



Stanmore College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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Basic information about the college

Name of college: Stanmore College

Type of college: General Further Education

Principal: Jacqui Mace

Address of college: Elm Park, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 4BQ

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Fax number: 020 8385 7269

Chair of governors: John Howard

Unique reference number: 130440

Name of lead inspector: Ela Piotrowska

Dates of inspection: 25–29 September 2006

Background of the organisation

1. Stanmore College is a small further education (FE) college located in the London borough of Harrow. The college was established in 1987. In January 2000, the college was re-structured into Stanmore Sixth Form College and Stanmore Adult College, each with its own management structure. Stanmore Business Development offers consultancy and training for businesses and operates as part of the adult college. The college delivers vocational courses in most of the sector skills areas with the exception of construction, engineering and retail. It holds Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for Early Years. The college has a new principal who took up post some three weeks prior to inspection.
2. Stanmore College collaborates with other Harrow colleges and the local education authority in the provision of adult community education. It has significant partnerships with Park and Canons High Schools. Students are recruited from Harrow, Brent and other areas. Harrow is an affluent London borough.
3. In 2005/06, there were 1,056 16-18 year old full-time students and some 3,934 adult part-time and full-time enrolments on professional, vocational and non-vocational/leisure courses. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups in 2005/06 was over 54%. 72% of students were female. The largest areas of provision were health and social care, retailing and commercial enterprise, arts, media and publishing, preparation for life and work and business.
4. In 2004 the proportion of school-leavers in Harrow who achieved five GCSEs at grade C and above was 60.5%, which is above the national average of 53.7%. Employment in the borough is mainly in professional and administrative occupations. Unemployment in 2005 was at the national average of 2.3%. Approximately 41% of the population are from minority ethnic groups.
5. The college has two mission statements. The sixth form college seeks to inspire 'academic excellence and personal success'. The adult college aims 'to be the natural choice to develop work and life skills, particularly in the areas of health and social care and continuous professional development, through centres of excellence'.

Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health and social care and child development; information and communication technology; beauty therapy; visual and performing arts and media; English and modern foreign languages; preparation for life and work.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
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Achievements and standards	Good: grade 2
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Quality of provision	Good: grade 2
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Leadership and management	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.

Curriculum areas

Health and social care and early years	Good: grade 2
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Information and communication technology	Good: grade 2
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Beauty therapy	Outstanding: grade 1
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Visual and performing arts and media	Good: grade 2
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English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

7. This is a satisfactory college. Success rates are high for learners aged 16-18 and overall success rates are satisfactory for adult learners. Some individual course success rates and success rates in key skills at level 2 are low. The college does not systematically measure adult learners' progress. Overall retention and attendance rates are high. Learners make good progress, enjoy their learning and achieve good standards of work.
8. Teaching and learning are good for 16-18 years and satisfactory for 19+ learners. The proportion of good or better teaching is the same as during the last inspection. Some teachers do not focus sufficiently on activities to generate learning and do not provide sufficient challenge for learners. The assessment and monitoring of learners' work are good. There are good arrangements for identifying and providing support for learners' additional learning needs.
9. The approach to social and education inclusion is good. The college is an inclusive community and provides good support for all learners including learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Key skills and skills for life are not sufficiently integrated with the teaching of academic and vocational subjects.
10. The college offers a good range of courses and enrichment activities to meet the needs and interests of all learners. There are good opportunities for all learners to gain qualifications that support their personal, academic and vocational ambitions. The wide range of partnerships with local employers, community organisations and schools are highly productive. The college provides good customised training and makes good use of its CoVE status to respond to employer and learner needs.
11. Learners receive very good guidance and advice. The wide range of support helps learners to participate, achieve and provides a caring and supportive learning environment. Support to meet learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs is generally good. The quality of academic support varies and systems to support the progress of adult learners are insufficiently formal.
12. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new strategic vision is informed by a good understanding of the key challenges currently facing the college. Governance is good and contributes positively to college life. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and child protection procedures are in place. There are inconsistencies in the quality of curriculum management and a lack of clarity in the college's overall management structure. Some areas for improvement identified during the last college inspection are still outstanding. Financial management and value for money are good.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

13. The college demonstrates a good capacity to improve. Governance has improved significantly and the college is now in a good financial position. The new principal has a clear strategic vision and a good understanding of key challenges. There is a good focus on raising standards. Data is used well to monitor and evaluate performance although some course teams do not set sufficiently ambitious improvement targets. Quality improvement is generally good although procedures are not used consistently. The college's assessment of teaching and learning is accurate. Staff development is targeted effectively to secure improvement.
14. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and broadly accurate, although the evidence base for assessment is narrow and the report is insufficiently self-critical. Some curriculum development plans lack detail and clear targets to measure and sustain continuous improvement.

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

15. The college has made satisfactory progress in improving areas identified as weaknesses at the last inspection. Success rates have improved at most levels although for some groups of learners, success rates remain low and declining.
16. Attendance is now good. The college has maintained standards. Although the quality of teaching and learning has not improved significantly since the last inspection, the college's internal observation process is rigorous and contributes to raising standards. There has been investment in training for information and learning technology and this has increased the use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons in some areas. The management information system has improved the accuracy and dissemination of data, and this is now well used in most curriculum areas to monitor performance. Accommodation remains satisfactory. The college has made slow progress in the integration of skills for life and key skills to support the raising of achievement and standards for all learners.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- high success rates for learners aged 16-18
- good range of provision and opportunities for progression
- productive partnerships
- effective employer engagement
- good guidance and support for learners
- highly supportive learning environment
- good management of resources
- good governance.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates on some courses and in key skills
- variable quality of academic support
- further improvement of the quality of teaching and learning
- the management and quality of skills for life and key skills
- weaknesses in self-assessment and action planning
- development of more ambitious improvement agenda.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

Contributory grades:

Learners aged 19+

Satisfactory: grade 3

17. Achievements and standards are good overall. In 2005 success rates were high for learners aged 16-18. These rates improved markedly at levels 2 and 3 from the previous year. At level 1 the rate is consistently close to the national average. In particular, GCE A and AS level rates have improved and in 2005 were well above sixth form college national averages. College data for 2006 indicates this high performance at level 3 has been maintained.
18. Key skills success rates at level 1 for learners aged 16-18 are high and above the national average in all three key skills. However the majority of learners are on level 2 courses where success rates are very low, declining and in 2005 were well below the national average. The high grade (A-C) success rate for English GCSE has also continued to fall significantly. The college has responded to this decline with a range of measures including offering learners an alternative qualification. The high grade mathematics GCSE success rate has been well above the national average from 2003 to 2005.
19. Achievements for adult learners are satisfactory. Success rates at levels 1 and 2 have fallen in comparison to national averages although at level 3, success rates are high and consistently above national averages. Success rates were particularly high for adults on the diploma and certificate courses in childcare and on many beauty therapy programmes. In 2004/05 there were very low success rates on some courses including the certificate in adult literacy at levels 1 and 2.
20. Learners achieve high standards on the large majority of level 3 courses. Targets for success are set regularly for learners aged 16-18, although these are not always sufficiently challenging. The college does not systematically measure adult learners' progress. The standard of learners' work was good in the majority of curriculum areas inspected. Learners are confident and demonstrate a mature attitude to their learning. The large majority of learners enjoy their learning and comply with health and safety regulations.
21. Attendance rates are high for both 16-18 and adult learners and most learners are punctual for their lessons. Retention rates have remained high especially for adult learners.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

Contributory grades:

Learners aged 19+

Satisfactory: grade 3

22. Teaching and learning are good for 16-18 year olds and satisfactory for the majority of learners aged 19+. Inspectors agree with the college's identification of strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning although the college's overall assessment of this aspect is too generous. The proportion of good or better teaching has remained largely static since the last inspection with some variations across different areas and groups of learners. The college has continued to modernise teaching since the last inspection. A more rigorous system for the observation of teaching and learning provides good support and training, detailed and evaluative feedback and effectively monitors improvement. However, there is insufficient focus on the quality of learning and the range of evidence used to assess teaching and learning is too narrow.
23. Lessons are generally well planned and teachers create very supportive and caring learning environments. Learners appreciate the professionalism and hard work of staff. High levels of subject and vocational expertise are demonstrated by teachers in some areas. In the best lessons, there is good collaborative work, teachers effectively relate theory to practice, learners make good progress in lessons and there is good use of ILT to support learning. However, some teachers do not use a sufficient range of strategies to encourage active learning. In some lessons there is insufficient consolidation of learning and some lessons for adults lack pace and variety. Insufficient integration of skills for life and key skills in lessons limits opportunities for learners to practice essential skills in relevant vocational environments.
24. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are good. Most teachers use initial assessment to inform lesson planning and use a range of activities to check and assess learning. In some curriculum areas, targets are insufficiently challenging and often too general.
25. The college offers a good range of courses for 16-18 year olds and adult learners, enabling them to work at different levels and to progress within the college. Learners of all abilities, including those with additional learning needs, have good opportunities to gain qualifications that support their personal and academic progress.
26. Partnerships with local employers, community organisations and two local schools are highly productive. The college is effectively marketed and has a high profile locally. Through informal networks, the college provides good customised training for many organisations and they, in turn, support the

college and its students in a variety of ways. Most of the customised provision is related to early years or care, but the college also works with organisations to provide Skills for Life training, business administration and family learning. Partner organisations value the college's flexibility in terms of timing and off-site locations.

27. Enrichment activities provide learners with good opportunities to broaden their experience and enhance their personal development. Sporting activities and clubs attract more 16-18 year olds than adult learners. The extent and quality of subject specific enrichment varies. While some students undertake work experience, others, such as those undertaking art courses, benefit from extensive visits and trips abroad to enhance their studies.
28. The college prides itself on being 'small and friendly' and all learners value highly the very good advice, guidance and support they receive. Information given to learners is clear and accessible and sensitive to cultural diversity. This, along with well organised interviews, enables learners to make well-informed choices about their courses. Induction programmes are good and help learners to settle in quickly to their studies. Learners feel safe in the college.
29. The individual additional learning needs of most learners are diagnosed at induction. Those who need extra help with their literacy, numeracy or language skills are given good support, as are students with learning difficulties or disabilities. Although student services are usually only available during the day, staff also offer support by appointment in the evenings. Careers advice, primarily focused on 16-18 year olds, is good. Sixth form students particularly value help with university applications.
30. The quality of academic support varies from satisfactory to very good. In the best examples, students have subject specific, challenging and timed targets, based on evidence about what they have achieved so far and how they can fulfil their potential. These are then discussed with tutors in one-to-one meetings. This process is more rigorous for 16-18 year olds than for adult learners, who have a more informal arrangement to discuss their progress. Systems for recording this information have been revised and standardised and this is helping staff and students to be consistent in the way in which they identify appropriate targets. Weekly tutorial sessions for 16-18 year olds are based on a standard scheme of work that offers good opportunities for personal and social education.
31. Accommodation and facilities are satisfactory and younger students make good use of the students' common room. Wheelchair users are able to access the buildings.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

32. Leadership and management are satisfactory. During the transition period between the new principal's appointment and taking up her post, there was limited strategic direction and planning and some aspects of provision have not improved since the last inspection. The new principal has a clear strategic vision and a good understanding of the key challenges faced by the college.
33. Governors are well informed about the performance of the college and are highly committed to improving provision. The governors receive good training and continue to improve their understanding and use of management information. This has improved since the last inspection. Some governors link effectively to curriculum areas and most attend functions and open days held by the college.
34. Financial management is good and resource management is effective. Business planning is thorough and there is adequate monitoring of the college operating plan. European Social Fund (ESF) programmes are well managed.
35. There is a lack of clarity in the management structure of the college and some roles and responsibilities are not sufficiently defined. Most curriculum managers monitor their provision well and take appropriate corrective action. The quality of curriculum leadership and management varies from satisfactory in most areas to good in areas such as child care and early years and beauty therapy. Internal and external communications at the college are generally good. The college now provides good value for money.
36. Self-assessment processes are satisfactory although the procedures are not used effectively in some areas such as ICT and arts, media and publishing. The overall college self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative. Arrangements for self-assessment have recently been changed to improve the quality of reporting. Some curriculum action plans lack detail and clear targets to measure improvement. In some areas, there is insufficient evidence to effectively inform curriculum self assessment.
37. The college's teaching and learning observation process is good although there is little change to the college's internal profile since the last inspection. Child protection procedures and those which relate to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults are well recorded and staff and governors have received recent training to raise awareness. Staff appraisal procedures have recently been improved. Staff training is good with opportunities to participate in a wide variety of useful courses for personal and professional development.
38. The college management information system is now good. However, the college does not consistently compare its success rates for its sixth form provision with similar institutions to provide a framework for a more ambitious achievement strategy. Accurate and detailed data is now used to monitor and

evaluate course performance although in some curriculum areas such as preparation for life and work, management information is not well used.

39. Resources are generally satisfactory although in some areas accommodation is in need of redecoration. The college site is fully accessible. The college is compliant with statutory requirements in relation to equality, disability and race relations. Equality and diversity are suitably managed and promoted. In some areas such as arts, media and publishing and care, they are particularly well integrated into the curriculum. Equality of opportunities data is analysed and used well. Arrangements for the management of Skills for Life are unsatisfactory. The strategy is not coherent and there is insufficient sharing of best practice across curriculum areas. Key skills are inadequately integrated into courses in most areas.

Curriculum area inspections

Health and social care and early years

Good: grade 2

Context

40. Full and part-time courses in care and early years also include hospital play specialists, teaching assistants, playwork and access to nursing and teaching. There are 165 mostly full-time learners aged 16-18 and 632 adult learners most of whom study part-time. Over half of the adult part-time learners are on level 2 courses. The college is a CoVE for early years. Learners have access to work placements in nurseries, after school clubs, schools and care homes.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates in early years courses
- high retention rates
- consistently good teaching
- good progression routes for learners
- productive partnerships promoted through the CoVE.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- poor integration of key skills in vocational teaching.

Achievements and standards

41. Learners' achievements and standards are good. Success rates are high in early years courses. In the award in caring for children and the diploma in childcare and education, the success rates for the past three years are significantly above the national average. Retention rates are high on all courses, well above the national average for the last four years. On some courses retention rates are declining. Standards of work are good. Learners demonstrate good collaborative work in lessons, develop independent learning skills and knowledgeably relate theory to practice. Learners' behaviour and attendance are good.

Quality of provision

42. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are lively, teachers skilfully question and extend learning and learners enjoy their lessons. In early years lessons, the good range of creative activities such as making play dough or organising classroom displays, enhance learners' vocational skills and prepares learners well for their work placements. Learners are prepared well to work safely. Teachers and learners make good use of ILT to extend learning. Key skills are poorly integrated within vocational lessons limiting the opportunity to practise key skills in a relevant vocational environment. Teaching resources are satisfactory.

43. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. In some lessons teachers use initial assessment to inform their planning and many teachers use a wide range of activities to make frequent checks on learning. NVQ assessment and tracking is effective in monitoring learners' progress.
44. The programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of the learners effectively. There are good progression pathways for learners in early years and care. Many learners in early years are able to progress from foundation level to level 4 and into higher education. The CoVE has successfully promoted a wide range of productive partnerships and provides training which is responsive to employer and learners' needs. The CoVE enables good practice to be shared both within the college and with external partners. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good individual support.

Leadership and management

45. Leadership and management are good. Communications between teachers and managers are good. Regular course reviews by managers and teachers inform planning well. Curriculum development is good. Staff are well supported and staff development activities are well attended. The CoVE is well managed and it has helped to improve teaching and learning across the curriculum area. Quality assurance systems are effective. The self-assessment process is collaborative, broadly accurate but not always sufficiently evaluative. Some action plans are too general. Most weaknesses identified during the last inspection have been addressed.

Information and communication technology

Good: grade 2

Context

46. Courses in information and communication technology (ICT) are offered from entry to advanced level. Full-time courses include GCE AS and A2 ICT, the introductory certificate in IT at work, first and national diplomas in information technology (IT) for practitioners. Part-time courses include new CLAIT and IT for absolute beginners and a range of text processing, spreadsheet, database and computerised accounts courses. All ICT courses are taught at the main college. There are approximately 216 full-time learners aged 16-18 and 172 part-time adult learners.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates on many long courses
- high A or B grade pass rates on most GCE A-level courses
- good progress made in lessons by learners aged 16-18
- good support for learning
- effective professional development for teachers.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low success rates on adult courses.
- insufficiently detailed and challenging action plans for learners
- links between self-assessment, action planning and quality improvement.

Achievements and standards

47. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates on many long courses are above national averages. GCE AS and A level courses have high entry requirements. Success rates are similar to sixth form colleges. A significant proportion of learners on advanced level courses achieve high grades. AS ICT learners perform better than their incoming attainment suggests. Success rates are low on many courses for adults although recent college data indicates improvement.
48. Work is well presented and organised. GCE AS level projects are well researched, thorough and demonstrate a high level of technical competence. Learners demonstrate excellent oral and organisation skills. Full-time learners work well in groups, they talk confidently and articulately about their work.

Quality of provision

49. Teaching and learning are good. Learners aged 16-18 make good progress in lessons. Teachers use a suitable range of activities to engage them and develop their skills. Interactive white boards enhance learning in many lessons. Some

lessons for adults are conducted at too slow a pace and contain insufficient variety.

50. The standard of assessment is satisfactory. Action plans and learning targets are identified by teachers and learners but targets are often insufficiently challenging to be helpful. Written feedback on work is sometimes brief, but supported by good oral feedback.
51. The range of courses provides good opportunities for learners to progress within the college, to employment or to higher education. Work experience is integrated into full-time vocational courses. There are few opportunities for A Level students to visit industry or hear relevant speakers.
52. Learning support is good. Course induction is effective and learners receive good guidance. A high level of support is available in lessons and teachers readily help learners at other times. Materials are available on the intranet to support learners. Additional workshops are provided for full-time learners with literacy or numeracy needs. Special equipment is available for learners with physical needs.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good communication and sharing of practice and team meetings, held regularly, focus on learning, attendance and progress. The professional development of teachers is effective and focuses well on improving learning. Good attention is paid to health and safety. There are insufficient links between self-assessment and quality improvement. Key issues and targets for improvement are not identified clearly enough.

Beauty Therapy

Outstanding: grade 1

54. The college offers a wide range of full and part-time courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. They are offered at a variety of times and days; the majority at a purpose-built beauty therapy site. Courses include NVQ level 1, 2 and 3 in beauty therapy, ITEC reflexology, Indian head massage and a variety of vocational beauty courses. There are currently 248 learners. Of these 15 learners are aged 14-16, 32 learners are aged 16-18 and 201 are adult learners.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates
- high standards of practical and written work
- professional learning environment
- excellent range of relevant courses meeting learner and employer needs.
- good leadership and management.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- poor administration of internal verification arrangements.

Achievements and standards

55. Success rates are consistently very high on all courses and significantly above national averages. Learners achieve high standards, develop a high level of professional expertise and produce very good quality work. They are encouraged to develop research skills using both books and the internet. Teachers have exceptionally high expectations for all learners.

Quality of provision

56. Teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and include a variety of appropriate activities to meet the needs and abilities of different learners. These include group work, brain storming, question and answer, and small revision tests. Work packs are provided for each course. Teachers provide good professional role models and use their current industry experience to keep lesson content up to date. Learners are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their lessons.
57. Assessment and monitoring of learning are good. Learners practice on each other and clients provide good opportunities for assessment. The professional learning environment supports high standards of practice. There are very good resources in purpose built rooms with specialist equipment, for example, electric couches. Rooms are decorated with industry posters and past student work. Security is excellent.

58. The range of courses offered is excellent and relevant to the needs of learners, employers and the community. New courses have been added this year including an NVQ level 3 in beauty therapy. Course modes of attendance are adapted to meet the needs of learners. Course enrichment includes visits to health spas and exhibitions as well as workshops developing additional skills.
59. Guidance and support are very good. Course interviews ensure that learners meet entry requirements and are placed on appropriate courses. Learners are able to borrow uniforms, beauty kits and hire massage beds for additional practice. Individual support for learners is very good. Literacy and numeracy support is available.

Leadership and management

60. Leadership and management are good. Strategic planning for the area is strong and the range of qualifications and content of courses is updated as required. Communication is good and there is an excellent support system for new teachers. All teachers are observed teaching and they are encouraged to undertake professional development. Health and safety and risk assessments are good. Teachers are well qualified, have teaching qualifications and work in the industry. Equality and diversity issues are promoted well and reinforced within lessons. Self-assessment is largely accurate. However, it did not recognise that the internal verification system was poorly administered and does not contribute sufficiently to raising standards.

Visual and performing arts and media

Good: grade 2

Context

61. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses, level 3 BTEC national diplomas, certificates and awards, and first diplomas at level 2; mainly to learners aged 16-18. Currently, 247 learners are enrolled on GCE courses, 141 learners on BTEC level 3 courses and 41 learners on first diplomas. There are 15 adults enrolled on a City and Guilds 6923 in photography.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates on most courses
- high standards of practical work
- stimulating teaching which motivates and engages learners.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- poor retention on a small number of courses
- ineffective quality assurance procedures.

Achievements and standards

62. Success rates on most courses are high, well above national averages for similar colleges. GCE AS and A-level success rates improved markedly in 2005 when they were similar to rates achieved in sixth form colleges. Retention is slightly above national averages overall but low on a small number of courses. A high proportion of students taking AS/A2 level courses achieve high grades, but many are not stretched to achieve higher grades than those predicted at entry.
63. Standards of practical work are very good. Media students produce well-crafted promotional DVDs. Many students have strong verbal skills and express themselves confidently. Student attendance and behaviour are good.

Quality of provision

64. There is much good teaching. In the best lessons, the emphasis on high expectations and professionalism motivates and engages learners. Teachers use their industry experience well to keep lesson content current. For example, an A2 textiles class were inspired by their teacher's extensive knowledge of the fashion industry. There is effective use of ILT to enhance learning. In a few lessons, planning is poor with a lack of variety in content. Group work is productive and focused.
65. Assessment is rigorous. Students receive detailed feedback, including points for improvement. Panels of teachers mark the project work. The internal verification system is robust. Enrichment is good. Students visit theatre and

dance performances, exhibitions and shows. Art and design students may undertake a study week abroad. Work experience placements are extensive and varied. The performing arts department is building effective formal links with professional companies. There are strong links with local schools.

66. Support for students is good. Learners value their teachers who are highly responsive to their needs. Individual learning plans and subject reviews are detailed. However, targets for improvement are sometimes too vague.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management are good and focus appropriately on improving the quality of learning. Quality assurance procedures are not always used effectively to raise standards. Action plans lack smart targets and key points for improvement are sometimes missed. In internal observations, a few lessons are over-graded with some observation notes not matching the grades given. There is good communication between course teams and within departments but little fruitful collaboration across the area as a whole. Teachers receive useful professional development, including industry up-dating. There has been recent investment in accommodation and specialist equipment, including a purpose built theatre.

English and modern foreign languages

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

68. Some 150 full-time learners aged 16-18 are enrolled on four GCE AS and A2 English and French courses, 46 learners aged 16-18 are taking GCSE English or the newly introduced level 2 literacy qualification and 62 learners are on courses for English for speakers of other languages. Most of the evening provision is in modern foreign languages with 125 adult learners enrolled. Some 24 part-time adult learners are studying for GCSE, AS and A2 qualifications.

STRENGTHS

- good overall success rates on most full-time courses
- high standards in GCE AS and A2 English language and literature
- highly effective support.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low and declining A*-C pass rates in GCSE English
- uneven take up of accreditation by adult evening learners.

Achievements and standards

69. Overall achievement is good on most full-time courses. Many learners on GCE AS and A2 English language and literature achieve higher (A-B) grades and make more progress than their prior attainment predicted. In English literature overall pass rates are high. Higher grade pass rates are below national averages. GCSE (A*-C) pass rates in GCSE English are low and declining. Many adult language learners are reluctant to undertake accreditation although those who took examinations were successful.

70. Many learners acquire the specialist language of literary analysis and make perceptive comments which stimulate discussion. A2 French students speak the language with few inhibitions and their oral and written skills surpass the standards expected at this stage of their course. The standard of written work is satisfactory overall. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

71. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students enjoy their lessons, particularly when effective, imaginative use is made of smartboards. Lessons are well planned and the better lessons, include plenty of variety and timed activities to sustain learners' interest and motivation. Pair work is productive; learners benefit from the provision of high quality learning materials and guidance notes. In a few lessons, learners' behaviour is immature and not focused sufficiently on their work.

72. Assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress are good. It is rigorous, meticulously recorded and focused on improvement. Oral feedback in lessons and comments on written work is clear and thorough.
73. The programme offer is satisfactory and the introduction of level 2 literacy to complement GCSE English offers learners options. Language provision for adult evening students is increasing but difficulties remain regarding the limited choice of qualifications.
74. Learner support is highly effective. They appreciate both the academic and personal support received. Learners value student services, finding the counsellors approachable and knowledgeable. Many learners cherish the confidentiality of individual tutorials. Arrangements for initial assessment and diagnostic testing are very effective.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Weaknesses noted in the previous inspection have been addressed although the low take-up of accreditation by adult evening learners and poor GCSE English results are yet to be resolved.
76. Communication is satisfactory. There has been a good focus on improving achievement and standards over the previous year. Staff development is comprehensive. Tutors undertake a variety of training activities to support classroom practice. Self assessment is accurate and action plans focus on addressing weaknesses.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

77. The college provides literacy and numeracy support for learners aged 16-18 and a small number of literacy and numeracy courses for adults. Over two thirds of the provision is ESOL for adults. All learners take externally accredited qualifications either in the college, in community venues and on employers' premises. In 2005-06, there were 101 learners aged 16-18 and 1,243 learners in the adult college.

STRENGTHS

- high standards of work in lessons
- good use of stimulating teaching and learning methods
- good response to community and employers needs.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low pass rates for adult Skills for Life courses
- poor planning in some lessons
- insufficient use of ILT to enhance learning.

Achievements and standards

78. The standard of learners' work is high. Learners progress well and achieve their personal aims. Lessons are interesting and challenging and learners demonstrate good oral skills.
79. Adult learners' achievement is unsatisfactory. Pass rates for adults have been significantly below national averages. However, following determined actions for improvement, college data shows that pass rates improved in 2005/06. Pass rates for 16-18 year olds are good and retention rates for this group of students are at the national average.

Quality of provision

80. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching methods are varied, interactive and provide realistic practice of skills. Teachers make good use of the Skills for Life published materials supplementing these with well-designed materials of their own. In some lessons, planning is weak and group work is not effective. Learners are not sufficiently encouraged to complete tasks and there are few opportunities to consolidate learning. There is insufficient use of ILT to support learning.
81. Assessment and monitoring of learning are satisfactory. Individual learning plans provide a useful record of completed work. However, many learning plans for adults do not record how achievement was demonstrated and do not

consistently set sufficiently specific and challenging targets. On some adult courses reviews of learning are incomplete.

82. The College provides a good range of courses in the community and for employers. ESOL learners are encouraged to make use of sport facilities and other enrichment activities.
83. Support and guidance for learners are good. All full-time learners have an assessment of literacy, language and numeracy. This informs individual action planning and support arrangements. Tutorial support for learners aged 16-18 is good. Initial assessment and induction for adult ESOL learners is good. A 'buddy' system provides effective peer support. Staff quickly establish productive relationships with learners.

Leadership and management

84. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Skills for Life programmes are managed in different parts of the college. Within each programme, good team work supports curriculum development and sharing of resources and materials. This structure does not sufficiently promote sharing of good practice between areas and the integration of Skills for Life across the college. Not all teachers have or are working towards appropriate qualifications. Accommodation is satisfactory although some rooms are too small to support active learning. There are few displays or other celebrations of student work in ESOL classes. There is respect for equality and diversity but little explicit promotion in teaching and learning. The self-assessment process does not use an adequate range of information to support judgements. It does not sufficiently inform action planning or the development of Skills for Life across the college.

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	350	56	56	0	906	67	55	12
	03/04	577	65	60	5	561	61	59	2
	04/05	703	66	64	2	881	62	62	0
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	33	91	60	31	9	67	47	20
	03/04	36	72	65	7	1	100	52	48
	04/05								
NVQs	02/03			52				49	
	03/04			56				57	
	04/05			61				62	
Other	02/03	317	52	56	-4	897	67	55	12
	03/04	541	64	60	4	560	61	59	2
	04/05	703	66	64	2	881	62	61	1

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	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	02/03	540	53	52	1	1002	59	49	10
	03/04	538	58	56	2	575	59	54	5
	04/05	412	70	61	9	684	59	59	0
GCSEs	02/03	169	51	57	-6	68	41	55	-14
	03/04	196	49	61	-12	50	64	59	5
	04/05	147	65	64	1	82	58	62	-4
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	82	67	58	9	18	39	53	-14
	03/04	43	79	63	16	15	7	57	-50
	04/05	25	92	67	25				
NVQs	02/03					101	89	48	41
	03/04	7	29	52	-23	181	61	53	8
	04/05	15	87	57	30	219	58	60	-2
Other	02/03	289	50	50	0	815	57	48	9
	03/04	292	61	54	7	329	60	53	7
	04/05	225	69	60	9	383	60	59	1

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	1275	71	62	9	556	62	51	11
	03/04	1499	73	64	9	478	61	53	8
	04/05	1553	85	67	18	301	71	57	14
A/A2 Levels	02/03	381	83	82	1	69	49	63	-14
	03/04	305	89	84	5	67	34	65	-31
	04/05	433	96	86	10	14	64	69	-5
AS Levels	02/03	666	68	61	7	57	39	48	-9
	03/04	991	70	63	7	40	30	50	-20
	04/05	884	83	65	18	13	69	52	17
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	136	66	50	16	7	43	45	-2
	03/04	84	56	52	4	3	0	43	-43
	04/05	18	61	60	1				
NVQs	02/03	1	100	50	50	69	90	44	46
	03/04	3	33	62	-29	65	66	47	19
	04/05					145	68	54	14
Other	02/03	91	46	55	-9	354	63	53	10
	03/04	119	71	56	15	303	71	56	16
	04/05	215	75	60	15	129	75	58	17