



# Colchester Institute



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

Better  
education  
and care

## Inspection report

Audience  
Post-sixteen

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130674

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## Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Colchester Institute
Type of college:	Further and higher education college
Principal:	Danny Clough
Address of college:	Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3LL
Telephone number:	01206 518000
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Chair of governors:	David Priest
Unique reference number:	130674
Name of lead inspector:	Garth Clucas ALI
Dates of inspection:	9-13 October 2006

## Background of the organisation

1. Colchester Institute is a large general college of further and higher education. It is located on a main campus in Colchester with two further sites at Clacton, in the district of Tendring, and learning centres at Dovercourt and in Colchester town centre. The town also has a separate sixth form college and an adult community college.
2. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time provision in 12 of the 15 subject sector areas funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Provision is predominantly vocational with opportunities to progress to higher education programmes validated by the University of Essex. The college has a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in hospitality and food studies. A construction CoVE and an Essex-wide ICT CoVE are in their first year of development.
3. In 2005, the proportion of school leavers with five or more GCSEs at A\*-C was 57% in Colchester and 45% in Tendring, compared with the national average of 56%. In August 2006, the proportion of unemployed in Clacton was 2.9% and in Colchester was 1.7%, compared with 1.7% for Essex, and 2.6% nationally. Tendring is ranked 98 out of 354 local authorities in England in terms of deprivation. At the last census, minority ethnic communities comprised 2.7% of the population of Colchester and 0.7% of the population of Tendring.
4. In 2005/06, the college had approximately 3,500 learners aged 16-18, three quarters of whom were studying full-time and 4,300 adults, the large majority taking part-time courses. Overall, there were equal numbers of males and females with 3% of learners from black and minority ethnic communities. Some 38% of enrolments were at level 1, 34% at level 2, and 20% at level 3.
5. The college is the lead partner in the Braintree, Colchester and Tendring work-based learning consortium. The college's work-based learning provision is primarily in construction and engineering with approximately 250 learners. The college has Train to Gain provision in hospitality, retail and basic skills. Some short course provision in information and learning technology (ILT) is franchised with TBG Learning and the college operates a Learndirect centre. A programme for 14-16 year olds is run in liaison with local schools in Colchester and Tendring.
6. The vision of Colchester Institute is 'to be the first choice provider of top quality vocational education and training throughout the communities it serves'.

## 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits; and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, public services and care; engineering and manufacturing technologies; building and construction; information and communication technology (ICT); hospitality and catering; and arts, media and performing arts.

## Summary of grades awarded

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

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

## Curriculum areas

Health, public services and care	Satisfactory: grade 3
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: grade 2
Building and construction	Good: grade 2
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: grade 3
Hospitality and catering	Outstanding: grade 1
Arts, media and performing arts	Good: grade 2

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

8. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates have significantly improved since the last inspection. In 2006, success rates for 16-18 year olds on long courses were above national averages at levels 1 and 2, but slightly below at level 3. Success rates were above national averages at all levels for adults. The overall success rate in work-based learning is good. Success rates in key skills have improved and are now satisfactory overall. Success rates are good for Learndirect and satisfactory on Train to Gain programmes. Success rates on short courses are poor.
9. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is particularly effective in developing learners' skills and in supporting preparation for employment. Some teaching, particularly on advanced courses, is insufficiently challenging. The use of information learning technology (ILT) is underdeveloped. The assessment of learners' work is accurate. The provision of additional learning support is highly effective.
10. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The college offers a good range of programmes from entry level to level 5 which is well matched to the skills' needs of the area. The college maintains successful and productive partnerships with schools, other providers and local employers. The needs of vulnerable and disengaged learners are very well met. Learners are well supported individually to develop both academic and personal skills. A range of college-wide enrichment activities is offered, but learners' participation is not monitored sufficiently.
11. Advice, guidance and support for learners are good. All learners are initially assessed so that teachers gain a thorough understanding of their skills, needs and aspirations. Their progress is reviewed regularly and learners are given appropriate targets for improvement. Arrangements for group tutorials are poorly managed.
12. Leadership and management are good. There is clear strategic direction and governors monitor college performance effectively. Self-assessment is thorough and accurate. Effective actions have secured improvements. Financial management is good and the college provides good value for money. Staff work hard to maintain an inclusive environment. However, learners' understanding of equality and diversity is not promoted or monitored adequately.

## Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

13. The college demonstrates a good capacity to improve its provision. Leadership and management are good and provide clear strategic direction. Measures taken to improve the provision have been effective and success rates have significantly improved. Managers receive reliable data on which to base decisions. Quality assurance arrangements provide a sound basis for monitoring and improving performance. The college's assessment of teaching and learning is accurate and staff development is effectively targeted. The annual self-assessment process is rigorous and involves all staff. The most recent self-assessment report provides an accurate evaluation of the college's performance. Action plans are well formulated and regularly monitored.

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

14. The college has maintained the strengths identified in its last inspection and made good progress in addressing most areas for improvement. There has been a clear focus on improving the learner experience and raising achievement. Overall success rates have significantly improved. A comprehensive lesson observation system effectively monitors the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning, which was a weakness at the last inspection, is now good. Good progress has been made in improving the management of work-based learning and literacy and numeracy support. The introduction of a quality manual has improved the consistency and rigour of quality assurance procedures.

## Key strengths of the college

### *Strengths*

- success rates for adults on long courses
- success rates for 16-18 year olds at levels 1 and 2
- good provision in work-based learning
- very effective teaching to develop learners' skills
- outstanding provision in hospitality and catering
- broad range of vocational provision and opportunities for progression
- productive links with employers and community organisations
- good guidance and support for learners
- clear strategic direction
- good governance.



## Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- success rates for 16-18 year olds at level 3
- success rates on short courses
- the management of tutorial provision
- the promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity.

## Main findings

### Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

15. Achievements and standards are good. During the three year period 2003 to 2005, the overall success rate for all college learners on long courses has risen above the national average. The college's rate of improvement during this period is well above the national rate of improvement. College data for 2006 indicates the trend of improvement has been maintained. The self-assessment report provides an accurate assessment of trends in learner performance.
16. In the three year period to 2006, success rates on long courses for 16-18 year olds have improved to above the national average at levels 1 and 2. Success rates on long courses at level 3 remained slightly below the national average in 2005 and 2006. Retention has remained above national averages at levels 1 and 2 but fell to below the national average at level 3. Success rates on national vocational qualifications (NVQs) are well above national averages at all levels. Key skills' success rates have significantly improved and are satisfactory in most areas of the college. Success rates on short courses are poor.
17. Success rates for adults remained well above the national average at level 1 in 2005 and 2006, and in 2006 rose to well above the national average at levels 2 and 3. Success rates on NVQs are well above national averages at levels 2 and 3. Success rates are good on Learndirect courses and satisfactory on Train to Gain programmes. However, they are poor on short courses.
18. The performance of work-based learners has steadily improved during the period 2004 to 2006 and is now good. The success rate for framework completion has improved from 39% in 2004 to 62% in 2006. The success rate of advanced apprentices at 72% is well above the national average. The achievement of objectives and progression by learners on entry to employment (E2E) programmes is satisfactory.
19. Overall, learners make good progress in developing practical skills on most vocational programmes, particularly in engineering, construction, hospitality and catering, and in arts, media and performing arts. Learners are generally well motivated. They have a satisfactory understanding of health and safety. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory overall. Progression by full-time learners to higher level courses, further training or employment, is good. The college provides a successful vocational taster programme for 14-16 year olds with good progression to college programmes in 2006.

## Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

20. Teaching and learning are good. The college has focused successfully on improving both the overall quality of teaching and learning and particular aspects identified as needing development. The recently introduced formal lesson observation system is comprehensive with all members of the college's teaching staff observed and graded. Prompt and effective action is taken to improve any unsatisfactory teaching, which has been reduced to a very small percentage. Well devised teaching and learning strategies have been effectively disseminated and have included topics such as key skills, differentiation and classroom management. Joint observations carried out by inspectors and college staff resulted in closely aligned findings.
21. The college judges that much teaching and learning is of good quality, uses varied strategies and addresses the individual needs of learners. Inspectors agree with this assessment. However, the college also recognises that the proportion of good or better teaching and learning is lower in a small minority of curriculum areas. Teachers in these areas do not always have sufficiently high expectations of learners on advanced level courses and some teaching is less interesting and challenging. The college has taken prompt action to improve provision and ensure greater consistency. ILT resources have been greatly improved and in some curriculum areas, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy and hospitality and catering, teachers make good use of them to enliven and extend learning. Overall, the use of ILT remains an area for further development.
22. A particular strength of teaching and learning is the effective development of learners' skills and preparation for employment. Lessons frequently provide realistic work environments and students work effectively to the exacting deadlines that they will experience in the world of work. Teachers' vocational experience is used well to illustrate particular points and to provide background knowledge. Some poor accommodation in a minority of curriculum areas is a constraint on learners' progress. Assessment is accurate and helpful. Parents and carers are kept well informed of learners' progress.
23. Additional learning support is highly effective. College data shows that success rates for learners receiving support are higher than the mainly good success rates achieved by all learners. The college's close links with schools are used well to identify vulnerable learners and ensure that additional learning support is prompt and effective. Learners with multiple and complex difficulties have been enabled to study successfully. The large number of learning support assistants provide good support to individuals and groups.
24. The college's responsiveness to learners' needs and interests is good. It offers a good range of programmes across all levels which meet the vocational needs of the area. The college maintains successful, productive partnerships with other providers to ensure that learners have access to a wider range of qualifications.

In most curriculum areas, learners can progress from level 1 to level 3, and on to degree level.

25. A well organised programme in Colchester and Clacton for 14-16 year olds includes some 332 learners from 16 schools. Good communication between schools and the college supports learners well. The college very actively promotes AimHigher to school students. Innovative work with Essex youth service and children and young people's strategic partnership has resulted in the successful progression of some very vulnerable and disengaged young people.
26. The college responds well to the needs of employers and the community. Good links with employers help to extend opportunities for work placements and the professional updating of staff. However, this opportunity is not used equally well by all curriculum areas. The college has been active in extending its provision in Clacton and in developing access to information technology (IT) provision in the community. Student services and the student union offer a range of enrichment activities, the majority in leisure and fitness. Participation in these activities is not monitored sufficiently.
27. Learners have good access to a wide range of support, including counselling, financial, careers, transport, legal and health related advice. There is good support for childcare. The college meets its target for the use of the educational maintenance allowance. Learners receive good pre-entry advice. Admissions officers conduct thorough initial interviews for most learners, and ensure that curriculum centres receive good information about learners' skills and aspirations. Arrangements for initial assessment are good. Learners have access to seven Connexions personal advisers, two of whom specialise in advising learners with additional needs, and an experienced advice and guidance manager who offers advice to adults. The advice centre is well equipped and learners benefit from the centre's close links with a local volunteer bureau to gain experience of work.
28. Most learners have appropriate and regular individual tutorials. However, arrangements for group tutorials are poorly managed. Each curriculum centre is responsible for its own tutorial arrangements but no manager has overall responsibility for tutorial provision throughout the college. Not all areas offer group tutorials regularly and in some cases they are simply used for the completion of course work.

## Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

29. Leadership and management are good. The principal provides effective leadership and together with governors and other senior managers sets a clear strategic direction and mission for the college. The focus on vocational education has been carefully considered and informed by the many strong partnerships established with the local community.

30. Effective actions have secured improvements. Strategies are well communicated to staff and have raised overall success rates. Many are now significantly above national averages. Quality assurance procedures, including self-assessment, are well established and thorough. The self-assessment report is accurate. Data are particularly robust and well used by managers to plan, set targets and monitor performance. The lesson observation scheme provides an accurate reflection of the quality of teaching and learning. The detailed information this generates is used well by curriculum managers, but could be better utilised to plan college-wide improvement. Curriculum management is good in most areas.
31. The management of resources is good. Learners have good access to ICT and other learning resources. Specialist resources are good overall and excellent in hospitality and catering. Accommodation is satisfactory. Whilst some buildings are well designed and of a good standard, many older buildings require updating. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Most teachers have relevant professional qualifications and a high proportion of both full-time and part-time staff have teaching qualifications. Access to professional development is good. Managers benefit from a well devised leadership programme.
33. Child protection procedures are in place and are well documented. Bullying and harassment policies are effectively applied. The college has responded well to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 and suitably to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Most of the college is accessible to learners with impaired mobility and achievements are analysed by age, gender and ethnicity. Staff work hard to maintain an inclusive environment where learners are made welcome. However, the promotion and reinforcement of learners' understanding of equality and diversity is insufficient. There has been no audit of teaching and learning materials and limited cross-college promotional activity. The college has been slow to address the gender imbalance of learners in some curriculum areas and to take action to improve the ethnic diversity of staff.
34. Governance is good. Governors have a good range of experience and expertise which they use effectively to support the college's development. They are well informed and supportive of the college and its mission. Governors challenge and support senior managers in order to improve learners' achievements.
35. Financial management is good. Arrangements for the setting and monitoring of budgets are comprehensive. Control procedures are robust. Detailed financial reports are produced frequently and are well used. Capital investments linked to strategic developments are well planned. The college provides good value for money.

## Curriculum area inspections

Health, public services and care

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

36. Most provision is for full-time learners, aged 16-18. At the time of the inspection, there were 188 learners on health and social care courses at levels 1 to 3, and 99 early years and 97 public service learners on courses at levels 2 and 3. There were 39 learners on NVQ programmes and 44 learners on part-time health and safety courses.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates at levels 1 and 2
- good progression from levels 1 and 2
- good support for NVQ learners with additional learning needs
- good resources to support trade union courses
- good strategies to effect improvement.

### *Areas for improvement*

- unsatisfactory retention at level 3
- low key skills' success rates
- insufficiently challenging teaching in some lessons at level 3.

### Achievements and standards

37. Learners' achievements are generally satisfactory. At level 1, the success rate was 16% above the national average in 2006. At level 2, success rates on BTEC First Diploma courses are well above national averages. Health and safety courses have consistently high success rates. NVQ success rates have improved and are now satisfactory. Retention rates are unsatisfactory on full-time courses at level 3. Key skills' success rates are poor. Progression is good from levels 1 and 2 to other courses. Almost three quarters of learners studying at level 1 in 2005/06 progressed to level 2 in 2006/07. Students' written work is satisfactory with some good aspects. There are good art portfolios on early years courses. Learners' display work shows increasing confidence in the use of ICT. In public services, learners work collaboratively and demonstrate good team work.

### Quality of provision

38. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most teaching is well planned and lesson plans take account of individual needs. There are some imaginative approaches to incorporating the themes of Every Child Matters into the curriculum. However, some lessons on level 3 courses are not sufficiently

challenging and learners are not always fully engaged; for example, they are sometimes asked to carry out routine copying. Expectations of learners are not always high enough. NVQ learners receive good additional learning support, including help with English and specialist dyslexia and assessment support. Accommodation and resources in trade union studies provide a good learning environment which promotes very effective collaborative and independent learning. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory.

39. Programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. Placement monitoring and other checks on health and safety are thorough. Teachers make good use of their professional contacts in arranging work placements for learners.
40. Guidance and support are satisfactory with some good elements. Induction is satisfactory with some imaginative approaches to peer working in public services. Learners are appropriately prepared for higher education and employment applications. The programme for public services is effectively structured to help students make appropriate career choices.

#### Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are good. Strategies to effect improvement have been successful. Weaknesses in NVQs and deficiencies in resources at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Course teams are actively involved in the self-assessment process which accurately identifies key weaknesses. Progress and targets are monitored regularly. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Staff have regular appraisals, linked to observations of teaching and learning, and there are good opportunities for professional development.

## Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: grade 2

### Context

42. The provision consists of mechanical engineering, fabrication and welding, motor vehicle servicing and motor vehicle body repair craft courses. Courses are also offered for technicians and for students aged 14-16 on schools link programmes. There are approximately 500 learners on college-based courses, of whom 211 are studying full-time, most aged 16-18. There are 110 work-based learners on programmes in mechanical engineering, motor vehicle servicing and motor vehicle body repair.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on many courses
- good development of practical skills
- high quality resources to support learning
- particularly well devised progression opportunities
- effective management action to secure improvements.

### *Areas for improvement*

- better use of ILT to enhance learning.

### Achievements and standards

43. Learners' achievements are good. On many courses, such as level 2 City & Guilds motor vehicle service and repair, success rates have been consistently above the national averages for the last three years. On a minority of courses, such as level 2 performing engineering operations, success rates have declined from 2005 to 2006 whilst still remaining well above the national averages. Success rates for apprenticeship frameworks are good overall. Success rates in key skills are satisfactory. Learners are industrious and well motivated in practical lessons.

### Quality of provision

44. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers develop learners' practical skills well. They make frequent references to relevant practical examples during theory lessons, check progress regularly and readily offer advice to help learners improve their skills. In work-based learning, learners receive good support from their employers and college staff to develop their practical skills. Comprehensive review systems ensure learners' progress is monitored closely in work-based learning. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory. Teachers are beginning to use the recently installed ILT. However, in some cases, the new resources are not used effectively and learners are still copying notes from projected images.



45. The courses provide particularly well devised progression opportunities. Level 1 courses provide a good introductory breadth before learners specialise at levels 2 and 3. The selection process for motor vehicle courses is rigorous and identifies well motivated learners. A new level 3 full-time technician course has been introduced. Additional mathematics and science courses allow learners at level 3 to progress on to higher national courses. The range of courses is satisfactory. There are no work placements for full-time learners.
46. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learning support staff provide good additional support, especially in key skill lessons. Work-based learners receive close vocational and pastoral support.

### Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The management of work-based learning has been restructured successfully. The improved resources to support learning are of a high quality. At Colchester, there are a series of spacious and well equipped workshops, including the latest information and learning technology. The engineering workshop is dated but suitable for purpose. At Clacton, the motor vehicle workshop is well equipped. Health and safety are satisfactory. The self-assessment report accurately evaluates the quality of the current provision. The work-based learning self-assessment report is also accurate and the action plan has improved the provision.

## Building and construction

Good: grade 2

### Context

48. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to level 5. At the time of the inspection, there were 689 learners aged 16-18 and 570 adult learners. One third of learners were studying full-time, mostly aged 16-18. A further 145 learners are on work-based learning programmes. The majority of learners are on level 2 courses. Courses offered include carpentry, brickwork, plumbing, electrical installation and a BTEC First Diploma programme. The centre also provides a variety of entry level courses for 103 school pupils aged 14-16.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on most courses
- exceptionally wide range of courses
- good theory teaching
- good additional learning support.

### *Areas for improvement*

- poor punctuality
- poor accommodation in some areas.

### Achievements and standards

49. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates are high on most courses. At levels 1 and 2 for learners aged 16-18 success rates have continually improved since 2004. Framework completion rates for work-based learners are high, particularly in plumbing. Success rates on the BTEC First Diploma are low. The standard of work produced by learners is good. Learners were observed working competently with tools and equipment producing work to industry standards.

### Quality of provision

50. Teaching and learning are good. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and areas for development identified by the college's own lesson observation scheme. Theory teaching is good. Teachers skilfully adapt lesson material and use innovative teaching methods to motivate and engage learners. Practical teaching is satisfactory, although learners' punctuality is poor. Learners' work is marked promptly and useful feedback is provided which details what needs to be done to improve. Assessment is frequent and fair. Internal verification is robust.

51. The college provides an exceptionally wide range of courses that meet the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local community. Taster courses at entry level are provided for many pupils from local schools in most construction craft occupations. A broad range of courses is offered at levels 1, 2 and 3. Higher education courses are offered at level 4 and, more recently, at level 5. Progression rates from one level to the next are good and improving. Learners are able to move between full-time and part-time courses and onto work-based learning programmes.
52. Support for learners is good. All full-time and work-based learners are screened for additional support needs before starting. The provision for additional learning support is good. Most classes have an additional support teacher to help develop learners' skills and understanding. Work-based learners receive frequent progress reviews and are effectively supported in the workplace. Employers of work-based learners receive regular and detailed reports.

### Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are good. Communication and lines of accountability are clear. Ambitious performance targets are set and these are effectively monitored. Staff are vocationally well qualified and experienced. Work-based learning is well managed and performance carefully monitored. The self-assessment report provides an accurate reflection of the provision. Changes to accommodation have been made although it remains poor in some areas; for example, external noise is disruptive of learning at the Church Road site in Clacton. Specialist resources and tools are satisfactory overall.

## Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

54. The college offers a range of courses for IT practitioners and IT users with progression routes from level 1 to higher education. Full-time provision includes IT at work, and BTEC First and National Diplomas for IT practitioners. Part-time courses include certificate and diploma for IT users and web design. At the time of inspection, enrolments included 204 learners aged 16-18 and 633 adults. Over three quarters of learners are on part-time courses. Some learning is provided online, including courses at Learndirect centres, which had over 300 enrolments last year, and courses franchised to a local provider, which had over 1,300 enrolments last year.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on most level 1 and 2 courses in 2005/06
- learners' good progress in practical workshops
- good opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low success rates on BTEC National Diplomas and franchised provision
- low achievement in key skills qualifications
- poorly planned teaching in some theory lessons failing to engage learners.

### Achievements and standards

55. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Success rates have improved and are now high on GNVQ foundation and intermediate IT courses and on most adult part-time courses, including those online. Success rates are low on BTEC National Diploma courses and most of the franchised provision. Achievement of key skills qualifications is low. The standard of learners' work is good in many practical lessons; however, the attainment of some full-time level 3 learners is below the level expected. Adult learners develop good skills for employment and also gain confidence in learning.

### Quality of provision

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching and support in practical lessons are good and learners progress well. Better lessons are designed effectively to include a range of activities, move at a challenging pace and successfully engage learners. In the weaker theory lessons, learning is insufficiently planned and checked and the pace is too slow. Too much emphasis on whole group teaching results in long periods of teacher presentation with insufficient focus on differing learner needs. Although

interactive whiteboards are installed they are not used effectively. In 2005/06, BTEC National Diploma assignments were poorly scheduled with some late submission, marking and return to learners. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory on other courses. The progress of many adult learners is monitored adequately, but targets are insufficiently used to plan learning. Learners are supported well in the Learndirect centre and their progress is adequately recorded.

57. A good range of courses is offered with clear progression routes from entry level to level 3. An 'opportunities through technology course' provides very effective provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A significant number of adult learners study online, most in learning shops and learners appreciate the flexibility and convenience that this provides. IT practitioner learners have insufficient opportunity to gain experience of the IT industry.
58. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Induction for full-time learners is well planned. Group tutorials are weak and used mainly for working on assignments. Learners are not given measurable targets, although individual learning plans for key skills development are well compiled for BTEC First Diploma learners, with clear short term targets which are monitored.

#### Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The manager of the area has only been in post since the start of the academic year but has already developed strategies to effect improvement, especially in the previously weak self-assessment process. Since the last inspection, many improvements have been made, especially to achievement. However, the franchised provision is not effectively monitored. Managers have taken insufficient action to increase the numbers of females on full-time ICT courses.

## Hospitality and catering

Outstanding: grade 1

### Context

60. The centre for hospitality and food studies, which is designated as a CoVE, offers programmes from levels 1 to 3. Full-time courses include NVQs in food preparation and cooking from levels 1 to 3, front office at level 2, and a BTEC National Diploma in hospitality supervision and food preparation. There is part-time provision in food hygiene health and safety, the advanced pastry cooks and patissiers level 3 and the certificate in culinary skills. At the time of inspection, there were 223 learners aged 16-18 and 24 adults on full-time courses, and 72 learners on part-time courses. The CoVE also offers a taster programme for 14-16 year olds.

### *Strengths*

- outstanding success rates on NVQ courses
- excellent success rates in key skills
- outstanding development of learners' practical skills
- outstanding specialist resources including good ICT facilities
- strong curriculum management with effective strategies for improvement.

### *Areas for improvement*

- the teaching of applied theory.

### Achievements and standards

61. Learners' achievements are outstanding. Success rates are consistently very high for programmes at level 1 in preparing food, and levels 2 and 3 in food preparation and cooking. Key skills' success rates are also excellent.

62. Learners develop very good practical skills in both food preparation and food service. Attention to personal and food safety is good and learners demonstrate high standards of cleanliness. Learners on craft courses have additional skills development classes to complement their main learning aim and are prepared well to meet the needs of industry.

### Quality of provision

63. The teaching of practical skills is outstanding. The majority of the practical food preparation and all the food service teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are very well planned and managed with good attention to individual learning needs. Demonstrations in practical lessons are very effective and make good use of plasma screens to reach all areas of the kitchen. The industrial experience of teachers and learners are used particularly well to reinforce

learning. Learners are motivated, enthusiastic and enjoy learning. In some cases, learners' understanding of what underpins the practical work is insufficiently developed and some theory teaching is unimaginative. The teaching of key skills is very good. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory.

64. The range of provision is closely aligned to the CoVE specialism and well matched to local skills needs. Programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners well. Links with employers are particularly strong. Chefs from local restaurants and hotels regularly come into college and work with tutors and learners. Learners gain new skills and experience a wide range of ingredients and cookery methods.
65. Guidance and support for learners are very good. Learners are given good vocational advice and receive strong personal support. Effective support is given to learners with additional learning needs. Learners' progress is regularly and carefully monitored and communicated to learners and their parent/carers. Learning plans give learners the information they need to improve and progress.

#### Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management are outstanding. Effective strategies have led to improvements in all the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Curriculum management is strong. Data management has improved and is used effectively to monitor curriculum performance. The self-assessment at programme level matches closely with the findings of inspection. However, there is no analysis of success rates of learners by age or gender. The centre's outstanding specialist resources are well managed and equipped to very high standards and there are good ICT facilities.

## Arts, media and performing arts

Good: grade 2

### Context

67. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in art and design, graphics and media, music and music technology, and performing arts. At the time of the inspection approximately two thirds of learners were enrolled on courses in art, design and media, with 17 learners studying at level 1, 30 at level 2 and 311 at level 3. Some 37 of these learners were studying part-time. On performance courses all learners were full-time, with 42 learners studying at level 2 and 129 at level 3. The majority of learners are aged 16-18.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on most courses
- very good standards of creative and practical work
- inventive and challenging teaching
- very good preparation for employment
- particularly good enrichment activities.

### *Areas for improvement*

- poor achievement of key skills
- inadequate accommodation and resources in music and performing arts
- insufficient use of management information in music and performing arts to secure improvements.

### Achievements and standards

68. Learners' achievements are good. Success rates are consistently above national averages on the majority of visual arts courses and particularly high on the diploma in foundation studies art and design. In music and performing arts, there is an overall improving trend. On the BTEC National Diploma in music practice there is consistently high achievement, but on the popular music diploma the success rate is poor.

69. The standard of learners' work on most courses is very good. Visual arts learners are confident in experimenting with new media and techniques. Musicians display good aural and music programming skills, using software creatively. Despite the recent introduction of key skills' specialists, achievement is poor. Many staff place insufficient importance on key skills.

### Quality of provision

70. Teaching and learning are good. Most teaching sessions are well planned and feature experiential learning tasks that engage learners' interest. Project briefs



are challenging. All tutors use good practical demonstration and encourage improvisation and experimentation. Learners receive very good preparation for employment. A strong vocational focus is a key feature of teaching and learning, individual tutorials and learner reviews. Assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. There is good, critical peer feedback on live performance work and artwork. Accommodation in music and performing arts is poor with insufficient opportunities for rehearsal. Extraneous noise distracts tutors and learners in some classrooms. Technology for music courses has not been updated.

71. The programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners well. Planned progression routes are available in all subjects, and include opportunities to study at degree level. There is a particularly good range of enrichment activities. Learners take part in visits to galleries and attend dance, theatre and music workshops. Band practice sessions, musical productions, chamber ensembles and choirs are open to all learners. Performances and workshops by visiting professionals inspire learners.
72. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. Individual tutorial support is sensitive and constructive. In-class support is provided for learners with additional learning and behavioural needs or sensory impairments.

### Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The system for observing teaching and learning is comprehensive and the results are used well by art and media curriculum managers to inform development plans for staff. Staff have good opportunities to update their vocational experience. Teachers are encouraged to take up opportunities to gain teaching qualifications. Despite this, a number of staff have yet to gain qualified teacher status. In music and performing arts, there is insufficient use of management information to secure improvements and specific actions have not been identified to address weaknesses in teaching and learning.

## Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	02/03	1,072	42.7	56.1	-13.4	2,911	55.7	54.9	0.8
	03/04	1,332	61.6	60.3	1.3	2,987	62.8	59.1	3.7
	04/05	1,561	68.7	64.2	4.5	1,905	78.5	61.6	16.9
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	66	71.2	59.7	11.5	7	42.9	47.3	-4.5
	03/04	73	80.8	65.1	15.7	4	75	52.3	22.7
	04/05	82	69.5	67.9	1.6	2	0	58.1	
NVQs	02/03	133	54.1	55.6	-1.5	6	50	56.3	-6.3
	03/04	167	61.7	61	0.6	5	80	62.3	17.7
	04/05	243	74.5	67.2	7.3	11	81.8	66.9	14.9
Other	02/03	873	38.8	55.9	-17.1	2,898	55.7	54.9	0.8
	03/04	1,092	60.3	60	0.4	2,978	62.8	59	3.7
	04/05	1,236	67.5	63.6	3.8	1,892	78.6	61.4	17.2

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream Level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	02/03	1,511	54.7	51.6	3.2	1,321	48.2	49.2	-1
	03/04	1,460	56.8	56.3	0.6	1,572	60.7	53.6	7.1
	04/05	1,217	61.4	60.9	0.5	1,331	61.5	59.5	1.9
GCSEs	02/03	32	28.1	57.1	-29	93	66.7	55.3	11.4
	03/04	48	33.3	61.3	-27.9	70	75.7	58.8	16.9
	04/05	30	53.3	64.1	-10.8	71	77.5	62.3	15.2
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	244	54.9	58.5	-3.6	31	54.8	52.8	2.1
	03/04	84	56	63	-7.1	6	66.7	56.6	10.1
	04/05	56	60.7	66.8	-6.1	0			
NVQs	02/03	302	47	41.9	5.9	401	40.4	48.2	-7.8
	03/04	322	63	51.9	11.2	442	64.3	53.5	10.8
	04/05	334	65.9	57	8.8	373	42.6	59.6	-17
Other	02/03	933	58.1	50.5	7.6	796	49.7	48.4	1.3
	03/04	1,006	56.1	54.1	2	1,054	58.2	52.7	5.5
	04/05	797	59.8	60.1	-0.3	887	68.1	58.8	9.3

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	02/03	998	55.7	61.6	-5.9	983	45.7	50.7	-5
	03/04	1,023	52.5	64.1	-11.6	641	57.3	53.5	3.8
	04/05	857	63.5	67.5	-4	655	56.8	57.3	-0.5
A/A2 Levels	02/03	31	80.6	81.8	-1.1	21	71.4	63	8.4
	03/04	22	90.9	83.8	7.1	10	100	65.5	34.5
	04/05	19	78.9	85.6	-6.7	2	100	69.1	30.9
AS Levels	02/03	65	58.5	61.1	-2.6	60	63.3	48.2	15.1
	03/04	33	63.6	62.9	0.7	16	31.3	49.6	-18.3
	04/05	32	59.4	65.5	-6.1	19	47.4	52.2	-4.8
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	373	34.9	49.8	-14.9	72	41.7	44.9	-3.3
	03/04	169	37.9	52.4	-14.5	27	44.4	43.5	0.9
	04/05	63	54	60.2	-6.3	14	57.1	52.9	4.3
NVQs	02/03	84	59.5	50.2	9.4	290	30.3	44.1	-13.7
	03/04	90	67.8	53.7	14.1	152	56.6	47	9.6
	04/05	51	72.5	62.4	10.2	232	38.8	53.9	-15.1
Other	02/03	445	70.3	55.4	14.9	540	51.5	52.6	-1.1
	03/04	709	52.3	56.3	-4	436	58.3	55.7	2.6
	04/05	692	63.4	60	3.5	388	67.8	58.3	9.5

Table 4

1. Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the college 2004 to 2006.

Year	Number of starts in year	Achieved Objectives *	Progression **	Still in learning
2003/04	34	18	21	0
2004/05	70	45	39	0
2005/06	71	40	32	6

\* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

\*\* Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period

Outcomes for Employer Training Pilots and National Employer Training Programmes managed by the college 2004 to 2006.

Year	Number of starts in year	Planned learning completed *	Still in learning
2003/04	609	281	0
2004/05	368	318	0
2005/06	91	57	0

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