



The Bournemouth and Poole 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: The Bournemouth and Poole College

Type of college: General Further Education

Principal: Rowland Foote

Address of college: North Road, Poole, Dorset, BH14 0LS

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Chair of governors: Bernard Vaughan OBE

Unique reference number: 130652

Name of lead inspector: Michael Davis, ALI

Dates of inspection: 15-19 January 2007

Background of the organisation

1. The Bournemouth and Poole College is one of the largest general further education (GFE) colleges in the country. It is the biggest provider of academic and vocational education in Dorset. The college's data for 2005/06 show that of the 20,364 learners on roll, 16,381 were Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded students, of whom 3,499 were aged 16-18 and 12,882 were adults. Over 3,000 learners aged 16-18 study full-time, with the majority of adults following part-time provision. The college offers courses across all 15 sector subject areas. There is large provision for work-based learning. Approximately 1,000 learners each year follow apprenticeship programmes together with over 100 Entry to Employment (E2E) learners. The college leads a large Job Centre Plus consortium, each year attracts some 200 international students and provides vocational courses for nearly 300 school pupils. Courses range from pre-entry to higher national diploma (HND) and foundation degrees. Over 800 students followed higher education courses. The college has centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) status in three areas - retail, culinary arts and health and social care. In 2005/06, the proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds was small, but similar to the local population. Unemployment rates are slightly lower than the national average, but the proportion of school leavers that achieve five or more grades A* - C, including English and mathematics, is four percentage points higher. Over 80% of the curriculum provision and all of the central support services and departments are located at the two main sites: Lansdowne, Bournemouth and North Road, Poole. The college also has six other major sites in the Bournemouth and Poole area and provision at many community venues.
2. The college mainly recruits students from Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch. However, it also attracts students from other parts of Dorset and Hampshire. The college mission is 'to serve the community through world class, high quality education and training, and the pursuit of excellence in all that we do'.

Scope of the inspection

3. 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 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.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: grade 2

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

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

4. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, success rates have continued to improve. Most are now at or above national averages, but some are below. Success rates are high for learners aged 16-18 following level 1 provision and for adults at level 2. Work-based learning outcomes are consistently good. Learner progression at all levels is good. Some students' work is very good and overall satisfaction rates are high.
5. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but improvements are ongoing. Many learners develop good independent skills and work safely in workshops. The college's virtual learning environment (VLE) is well used by many students. Most learners' work is well planned and homework marked promptly. However, in some classes, insufficient attention is paid to the needs of individual learners.
6. The college's approach to meeting the needs of learners and employers is outstanding. A wide range of courses is provided, including work-based learning. There are clear pathways from pre-entry to higher education. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The college has particularly effective partnerships with community and voluntary organisations. Links with employers and schools are outstanding. Enrichment activities are excellent.
7. Learners receive good guidance and support. Advice and guidance are relevant and impartial. Pastoral support is effective. The diagnosis of, and provision for, specific learning needs are very good. Counselling and welfare arrangements are well managed and co-ordinated. Tutorial arrangements for full-time, 16-18 learners are effective.
8. Leadership and management are good. Senior managers and governors share a clear strategic vision and success rates have continued to rise. Self-assessment and quality monitoring procedures are rigorous and comprehensive. Judgements made are mostly accurate. Management information is now reliable, but its use for target setting is underdeveloped. Experienced governors effectively support the college and monitor performance.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

9. The college's capacity to improve is good. Success rates continue to improve and quality assurance processes identify and remedy most weaknesses effectively. Staff have clear accountabilities and demonstrate a commitment to raising standards further. The self-assessment process is robust. A clear focus on teaching and learning is leading to higher standards. The college is able to monitor effectively its action plans for improvement.

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

10. The college has made good progress in remedying weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Management information systems now provide accurate and timely data on learner performance. The college has made progress on monitoring the performance of learners by ethnicity, gender and disability, but only at the college level. The revised management structure has strengthened curriculum management. Key skills success rates have improved. Appropriate action has been taken to improve access to college buildings for people with restricted mobility. Attendance rates are mostly satisfactory.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- good leadership and governance
- clear vision and strategic planning
- highly effective partnership working and employer engagement
- much continuous improvement since the last inspection
- outstanding arrangements to meet local needs
- good work-based learning provision
- safe and enriching learning environment
- good learner progression
- very effective support for learners' additional needs.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- success rates that are below national averages
- use of data to better inform target setting
- teaching that does not take sufficient account of individual learners' needs
- standardisation of practices across the college
- slow introduction of some college-wide improvement strategies.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grades:

Learners aged 14-16

Good: grade 2

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

11. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Overall, success rates for long courses are at or around national averages. Since the last inspection, success rates have generally improved, by over 20 percentage points. In 2005/06, success rates for learners aged 16-18 were good at level 1 and satisfactory at levels 2 and 3. Achievements on some vocational courses are high. Success rates for adult learners at level 1 have remained low and in 2005/06 were 9 percentage points below the national level. Information and communication technology provision was particularly poor. At level 2, success rates have remained above the national level for the last 3 years, with level 3 around the national averages. On very short courses, success rates are above the average for learners aged 16-18 and satisfactory for adults. In 2005/06, success rates for longer short courses were low. Retention rates for learners aged 16-18 are broadly satisfactory. However, for adults they are just below the national average at levels 1 and 3, whilst significantly above at level 2. In 2005/06, achievement rates for 16-18 year olds rose to above national averages at all levels, but the picture for adult learners was more mixed. The proportion of learners aged 16-18 that achieve their predicted grades at GCE AS and A Level, relative to their prior achievement at GCSE, is low. Some AS-level results are poor. In recent years, key skills success rates were very low, but in 2005/06 they rose to 46%, much higher than the national level. However, the number of entries was lower than previously and achievements at level 3 were low.
12. In work-based learning, success rates for both types of apprenticeship programmes have remained above the national average for the last three years. In 2005/06, for example, the overall success rate on the engineering apprenticeship programmes was 85%. Until recently, however, many construction apprentices completed their programme late. E2E progression is good and improving, with rates around 70%. Unit qualification success rates for school pupils following college courses are good. Learner progression between levels and onto higher education is generally good. Attendance and punctuality are broadly satisfactory and in some areas good. Satisfaction survey rates are high and most students enjoy learning. Many learners develop good practical skills. Learners use safe work practices in workshops and in the workplace.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

13. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. College lesson observation records indicate that teaching and learning are steadily improving, but these have yet to impact sufficiently on outcomes. As identified in the self-assessment report, the

pace of most lessons is appropriate and student learning is generally satisfactory or good. Most learners are well motivated and attentive. Learners are clear about lesson objectives and they participate well in lessons. In the best lessons, good questioning techniques and other activities allow learners to demonstrate what they have learnt. Many learners develop the ability to work independently and in groups. Teachers are knowledgeable and experienced. In practical lessons, they readily draw on their experience of industry to enhance learning. Vocational learners develop a good awareness of employers' expectations and requirements. Training and assessment for apprentices in the workplace are good. Learners following the E2E programme develop good literacy and numeracy skills. In many lessons, information learning technology is used effectively, particularly at level 1. Weaker lessons often fail to motivate and involve all learners. In a minority of lessons, there are too few checks to ensure learning is effective. In many theory lessons, insufficient attention is paid to meeting learners' individual needs.

14. The college's VLE is popular and well used by many students. Although not fully developed in some curriculum areas, it contains an extensive range of materials. Updating is ongoing. Students make good use of computers for research purposes and when completing assignments.
15. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory. Homework is set frequently and marked promptly. Written feedback on learners' work often helps them to improve. The assessment of practical skills is mostly well planned and internal verification is generally thorough. Learners review and plan their progress with their tutors every six weeks. Most action plans and targets are well constructed but a minority lack clarity and precise timescales for completion.
16. At the start of a course, all learners aged 16-18, and a minority of adults, complete a detailed literacy and numeracy initial assessment. At level 1, all full-time learners receive additional learning support during lessons. Other learners identified as in need of additional help receive it quickly. Learners speak very highly of the support they receive. In a minority of lessons, learning support assistants are not used effectively.
17. The college's approach to meeting the needs of learners and employers is outstanding. It offers a very wide and comprehensive range of courses with clear progression routes from level 1 to level 4. It has effective partnerships and strategies to provide innovative programmes to attract underrepresented groups. The college is committed to partnership working. It works effectively with a range of community and voluntary organisations to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities. Provision is flexible, responsive and accessible. The college programme of enrichment is extensive. Full-time learners enjoy a range of activities, as part of tutorials and the curriculum.
18. The college's responsiveness to the needs of employers is outstanding. The business development unit has a clear and effective strategy to increase engagement. Provision is relevant to employers' needs and is well managed.

Communications are excellent. A wide range of employers support the college's successful apprenticeship programmes. Learners have good opportunities to take part in taster and work experience opportunities. The college has developed a successful programme for 14-16 year olds and links effectively with 44 schools. The unitised vocational curriculum is relevant, with 70% of learners progressing to college courses. The college has implemented some good strategies to improve key skills provision, which was weak in the previous inspection.

19. Learners receive good advice, support and guidance. Staff work effectively in partnership with local schools, employers and community organisations. At the interview stage, learners receive good impartial guidance. The diagnosis of specific learning needs and the provision to support them are good. The college provides assistive technology, laptops and equipment software. Learners are very well supported in the transition from school to college. For example, learners with learning difficulties and disabilities visit the college for orientation sessions before starting their course. Staff that provide support functions have appropriate specialist qualifications and relevant experience.
20. Induction arrangements are effective. Learners receive good careers guidance, especially those wishing to progress to higher education. Other level 3 learners are not so well catered for. Tutorial support for learners aged 16-18 is good and includes topics such as healthy lifestyles. Tutoring for adult and part-time learners is improving. Pastoral support is very good. Counselling and welfare arrangements are well managed. Learners are well supported through extensive links with a wide range of external agencies. Consultation with learners is excellent and feedback is acted on promptly. The college is highly responsive to the views learner representatives present at the student council and in governors meetings. There is regular communication between the college and parents of 16-18 year old learners.

Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

21. Leadership and management are good. The principal sets a clear strategic direction for the college, supported by senior managers and governors. There is a strong focus on raising achievement, and success rates have steadily risen since the last inspection. The revised management structure has effectively clarified roles, responsibilities and accountability.
22. Procedures for self-assessment and monitoring the quality of provision are rigorous and comprehensive. Managers meet regularly with course teams to review performance. The self-assessment process is mostly effective in identifying key strengths and areas for improvement, although some curriculum area self-assessment reports do not contain sufficiently detailed evidence.
23. Managers are making good progress in developing ways to measure the impact of improvement strategies. However, across the college there are still too many inconsistencies in performance and practice. Following joint lesson

observations, inspectors mostly agreed with judgements made by college observers on the quality of teaching and learning.

24. Since the last inspection, the collection and accuracy of management information have improved significantly and it is now more widely available. However, the college recognises the need to use data much more effectively if it is to set more realistic and challenging targets at course, curriculum area and college level.
25. Equality of opportunity is well promoted and the college is very inclusive. Good progress has been made in monitoring the performance of different groups of learners, but the analysis is insufficiently detailed. Action plans identify clear priorities for further developments, and progress is reported on. The college meets the statutory requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.
26. Partnership working is highly effective in extending the range of learning opportunities. Arrangements for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are comprehensive and compliant with the latest regulations. Employers and community representatives speak very highly of their involvement with the college and the support it provides. There are very good leadership strategies for work-based learning and the provision is well managed.
27. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The college has well advanced plans to redevelop accommodation on both main sites. The college's investment in information technology and the development of its VLE are significant. These resources are mostly very good, but not fully developed or well used in a few curriculum areas. There are good specialist resources in many vocational areas. High proportions of teachers have or are working towards a teaching qualification. The staff appraisal process has improved, but the college acknowledges the need to increase the regularity of reviews.
28. Governors bring a wide range of expertise to the college and monitor college and learner performance closely. They are well informed and have a clear understanding of the challenges confronting the college. Financial management is good, but as some class sizes are low and success rates mostly satisfactory, the college overall provides satisfactory value for money.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type. Please note the college produced the 2005/06 data set.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	03/04	601	59	60	-1	1326	64	59	5
	04/05	1033	64	64	0	1349	49	62	-13
	05/06	925	70			1752	53		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	16	75	65	10	0	0	52	-52
	04/05	21	76	68	8	0	0	58	-58
	05/06	24	83			0	0		
NVQs	03/04	147	69	61	8	127	52	62	-10
	04/05	142	61	67	-6	85	65	67	-2
	05/06	184	61			82	68		
Other	03/04	438	55	60	-5	1199	65	59	6
	04/05	870	64	64	0	1264	49	61	-12
	05/06	717	72			1670	52		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type. Please note the college produced the 2005/06 data set.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	03/04	1399	57	56	1	2431	60	54	6
	04/05	1666	62	61	1	2195	68	60	8
	05/06	1425	64			2030	67		
GCSEs	03/04	305	53	61	-8	313	62	59	3
	04/05	263	59	64	-5	342	58	62	-4
	05/06	179	70			120	53		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	97	58	63	-5	15	60	57	3
	04/05	88	61	67	-6	25	88	70	18
	05/06	82	79			38	71		
NVQs	03/04	239	61	52	9	680	48	54	-6
	04/05	378	58	57	1	986	70	60	10
	05/06	341	64			783	69		
Other	03/04	758	58	54	4	1423	65	53	12
	04/05	937	64	60	4	842	68	59	9
	05/06	811	61			1089	65		

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type. Please note the college produced the 2005/06 data set.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	03/04	2901	59	64	-5	2774	50	54	-4
	04/05	2490	63	68	-5	1876	58	57	1
	05/06	2455	67			1449	59		
A/A2 Levels	03/04	378	79	84	-5	142	70	66	4
	04/05	337	77	86	-9	99	70	69	1
	05/06	352	86			80	64		
AS Levels	03/04	1147	57	63	-6	284	49	50	-1
	04/05	1030	63	66	-3	251	50	52	-2
	05/06	1062	66			69	65		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	596	52	52	0	108	38	44	-6
	04/05	314	75	60	15	49	73	53	20
	05/06	150	72			32	66		
NVQs	03/04	74	57	54	3	615	40	47	-7
	04/05	79	72	62	10	350	51	54	-3
	05/06	58	81			352	55		
Other	03/04	704	59	56	3	1286	49	56	-7
	04/05	729	49	60	-11	1164	58	58	0
	05/06	2901	59			966	59		

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners *	College NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate **	College framework rate **	National framework rate **
Advanced Apprenticeships	03/04	overall	153	41	48	37	31
		timely	179	37	30	34	19
	04/05	overall	117	65	48	57	34
		timely	92	38	31	34	21
	05/06	overall	176	63		55	
		timely	164	49		43	
Apprenticeships	03/04	overall	166	60	47	52	32
		timely	188	36	24	31	16
	04/05	overall	350	55	50	50	38
		timely	391	24	29	23	22
	05/06	overall	368	61		59	
		timely	359	31		30	

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

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

Table 5

Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the college
2003/04 to 2005/06

Year	Number of starts in year	Achieved objectives rate *	Progression rate **
2003/04	166	15	44
2004/05	140	46	56
2005/06	136	42	70

* 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