accurate.

Hospitality, leisure and travel

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

54. The college offers courses in hospitality, travel and sport. In hospitality, there is a range of full-time courses from entry level to level 3 and a small number of short courses. In travel, there is a BTEC national diploma course. In sport, there are level 2 and 3 programmes. There are a few courses offered as additionality; for example, the air cabin crew and hygiene certificates and the community sports leaders' award. There are currently 89 learners studying on full-time courses of whom around 80% are aged 16-18. Approximately 10% of the total number of learners study on part-time courses, with the majority of these being aged 19 or over.

### *STRENGTHS*

- outstanding success rates on the certificate in food studies and food and drink service
- good teaching and learning
- highly effective support for learners
- good access to, and use of, high quality resources.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- low success rates on most full-time catering courses in 2005/06
- narrow range of provision
- slow management response to declining success rates in some areas.

### Achievements and standards

55. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on the certificate in food studies are outstanding and have been consistently so over the last three years. Success rates on the level 2 food and drink service programme have also been consistently very high. For learners in hospitality and catering, success rates are lower than national averages on level 1 programmes. Whilst pass rates are satisfactory on these courses, retention rates are below national averages. In 2005/06, the success rate on the level 2 food preparation and cooking fell to well below the national average.
56. Many learners develop a good range of vocational skills and competences relevant to the workplace. The standard of learners' written work is satisfactory and most learners make at least the progress expected of them.

### Quality of provision

57. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons well with a range of interesting activities. Learners participate enthusiastically in these activities. Teachers take individual learning needs into account and provide

good support. Assessment and internal verification practices are satisfactory. Teachers give effective feedback to learners and agree actions to improve. The teaching of key skills is effective. Learners develop their communication, problem solving and team building skills well, through vocationally relevant assignments.

58. The range of provision is too narrow. Many courses have low numbers and as a result are combined, which is not always appropriate. In sport and travel, there is no entry level or level 1 provision to provide progression. A very small number of learners access training through employers.
59. Support for learners is good. The tutorial system monitors learners' progress well. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very effective support.

#### Leadership and management

60. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent improvements have been made to curriculum planning and organisation. There is good access to, and use of, the high standard of industrial equipment and resources. All areas of the curriculum are accessible to wheelchair users and the fitness centre has equipment adapted specifically for learners with restricted mobility. The management response to the declining success rates in 2005/06 has been slow. Development plans and course reviews are insufficiently evaluative and target setting lacks rigour. Weak contingency plans to cover absent staff and insufficient monitoring of staff performance had an adverse effect on courses in 2006. Actions have since been taken to address this issue but it is too early to judge their full impact. The self-assessment report is accurate.

## Literacy and numeracy

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

61. The inspection covered courses in literacy and numeracy, the key skills of communication and application of number (AoN) at levels 1 and 2 and additional support for literacy and numeracy. Part-time courses in literacy and numeracy for adults are available at the college and in a small number of community venues. There are currently 62 adults on these courses. Nationally recognised qualifications such as the certificate in adult literacy or adult numeracy are available. Learners on full-time courses are able to develop their key skills within their main programme. Currently, 13 learners receive additional support for literacy and numeracy in workshop sessions. Support is also available within main programmes.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high pass rates on level 1 key skills courses in 2005/06
- good learning support in lessons
- good development of learners' confidence through relevant and interesting activities.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- low success rates on the level 1 certificate in adult numeracy course in 2005/06
- low pass rates on the level 2 key skills
- underdeveloped individual learners' target setting.

### Achievements and standards

62. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Pass rates on level 1 key skills in 2005/06 were high and have significantly improved over the past three years. There is good development of learners' confidence, both on adult provision and courses for those aged 16-18. Learners work well with each other in group and pair activities and participate well in discussions. Pass rates for key skills at level 2 are still low but have improved significantly. Attendance in most lessons is high but low in skills support workshops. The success rate on the level 1 certificate in adult numeracy in 2005/06 was low.

### Quality of provision

63. Teaching and learning are good. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan well to meet individuals' needs. Vocationally relevant and interesting activities or tasks related to everyday life enable learners to develop good levels of confidence, motivation and skills. Practical tasks enable learners to develop skills in using information and communication technology. In the less effective lessons, the planning takes insufficient account of all the needs of individual

learners. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory.

64. The current range of provision is satisfactory. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learning support in lessons is good. Initial and diagnostic assessment systems are used satisfactorily to plan learning. Individual target setting is underdeveloped. The most effective targets in individual learning plans are clearly written enabling both teacher and learner to monitor progress. However, some targets are too general to be fully effective in tracking and monitoring of learners' progress and achievement. Others are in language that is too complex to help learners to recognise the progress they are making. In vocational areas, targets are related more to the completion of course work than to the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

#### Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management of literacy, numeracy and key skills across the college has improved since the last inspection. Systems are now more robust but it is too early to judge fully the impact of these measures. Success rates for key skills have improved and compare favourably with the low national averages. Course reviews are satisfactory. Strategies to address problems with attendance at skills support sessions have not been fully effective. The self-assessment report accurately identifies the key areas for improvement. However, it over estimates the significance of some of the improvements made and over states some strengths.

## 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	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	03/04	402	65	60	5	596	76	59	17
	04/05	513	63	64	-1	600	83	62	21
	05/06	546	69	*	*	629	79	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	19	79	65	14	1	100	52	48
	04/05	11	46	68	-22	1	100	58	42
	05/06	9	44	*	*	0	0	*	*
NVQs	03/04	35	63	61	2	22	77	62	15
	04/05	75	71	67	4	29	72	67	5
	05/06	60	73	*	*	26	92	*	*
Other	03/04	348	65	60	5	573	75	67	8
	04/05	427	62	64	-2	570	84	55	29
	05/06	480	69	*	*	601	78	*	*

\* National averages for 2005/06 not available at the time of inspection

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	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	03/04	323	51	56	-5	566	59	54	5
	04/05	360	54	61	-7	555	73	60	13
	05/06	483	61	*	*	527	78	*	*
GCSEs	03/04	31	55	61	-6	70	69	59	10
	04/05	26	50	64	-14	42	62	62	0
	05/06	33	55	*	*	38	79	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	51	39	63	-24	32	16	57	-41
	04/05	35	43	67	-24	7	57	70	-13
	05/06	16	63	*	*	1	0	*	*
NVQs	03/04	88	67	52	15	134	69	54	15
	04/05	83	68	57	11	228	80	60	20
	05/06	128	69	*	*	236	78	*	*
Other	03/04	153	44	54	-10	330	57	53	4
	04/05	216	51	60	-9	278	70	59	11
	05/06	306	59	*	*	252	78	*	*

\* National averages for 2005/06 not available at the time of inspection

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	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	03/04	367	58	64	-6	371	57	54	3
	04/05	334	55	68	-13	464	72	57	15
	05/06	282	68	*	*	385	73	*	*
A/A2 Levels	03/04	33	79	84	-5	20	65	66	-1
	04/05	12	92	86	-6	14	79	69	10
	05/06	5	60	*	*	2	50	*	*
AS Levels	03/04	60	33	63	-30	30	60	50	10
	04/05	65	40	66	-26	25	52	52	0
	05/06	18	56	*	*	18	56	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	151	66	52	14	29	59	44	15
	04/05	111	65	60	5	28	68	53	15
	05/06	15	67	*	*	13	85	*	*
NVQs	03/04	39	62	54	8	107	60	47	13
	04/05	16	81	62	19	167	86	54	32
	05/06	25	84	*	*	138	86	*	*
Other	03/04	84	51	56	-5	185	54	56	-2
	04/05	130	49	60	-11	230	65	58	7
	05/06	186	73	*	*	125	71	*	*

\* National averages for 2005/06 not available at the time of inspection



Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2003/04 to 2005/06.

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	102	37	32	63	47
	Advanced	2	0	31	50	48
2004/05	Apprenticeship	80	46	39	66	50
	Advanced	10	10	34	50	48
2005/06	Apprenticeship	105	63	53	75	58
	Advanced	28	61	44	79	53

\* 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	89	19	16	30	24
	Advanced	1	0	19	0	30
2004/05	Apprenticeship	74	32	22	43	29
	Advanced	10	10	21	50	31
2005/06	Apprenticeship	115	50	32	63	36
	Advanced	33	42	26	67	33

\* 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'