



# Weymouth College



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

Better  
education  
and care

## Inspection report

Audience  
Post-sixteen

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130653

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## Basic information about the college

Name of college: Weymouth College

Type of college: Tertiary

Principal: Susan Moore

Address of college: Cranford Avenue, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 7LW

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Chair of governors: Paul Kent

Unique reference number: 130653

Name of lead inspector: Margaret Swift, ALI

Dates of inspection: 13-17 November 2006

## Background of the organisation

1. Weymouth College is a medium-sized tertiary college serving the towns of Weymouth, Portland and South and West Dorset. The college is the main provider of vocational and academic education in the area. The only other college within reasonable travelling distance specialises in land-based industries. One of the local secondary schools has a sixth form, and some young people travel from Weymouth to Dorchester for their sixth form education. Most of the college's work is delivered on the main college site with some provision in information and communication technology (ICT) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is delivered in community venues. The college mission is to provide education and training to meet the needs of the local community and to invest in a quality service to ensure positive outcomes.
2. Weymouth College offers education and training in all fifteen subject sector categories, though enrolments in agriculture, horticulture and animal care are very low. The college offers a wide range of GCSE advanced level subjects, AVCE courses, first and national diplomas and National Vocational Qualifications (NVOs) and a small provision in work based learning. The college also offer higher education qualifications and a wide range of Foundation degrees.
3. The college enrolls around 2,500 learners each year. In 2004-05 there were 2,585 (FTE) learners. Those aged 16-18 numbered 1,426 (FTE) and those aged over 19 numbered 1,158 (FTE). Weymouth and Portland have a population of around 1.5 per cent from minority ethnic groups. Weymouth College enrolments are two per cent higher than the ethnic composition of the local community. Unemployment in the south west is low at 1.6 compared with the national rate of 2.6 but the rate is slightly higher in Weymouth and Portland at 1.9 per cent. Weymouth College is based in a rural area and operates in a difficult climate for the rural economy.
4. The college has close links with local prisons and has delivered teacher training for Skills for Life through an LSC funded pilot. Weymouth College in partnership with two other colleges is a joint Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for stonemasonry. The college is a partner in an increased flexibility programme for school students wishing to sample vocational courses.

## Scope of the inspection

5. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](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 and social care; construction; information and communication technology (ICT); languages, literature and culture; preparation for work and life.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: grade 3
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: grade 3

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

## Curriculum areas

Health and social care	Satisfactory: grade 3
Construction	Good: grade 2
ICT	Satisfactory: grade 3
Languages, literature and culture	Satisfactory: grade 3
Preparation for work and life	Satisfactory: grade 3

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

6. The overall effectiveness of the college is satisfactory. It has improved retention rates at all levels and success rates on adult NVQ programmes to above the national average. There is good achievement on full-time level 1 programmes. Achievement for learners aged 16-18 remains low. Progression rates on vocational courses and from courses for learners aged 14-16 are good; however, there is poor progression from GCE AS level to A2.
7. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff development is well focused on appropriate teaching and learning themes and there is effective sharing of good practice. Learners receive satisfactory feedback following assessment, but target setting in individual learning plans is still underdeveloped. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.
8. The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college has increased the range of courses for disadvantaged young people and adults and has increased the range and levels of vocational provision. It has also increased the number of students aged 14-16 engaged in training. Employer engagement remains underdeveloped in some vocational areas.
9. Initial advice and guidance are satisfactory. Tutorial arrangements have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. However, learner guidance and support facilities are poorly located and do not have a sufficiently high profile across the college. Additional learning support needs are not being identified early enough for a significant minority of learners.
10. Leadership and management are satisfactory. College strategies are responsive to government and local priorities. Partnerships with schools are strong. Communications are generally satisfactory, but some reports for governors do not include a sufficient level of detail. Financial management is effective and the financial status of the college has improved. Quality assurance procedures have improved. There is insufficient awareness and promotion of equality and diversity across the college.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: grade 3

11. The college's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Quality assurance procedures have improved and the accuracy of the self-assessment report is satisfactory. Action plans appropriately target most weaknesses identified through course and programme area review. However, certain key weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection remain, such as the low pass rates. The college has developed more thorough and objective internal lesson observations



and staff performance review schemes. These are now used to identify and prioritise areas for development and staff training.

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

12. The college has made satisfactory progress to promote improvement since the last inspection in 2004. Management structures have been refined, the range of provision has increased and is now more responsive to local priorities, and quality assurance procedures have been significantly developed. The college has continued to improve the accuracy, reliability and use of management information to strengthen the financial position of the college. Retention and success rates have also improved. The quality of teaching and learning remains satisfactory. The college has yet to address, in particular, improvements to pass rates, target setting and the effectiveness of individual learning plans, and the promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum.

Key strengths of the college

#### *Strengths*

- Good student retention
- highly effective schools links
- wide range of provision
- effective financial management and control
- comprehensive staff development to improve teaching and learning and management.

Areas for improvement

#### *The college should address:*

- raising standards and achievement
- success rates on AS level
- target setting and use of individual learning plans
- the promotion of equality and diversity themes
- the greater involvement of learners in decision-making.

## Main findings

### Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

13. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Inspection judgements on learner achievement were based on official data for the years 2002/03-2004/05 and interim data for 2005/06. Success rates for learners aged 16-18 and over 19 on long courses have risen to around the national average. The retention of learners has improved significantly to above national average, though the achievement rate has fallen and more able learners are often not sufficiently challenged in their learning. College targets to raise retention and achievement are not sufficiently rigorous.
14. Achievement and retention rates are high on full-time level 1 courses for 16-18 year olds. Achievements on the 'Increased Flexibility Programme' for 14-16 year old learners are good and many learners progress to relevant college courses. In work-based learning, overall and timely success rates for apprenticeship frameworks have improved significantly over the last three years and are now close to the national average. In 2006, achievement on GCSE AS programmes fell to below the national average and the number progressing to GCSE A level was very poor. Many GCSE AS learners made weak progress in comparison with their starting point, whereas on GCSE A level programmes, learners made the progress expected of them. Achievement on level 2 and level 3 vocational programmes is variable, although many learners on BTEC national courses made very good progress when measured against their starting points. Progression on vocational courses has improved at all levels and is now good. While retention and achievement on many adult part-time and evening courses are poor, adults achieved well on national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in 2006.
15. The standard of learners' practical and written work is satisfactory in most areas and good in construction. At the recent 'Skillbuild' competition, stonemasonry learners achieved gold and bronze medals. The achievement of key skills has improved considerably; however, many learners are not taking a high enough level course in order to challenge and extend their learning, especially in communication. While college data indicate improvement in attendance, during the inspection it was below average.

### Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

16. The college self-assessment report judges the overall quality of teaching and learning to be satisfactory, and inspectors agree. The teaching and learning observation scheme was reviewed after the last inspection. All full-time staff are observed at least twice a year and most part-time staff observed once a year. Following each observation, an action plan is created to address the areas identified for development. Information from all observations is used to inform

- the staff development and training plan. Staff training and development linked to teaching and learning are good.
17. Inspectors carried out some joint observations with the college's observers and there was close agreement on the quality of teaching and learning in most of these observations. However, there was evidence of over grading in one area and this is reflected in the college's own records of observations in 2005/06. Feedback by the college's observers to teachers is detailed, clear and accurate. It is supportive and identifies areas for improvement.
  18. Much good teaching was observed, particularly in construction, languages, literature and culture, and preparation for work and life. In the best lessons, teachers planned a range of imaginative and challenging activities that fully engaged the learners. Learners were motivated and enthusiastic about their learning, asked questions and used their skills effectively to solve problems.
  19. In the weaker lessons, teachers failed to provide learning activities which challenged and extended the skills of more able learners. Hence some learners spent long periods of time not engaged in any activities. In a few lessons, too many learners were passive and there were insufficient checks on learners' understanding. Good use is made of interactive learning technologies in most curriculum areas.
  20. Assessment is satisfactory. Most teachers provide constructive feedback on assessed work which helps the learners to improve, but in some instances feedback is limited to a few comments. Internal verification is good in construction and effective in all other areas.
  21. The range of programmes is satisfactory. Learners benefit from a wide range of courses with appropriate progression routes from level 1 to level 3 in most curriculum areas. There is good progression to the college's 12 foundation degrees. Weymouth College is a joint CoVE for stonemasonry in partnership with two other colleges. Employers are positive about their links with the college, but employer engagement remains underdeveloped in some vocational areas. The management of work-based learning programmes is satisfactory.
  22. Educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the college has significantly increased the range of courses for disadvantaged young people and adults. Partnerships with schools and community organisations are successful. The college ensures that school students receive good information about its courses. A wide range of initiatives is in place which enables pupils from primary and secondary schools to experience college life and vocational courses. The college works well with community-based organisations to meet the needs of its staff and learners.
  23. The arrangements for enrichment are satisfactory. There is an imaginative range of cross-college enrichment activities, such as music, body massage and

jewellery making. Sports activities are particularly strong and are enhanced by the development of the sports academies.

24. Support and guidance for learners are satisfactory overall. Initial advice and guidance are good. The college works closely with Connexions and partner schools to ensure that students receive impartial advice about the most appropriate choice of education and training provider. The number of learners withdrawing from courses has fallen by 50% in the last two years, and transfers between programmes have decreased.
25. Personal support is effective and valued by learners. The co-ordination of transport arrangements for learners is good, many of whom have to travel considerable distances to college from outlying rural areas. The location of the main guidance and learner support facilities does not ensure that the services are sufficiently accessible to all learners.
26. Tutorial arrangements have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. However, target setting in tutorials is weak. Individual learning plans are insufficiently detailed and are not used effectively to set targets and to review progress. Some learners do not have sufficient access to individual tutorials.
27. Support for learners with additional learning needs is satisfactory overall. However, the development of the monitoring of learning support and how the support is delivered in the lessons is slow. This was identified as a weakness at the last inspection and in the college's two most recent self-assessment reports. Teachers are not always sufficiently aware of learners' additional support needs at an early stage in the year. The college has been slow to use data to monitor the effect of its guidance and support on the retention and success rates of those learners receiving support.

#### Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college's strategic focus is well aligned to key government priorities and the needs of the local community. The public profile of the college has recently improved significantly.
29. The quality of curriculum management is satisfactory. There is a strong culture of empowerment and accountability of managers. There are reliable management systems in place and good access to a range of management information which enable managers to track and monitor performance against targets. However, there is insufficient focus on the use of value added data and other information to raise achievements. The college is strongly committed to providing managers with appropriate time, development and training to carry out their roles effectively.
30. Communications with external stakeholders are good. The college is working highly effectively in partnership with schools to develop a more integrated 14-

- 19 provision in the area. The quality of internal communications is more mixed. Managers and governors are suitably informed about college business and priorities. However, in a recent survey, staff expressed concerns over a number of aspects of internal communication with senior managers including trust in and approachability of senior managers, and clarity of communication over key strategic priorities. Since the survey was completed, the senior management team has set up focus groups to start to address these issues with staff.
31. Quality improvement procedures and the accuracy of the self-assessment report are satisfactory. Self-assessment, internal quality audits, and lesson observation schemes are increasingly effective. These result in appropriate prioritising, action planning, training and staff development activities which are helping to raise the quality of provision. One of the key areas where quality improvements have not yet had a significant impact is on raising pass rates.
  32. Staff development is good. The college successfully identifies teaching and learning development priorities from the outcomes of the lesson observation scheme. However, there are insufficient opportunities for industrial updating in some areas.
  33. Governance and clerking procedures are effective. Governors take an active part in helping define the educational character and strategic priorities of the college. They receive adequate reports on most core topics. The reports they receive do not, however, place sufficient emphasis on certain key issues, for example, the low pass rates, monitoring and review of performance in line with race relations legislation, and staff perceptions.
  34. Most aspects of the college's response to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2002 are satisfactory. The college has an equality and diversity plan in place. Staff and governors have received training on legislative developments in these areas. All the buildings are accessible to learners with restricted mobility. There is, however, insufficient monitoring, review and reporting of learners' performance by ethnic group. There is no evidence of the policies making an impact on the curriculum or tutorial programmes. The college has appropriate child protection procedures in place. It carries out and keeps appropriate records of criminal records bureau checks on all staff.
  35. Most of the college's financial management and monitoring systems are stringent and highly effective. The college maintains strong financial control and is making good progress to remove itself from financial recovery. Initial indications suggest that in the current year the college will exceed its enrolment targets. The college has identified staff utilisation as one key area where further improvements are necessary. Value for money is satisfactory.

## Curriculum area inspections

Health, public services and care

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

36. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses at levels 1 to 4. There are 148 learners on full-time courses at levels 1 to 3 with 59 on care and 89 on childcare courses. The majority are 16-18 years old. Seven learners are on a childcare course through a school partnership scheme and 56 learners undertake vocational GCSEs as part of the 14-16 increased flexibility programme. Fifty-seven learners are on counselling courses. NVQs in childcare and care at levels 2, 3 and 4 have 381 learners and there are 19 on oral health level 3. The foundation degree course in early years has 31 learners.

### *STRENGTHS*

- good use of ILT in many lessons
- good response to the needs of local employers
- effective management action to ensure improvements in NVQs.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- poor pass rates on full-time childcare courses
- insufficient challenge for learners in many lessons
- inadequate support arrangements for part-time learners.

### Achievements and standards

37. Learners' achievements are satisfactory. In 2005/06, success rates on the majority of full-time courses improved to at or above the national average. Pass rates on full-time childcare courses at levels 2 and 3 are below national rates. Success rates are good on NVQ courses in care and early years. On the 14 -16 provision, achievement has been 100%. Key skills results are satisfactory. Learners achieve well on additional qualifications such as first aid. There is satisfactory attainment in lessons. Vocational skills, such as planning activities for children, are well developed in the workplace. Portfolios and assignments are of a good standard with a good range of diverse evidence.

### Quality of provision

38. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Information learning technology (ILT) is used effectively and confidently in many lessons. Classrooms have interactive whiteboards that are used well. For example, in one lesson, good use was made of video clips to discuss observations of children. Theory and practice are effectively linked. In the weaker lessons, there is too much whole class activity. Learners are insufficiently challenged. Assessment is satisfactory. Marking is

thorough and provides detailed feedback, though the return of work to learners is sometimes slow.

39. There is a good range of courses to meet the needs of college and school learners and employers. Links with employers are productive. The addition of NVQs in care, early years and oral health and short course qualifications meet identified local needs. Work experience is extensive.
40. Personal support for learners is good, but the tutorial system is inconsistently applied. The newly introduced electronic individual learning plans (ILPs) have not been used to set targets and many learners have not had individual tutorials. Additional learning needs are clearly identified through initial assessment and good classroom support is given for individuals. Support for part-time learners is inadequate. There is late identification of their needs and many learners are unable to access appropriate support.

#### Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications are good. Teachers have good access to continuous professional development (CPD). Effective management action has been taken to ensure improvements in NVQs and to ensure consistent standards throughout the department. The self-assessment report is accurate and actions have been taken to address the areas identified for improvement.

Construction

Good: grade 2

Context

42. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in construction from level 1 to level 3. Established trade courses include carpentry and joinery, furniture studies, brickwork, electrical installation and stonemasonry. New facilities are being provided for plumbing, painting and decorating. The college has joint CoVE status with two other colleges for its Stonemasonry provision. At the time of the inspection, there were 414 learners of whom 159 were aged 16-18. Work-based learners attend for off-the-job training from two managing agencies. Fifty-one learners aged 14-16 attend courses held either at the college or on school premises.

### *STRENGTHS*

- good success rates on level 1 courses
- good development of learners' practical skills
- much good teaching and learning
- good employer and community links
- effective target setting and action planning for staff
- effective self-assessment and course reviews.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- low pass rates on a few NVQ level 2 courses
- late identification of learning support needs for a minority of learners
- insufficiently challenging target setting for learners.

Achievements and standards

43. Success rates are good. Success rates are high on courses at level 1, with many courses being above the national rates. Pass rates for level 2 NVQ carpentry and joinery and brickwork courses declined in 2004/05. However, effective action planning has arrested this decline and pass rates improved in 2005/06. The standard of learners' practical and written work is good. They demonstrate good levels of skill and make good progress in lessons. There is good progression to higher education programmes. The achievements of learners aged 14-16 are good with many progressing to work-based and full-time college courses.

Quality of provision

44. Teaching and learning are good. Many teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively. Use of innovative teaching and learning resources adds variety and challenge to lessons and enhances learners' experience. In practical lessons, good skills are developed. Attention to health and safety issues is rigorous with



learners working in a safe environment. Most workshops are spacious and well equipped with specialist equipment. Some theory lessons are conducted in overcrowded classrooms and opportunities to display curriculum enhancing resources are not maximised.

45. The range of provision is satisfactory with progression from levels 1 to 3 in most subjects. Links with employers and the community are good. Effective partnerships ensure the service offered by the college meets the needs of industry.
46. Guidance and support are good. Initial assessment and diagnosis of additional learning needs are thorough for first-year learners. However, the learning needs of a minority of learners are not identified early enough. Tutorial provision is effective, but learners' individual learning plans lack detailed targets and actions.

#### Leadership and management

47. The provision is well managed. Curriculum managers successfully improve outcomes through realistic target setting, action planning and regular review. Team meetings focus on learners' progress, curriculum planning and on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Staff appraisals and lesson observations are used to monitor performance and to agree targets for all teachers. Internal verification is thorough. Rigorous assessment procedures and practices are in place. The self-assessment report is an accurate reflection of the provision. Equality and diversity are promoted and encouraged satisfactorily.

Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

48. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in ICT. There are 178 learners aged 16-18 and 200 adult learners enrolled on courses. Most provision for 16-18 learners is at level 2 and level 3, whereas the majority of adults enrol on level 1 courses. Full-time courses include first and national diplomas, national certificate for information technology practitioners, and GCE AS and GCE A levels in computing and ICT. Part-time courses comprise City & Guilds systems support, European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) level 1 and level 2 qualifications and the computer literacy and IT certificate.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high success rates on most full-time courses in 2005/06
- broad range of computing and ICT provision for full-time learners
- effective strategies implemented to improve success rates on most courses for 16-18 year old learners.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- low pass rates on the level 1 ECDL and computer literacy and IT courses
- insufficient focus on teaching and learning activities to challenge the more able learners
- no work placement opportunities for full-time learners.

### Achievements and standards

49. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on most full-time courses in 2005/06 are above the national averages. Pass rates on full-time courses are satisfactory or better. However, pass rates on some part-time courses for adults are low. Pass rates for key skill qualifications have improved. Many learners on GCE AS, A level and national diploma courses do not achieve the grades predicted for them when prior attainment is taken into account. The standard of most learners' work is satisfactory. Overall attendance at lessons is satisfactory.

### Quality of provision

50. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers set imaginative tasks to motivate learners and use effective questioning techniques to assess the progress being made by learners. In too many lessons, teachers fail to provide learning activities which challenge the more able learners and do not check the understanding of individual learners with sufficient frequency. The suitability and rigour of assessment are satisfactory overall. Feedback provided by teachers on learners' assessed work is good.

51. The college offers a broad range of ICT courses for full-time learners and an appropriate range for adult learners. Most courses for adults are offered in community centres and through the recently expanded LearnDirect provision. The department recognises the need to improve engagement with employers. Courses for full-time learners do not include a work placement programme.
52. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Learners are enrolled on courses appropriate to their needs and their prior attainment. The proportion of learners progressing from the national diploma to higher education is low. Learning support provided in lessons is satisfactory. The tutorial programme now includes activities which are carefully aligned with the five outcomes for 'Every Child Matters'.

### Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have successfully focused on improving success rates on full-time vocational courses. However, use of management information for target setting and monitoring performance at course team level is underdeveloped. Outcomes of graded lesson observations are used effectively in the appraisal of staff performance. Equality and diversity are not actively promoted in the curriculum. Staff are suitably qualified and accommodation and resources are fit for purpose. The self-assessment report identifies most issues identified by inspectors but lacks rigorous evaluation.

Languages, literature and culture

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

54. The college offers a range of courses in English and modern foreign languages. English provision includes GCE English literature, English language and GCSE English. The language programme includes GCE French, Spanish and German. The curriculum area has 220 learners of whom 65 are adults. Eighteen learners are enrolled on a short course in British sign language. With regard to 16-18 year olds, there are 130 learners on level 3 courses and 30 on level 2 courses.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high success rates on most English courses
- lively and imaginative teaching and learning
- good links with local schools
- effective measures leading to improvements in standards on courses.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- declining and low success rates on AS English Language
- some poorly planned lessons
- insufficient attention paid to Key Skills
- inadequate use of ILT.

### Achievements and standards

55. Learners' achievements are satisfactory overall and high on most English courses in 2006. Most learners achieve at the expected level. Less than half the learners who complete GCE AS level courses progress to GCE A level. Retention rates are mostly satisfactory but low on AS level English language. The standard of learners' written work is satisfactory and some is good. Learners are keen and enthusiastic to learn and their behaviour is good. Attendance rates are satisfactory.

### Quality of provision

56. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory and some is good. In the best lessons, careful planning and imaginative teaching effectively matches learners' interests to course requirements. These lessons are conducted at a lively pace. Learners contribute collaboratively and make good progress. Less effective lessons are characterised by poor planning. In these lessons, explanations of tasks and expectations are insufficiently clear. Learners lack confidence and fail to make the progress they should. Written work is generally marked quickly and accurately and returned with helpful advice on how it may be improved. Insufficient attention is paid to key skills in lessons and there is inadequate use of ILT in lessons.

57. The range of provision is satisfactory. Recent reintroduction of AS French, Spanish and German has broadened the curriculum, but numbers are low on each of these courses.
58. Support for learners is satisfactory. Teaching staff give freely of their time, which learners appreciate. Initial assessment of learning styles is shared with learners. Learners find this information helpful and it is frequently used to meet individual learning needs in lessons. On GCE A level, target minimum grades are identified, but for a significant minority of learners, target setting is insufficiently detailed and learners do not always know what they have to do to improve.

### Leadership and management

59. The arrangements for leadership and management are good. Over the past year, action planning has succeeded in raising standards on several courses. Active links with local schools over the last year have led to much improved recruitment. Managers communicate clearly. There is clearer direction, better co-ordination of courses and greater team cohesion.
60. Regular meetings are effective in monitoring standards and supporting learners. There are increased opportunities for the sharing of best practice. Learners' views are actively sought and findings lead to well considered actions to improve the provision. Self-assessment is robust, honest and fully involves teaching staff. Inspectors agree with the majority of the key findings identified by the college.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

61. There are 113 enrolments on language (ESOL) courses, 96 learners on courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and approximately 80 learners attending literacy and numeracy courses. There are a further 1,700 enrolments on key skills in application of number and communications at levels 1 and 2. Both full- and part-time courses are provided from entry level to level 2. Courses cater for learners aged 16-18 and those aged 19 years and over. Most of the key skills enrolments are 16-18 year old full-time learners.

### *STRENGTHS*

- good imaginative teaching on courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- particularly good matching of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to work placements
- very effective enrichment programme.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- insufficient planning and monitoring of learning
- insufficient resources for ESOL programmes
- inadequate tracking systems to ensure that learners are on appropriate level courses.

Achievements and standards

62. Success rates are satisfactory. Although many success rates are above national averages, many learners achieve qualifications that only confirm their current level of ability and some learners achieve qualifications lower than their assessed ability. Most entry level learners progress appropriately to level 1. Attendance is satisfactory. Learners make satisfactory progress. In the best lessons, learners develop a good range of skills. The progress of some learners is hampered by large class sizes and the lack of identified learning outcomes for individual learners.

Quality of provision

63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Much teaching for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is imaginative and challenging. In one lesson, learners gained a good understanding of healthy eating, then went shopping for the food and were keen to cook. Classroom support is effective and support staff work collaboratively with the teachers. In other areas, many lessons are planned without identifying how the individual needs of learners will be met. In the weaker lessons, the more able learners often have to wait significant periods of time for others to catch up.

64. The range of provision is satisfactory overall. The needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well matched to work placements. Learners gain placements with national and local companies and public bodies. Work activities are well planned and learners develop work skills and confidence. Twenty-two out of 53 learners entered paid employment in 2005/06.
65. Support and guidance for learners are satisfactory. The enrichment programme is particularly effective in developing learners' skills. Examples include sport, jewellery craft and fund raising. A bowling event was used to improve numeracy skills. Learners further develop their communication and confidence. Visiting speakers add value to other courses.

#### Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. ESOL programmes are under-resourced and accommodation is cramped. Learners' diverse needs are not fully met in lessons where numbers are high. Many learners feel that they have insufficient opportunities to practise their English and are sometimes too involved with helping others at the expense of their own learning. The college is currently training more staff to rectify this weakness.
67. Arrangements to ensure that learners are on a course at an appropriate level are inadequate. There are no systems in place to effectively check that learners are achieving sufficiently challenging qualifications. Many learners achieve a qualification at the same level of their initial assessment. The self-assessment is largely accurate.

## 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	820	54	56	-2	1155	81	55	+26
	03/04	542	47	60	-13	541	51	59	-8
	04/05	827	51	64	-13	1124	61	62	-1
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	61	54	60	-6	none			
	03/04	36	67	65	+2	5	60	52	+8
	04/05	38	71	68	+3	none			
NVQs	02/03	80	60	56	+4	26	73	57	+16
	03/04	21	24	61	-37	30	17	62	-45
	04/05	42	64	67	-3	111	62	67	-5
Other	02/03	679	53	56	-3	1129	81	55	+26
	03/04	485	47	60	-13	506	53	59	-6
	04/05	747	49	64	-15	1013	61	61	0

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	983	49	52	-3	854	48	49	-1
	03/04	721	54	56	-2	612	52	54	-2
	04/05	887	55	61	-6	1091	56	60	-4
GCSEs	02/03	330	46	57	-11	203	46	55	-9
	03/04	84	58	61	-3	185	45	59	-14
	04/05	94	54	64	-10	157	47	62	-15
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	78	36	59	-23	1	0	53	-53
	03/04	36	50	63	-13	3	33	57	-24
	04/05	25	52	67	-15	7	43	70	-27
NVQs	02/03	95	44	42	+2	211	48	49	-1
	03/04	155	56	52	+4	125	61	53	+8
	04/05	251	39	57	-18	190	51	60	-9
Other	02/03	480	55	50	+5	439	49	48	+1
	03/04	446	53	54	-1	299	53	52	+1
	04/05	517	64	60	+4	737	59	59	0



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	2100	68	62	+6	901	56	51	+5
	03/04	1885	68	64	+4	677	57	53	+4
	04/05	1510	68	67	+1	800	53	57	-4
A/A2 Levels	02/03	491	86	82	+4	91	75	63	+12
	03/04	512	87	84	+3	70	70	66	+4
	04/05	333	88	86	+2	51	65	69	-4
AS Levels	02/03	1113	69	61	+8	164	43	48	-5
	03/04	952	60	63	-3	147	41	50	-9
	04/05	749	65	66	-1	161	54	52	+2
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	263	49	50	-1	56	43	45	-2
	03/04	108	65	52	+13	18	61	43	+18
	04/05	77	61	60	+1	10	60	53	+7
NVQs	02/03	36	45	50	-5	221	47	44	+3
	03/04	22	68	54	+14	142	62	47	+15
	04/05	35	54	62	-8	160	59	54	+5
Other	02/03	197	55	55	0	369	64	53	+11
	03/04	291	59	56	+3	300	59	56	+3
	04/05	316	57	60	-3	418	48	58	-10