



Wigan and Leigh 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: Wigan and Leigh College

Type of college: General Further Education

Principal: Jim Crewdson

Address of college: Wigan and Leigh College
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Chair of governors: Richard Waterfield

Unique reference number: 130521

Name of lead inspector: John Dunn, ALI

Dates of inspection: 5 – 9 February 2007

Background of the organisation

1. Wigan and Leigh College is a large general further education (FE) college with 4,030 full-time and 14,500 part-time learners, and an annual income of over £31.8 million. In 2006/07, it recruited 2,937 full-time learners aged 16-18 and 743 full-time adult learners. There were on average 487 work-based learners, mainly in engineering and construction, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), 96 Entry to Employment and 2,043 Train to Gain learners. The college enrolls learners in all of the LSC areas of learning, but very few learners take courses in land-based subjects. Courses are available from entry level to degree level. The college is a partner in Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), in logistics, computer networking technology, and construction regeneration.
2. Wigan is one of the 10 boroughs within Greater Manchester and has a population of 303,846. The borough is made up of 14 towns and villages and covers an area of 77 square miles of which 75% is open land or countryside. Some 55% of wards in Wigan fall within the 20% most deprived wards in England, and 16% of wards are amongst the 10% most deprived. Unemployment in Wigan is lower than the Greater Manchester average but is higher than the national average.
3. In the Wigan borough there are two schools with sixth forms and two sixth form colleges. In September 2001, 63% of the borough's 16 year olds were in full-time education compared to 72% nationally. The proportion of learners aged 16 achieving five or more, higher grade General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs), was 51.3% in 2004, compared with 53.7% nationally.
4. The college has five sites in the two towns and provides community courses in over 75 venues.
5. The college mission states that Wigan and Leigh College will strive to be the best inclusive general further and higher education college in the north of England.

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: science and mathematics; construction, planning and the built environment; information and communication technology; hairdressing and beauty therapy; preparation for life and work; business, administration and management.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Science and mathematics	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Construction, planning and the built environment	Good: grade 2
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Information and communication technology	Good: grade 2
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Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Outstanding: grade 1
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Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Business administration	Good: grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

7. Learners' achievements are satisfactory overall. Success rates at all levels have improved steadily since the last inspection and the rate of improvement has increased in 2005/06; most are now at or near national averages. Overall success rates on apprenticeship programmes are satisfactory.
8. Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that much of its teaching and learning is good. The college has correctly identified that the proportion of good or better teaching has increased since the last inspection. In the better lessons, teaching is well planned to meet the individual needs of learners and to provide interesting and stimulating challenges for learners. The college recognises that in the weaker lessons much of the teaching remains dull, uninspiring and teacher focused.
9. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. Excellent links have been formed with schools and the local community and the college responds effectively to community needs with regular reviews and changes to the range of provision offered. Substantial international provision adds to the cultural diversity within the college. Many learners benefit from the extensive range of enrichment activities offered but in a minority of curriculum areas, timetable constraints prevent learners from participating.
10. Most learners receive good guidance and support. Induction is comprehensive and effective for full-time learners but less so for part-time learners. Tutorials are effective and offer an appropriate mix of one-to-one and group activities. Target setting and progress monitoring remain inconsistent with weak practice in some areas.
11. Leadership and management are good. Governors and the principal set a clear direction for the college and maintain good links with the local community and business. Success rates have improved steadily year-on-year and the college has improved its financial position significantly since the last inspection. Self-assessment is rigorous and accurate.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

12. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve its provision for learners. The arrangements for quality assurance and improvement have been strengthened since the last inspection and are now good. A well planned and managed capital programme has directly improved the learning environment and resources and is on-going. Self-assessment is good. The process is inclusive and rigorous and the report is mainly accurate. Managers use it effectively to secure improvements across the college. Self-assessment reports

are detailed but in a minority of areas they are more descriptive than evaluative. Most course reviews are accurate and the validation process is thorough.

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

13. The college has made good progress in addressing areas for improvement noted in the last inspection. Success rates and the quality of teaching and learning have improved. There have been significant improvements in the overall quality of many sector subject areas as indicated by the inspection grades. The college has significantly improved its financial position and the quality of accommodation in many areas.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- outstanding provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy
- good practical teaching
- productive college partnerships
- excellent community links and inclusiveness
- good access to a wide range of courses and progression routes
- good guidance and support for learners
- well co-ordinated strategic and operational planning
- strong financial management and well managed capital programme
- particularly effective leadership and change management.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates on AS courses
- poor attendance
- insufficient use of data on learners' prior attainments to measure progress
- uninspiring teaching and lack of challenge for some learners
- unsatisfactory accommodation in a minority of areas.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

14. College success rates on all long programmes for learners aged 16-18 have been very close to the national averages since 2002/03. Success rates for adults have followed a similar pattern.
15. Success rates on long courses at most levels have improved since the last inspection and have kept pace with improving national averages. They are at or near national averages. Success rates for adult learners on long courses at level 1 have been static since the last inspection and are now slightly below the national average. Success rates for adults on level 2 provision have improved to be significantly above the national average. On the majority of courses, pass rates have been rising in line with improvements in national averages and most are at or near national averages. Pass rates on GCE AS courses are low. Retention rates have followed a similar pattern during the last three years. The retention rate of adults on level 1 courses is high.
16. In most sector subject areas and qualifications, learners make at least the progress expected of them based on their prior attainment. However, learners' progress in GCE A level courses in sector subject areas: history, philosophy and theology and social sciences, is low, compared with their prior attainment.
17. The achievement of female learners is better than that of male learners. No groups of learners underachieve significantly. Success rates for learners receiving learning support are better than for those not receiving support.
18. Overall success rates for work-based learners are satisfactory. Timely success rates are particularly low. Key skills success rates are satisfactory. The standard of learners' work is good in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in construction. Learners in preparation for life and work, gain in confidence during their courses. The standard of learners' work in most other sector subject areas is satisfactory. Attendance during inspection week was poor and is low throughout the year. Attendance has improved but low attendance and poor punctuality in the inspection week adversely affected learning in a significant majority of lessons.
19. Participation of young people in enrichment activities is very high. The college provides good opportunities for learners to celebrate and enjoy their success through award ceremonies and participation in skills competitions and other external events.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

20. Inspectors agree with the college self-assessment that the quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are good. The college has established a more rigorous approach to lesson

observations and moderated grades, and teachers receive detailed feedback. Managers use the outcomes of lesson observations appropriately for self-assessment, staff appraisal and continuing professional development. Joint observations undertaken during the inspection showed close agreement between the strengths and areas for improvement but did not always agree on the appropriate grade. The college has worked hard to reduce the proportion of inadequate teaching but recognises that it needs to improve the proportion of outstanding and inspirational teaching. Advanced practitioners and subject learning coaches share good practice in teaching and learning effectively.

21. Teachers plan lessons well and have clear objectives. They make good use of the data available to them about their learners to provide a range of learning activities that meets their needs and supports learning effectively. Teachers conduct practical lessons well and learners develop a good range of relevant vocational skills in a professional and productive working atmosphere. In a minority of theory lessons, teachers do not challenge learners sufficiently. Many teachers use effective questioning techniques but make insufficient checks on individual learners' learning. Learners appreciate the good support provided in class and they enjoy their lessons. The college has invested in and increased the access to information and learning technology (ILT) but the use of ILT to support learning is insufficient. Assessment is regular and detailed teachers' comments help learners to improve the quality of their work. The college has appropriate plans in place to address the weaknesses in teaching and learning.
22. The college is very responsive to employers and the community and is outstanding in meeting the needs of its learners and stakeholders. There is an increasing number of strong partnerships with employers through the CoVE's and Train to Gain provision. The management centre provides good training on employers' premises and in the centre. The college makes a significant contribution to the 14-19 strategy for the area and works with 13 schools to deliver programmes for learners aged 14-16, both in the schools and in college. The provision in family learning and other community-based programmes is valuable to the community and is increasing. Extensive international provision adds to the cultural diversity within the college.
23. The progression routes in most sector subject areas are excellent. For example, in 2006, 22 learners progressed to higher education, having joined the college on level 2 programmes. Provision at levels 1 and 2 in many sector subject areas has increased since the previous inspection.
24. The range of enrichment activities offered by the college is wide, varied and stimulating. For example, learners visit overseas destinations, take part in outdoor pursuit activities and team building exercises and visit relevant trade shows and sporting events. However, learners do not always take up the opportunities available. Young people are well supported in skills development, particularly in construction and in hairdressing and beauty

therapy. Guidance and support for higher education and employment are good and group tutorials provide young people with opportunities to learn about personal financial management.

25. Most learners receive good additional support and the support for learners aged 16-18 is particularly good. Success rates for learners who receive support are higher than for other learners. College staff have very good links with the mental health agencies in the area and support learners from initial contact in the community, through to completion of their courses effectively. Literacy and numeracy support for learners is good. Learners identified as requiring study support at initial assessment receive support within the first week of starting their course. Support is well designed to meet the individual needs of the learners. Staff have quick and easy access to advice on how to support their learners.
26. Induction is good for full-time learners and satisfactory for part-time learners. All full-time learners have a comprehensive induction, but this is not always available for part-time learners. Initial assessment is good and is effectively linked to study support. The tutorial system is satisfactory. Private tutorials are available and are well used to review progress and personal issues. Group tutorial time is well used for outside speakers and to discuss difficulties within the group. Target setting and monitoring of progress are weak. Group tutorials enable young people to learn about healthy living. Appropriate services are available to meet the health needs of young people, particularly in hairdressing and beauty therapy.

Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

27. Inspectors agree with the college self-assessment that its leadership and management are good. The management team sets a clear strategic direction with an appropriate focus on raising the aspirations of learners and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Co-ordination and monitoring of strategic and operational plans are good and plans produce clear targets for sector subject areas. Since the last inspection, learners' success rates have improved, keeping pace with rising national rates. The improvement strategies adopted more recently have contributed to the more significant improvements in success rates in 2005/06.
28. The principal, ably supported by senior managers and governors, has been particularly effective in leading and managing the changes necessary to improve the college's financial position. Communications are more effective throughout the college. A very well managed capital project has produced significant improvements to the college estate which impact directly and positively on learners. However, there are still areas of the college where accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.
29. The college has strong regional, national and international partnerships and has forged links which benefit its learners and the community. Partnerships

with schools are strong and the college is active in developing new provision for learners aged 14-16. The college has CoVEs in computing networking, logistics and construction regeneration, which are helping to improve standards in sector subject areas and promote more extensive liaison and partnership work with employers.

30. Managers have strengthened the quality assurance system and it is good. Staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process. The accuracy of the self-assessment report is good. Managers use the report effectively to drive forward many areas for improvement. The arrangements for gathering comments from learners are suitable and appropriate action is taken when necessary. Learners' surveys indicate increased levels of their satisfaction over the last two years.
31. Staff are appropriately qualified and have relevant experience. Staff performance is effectively managed through the college appraisal system and regular meetings with managers. Staff development is good but the opportunities for staff to update their professional skills and industrial experience are insufficient.
32. Equality and diversity are good. The response of the college to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 and disability discrimination legislation has been good. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults. Access for those with restricted mobility is good.
33. Governors are highly committed and supportive of the college's work. They receive detailed reports on most aspects of the college operation, critically evaluate performance and challenge managers when necessary. Financial management is strong, systems are robust and good budgetary controls are in place. The college consistently meets its funding body targets but improvement targets for success rates and attendance for 2006/07 are modest. The college provides good value for money.

Curriculum area inspections

Science and mathematics

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

34. The college offers full-time courses in GCSE AS and A-level biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics and psychology, GCSE mathematics and psychology, a National Diploma in applied science and an Access to Higher Education (HE) course in forensic and human science. Part-time courses include: GCE AS psychology, GCSE human biology and GCSE mathematics. Currently, there are 232 full-time and 218 part-time learners. About 250 are aged 16-18 and 200 are aged 19 or over. About 34% are male and 0.5% are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates on National Diploma, Access to HE and GCE A-level biology
- high success rates on GCSE courses
- good curriculum support and progress monitoring.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low success rates on GCE AS courses
- low pass rates on GCE A-level chemistry and psychology
- some uninspiring theory teaching.

Achievements and standards

35. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on the National Diploma in applied science, the Access to HE, GCE A-level biology and on most GCSE courses are high. The retention rate on GCE advanced level courses in 2006 was 100%. However, pass rates on GCE A-level chemistry and psychology and success rates on GCSE AS courses have been consistently below the national averages for the past three years. Attendance and punctuality are good. Learners develop good practical skills. The standard of their written work is satisfactory. Progression to higher education and between college courses is good.

Quality of provision

36. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have clear objectives and are secure in their knowledge. Most lesson plans aim to meet learners' individual needs but these lack explicit information about how this will be achieved. In science, lively and interesting practical lessons link practical technique and theory to examination criteria, allowing learners to refine the accuracy of their practical work with a strong emphasis on health and safety. In contrast, theory teaching is often dull and uninspiring with little variety in teaching

methods, too much teacher exposition, insufficient checks on individual learning and insufficient challenge for more able learners. The use of ILT to enhance teaching and learning is insufficient. Where ILT is used, it often promotes learners' interaction and improves opportunities for learners to enhance their practical techniques or research skills.

37. The range of provision is satisfactory with good opportunities for internal progression from level 2 to foundation degree. The enrichment programme is good and wide and includes scientific activities.
38. Assessment and monitoring are good. Regular setting of assignments and progress tests, detailed feedback, revision workshops and supplementary numeracy support lessons for access learners help learners to prepare for examinations. Departmental monitoring strategies allow learners to measure their progress towards meeting their minimum target grade and to agree targets for further improvement.

Leadership and management

39. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new management structure has recently been introduced for the Leigh Sixth Form Centre. The course offer has been revised to meet the needs of learners more fully. New managers use performance data well to evaluate the provision. Target setting is becoming embedded. The latest self-assessment report is detailed, evaluative and accurate. All staff are involved in the self-assessment process and carefully analyse success rate and attendance data. A programme of lesson observations is in place. All staff are appraised annually. A strong emphasis on staff development to improve teaching and learning together with improved tracking of attendance, punctuality and learners' progress has begun to improve achievements.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Good: grade 2

Context

40. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses from levels 1 to 5. These courses include trowel trades, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, plumbing and national and higher national certificates and diplomas. There are 340 learners aged 16-18 and 154 adult learners. Approximately 30% study full-time, the vast majority being aged 16-18. A further 437 learners are on work-based learning programmes. Forty-nine learners aged 14-16 are on the introductory certificate in construction.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates by learners aged 16-18
- good development of practical skills
- good teaching in practical lessons
- good support and guidance.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low success rates by adult learners
- insufficient use of ILT in lessons.

Achievements and standards

41. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates on long programmes for learners aged 16-18, particularly at levels 1 and 3, have improved and are high. In 2005/2006, there was a significant improvement in success rates on most courses. About 70% of learners are aged 16-18. In contrast, success rates for adult learners have declined and are below national averages. Learners are industrious, well motivated and enjoy their work. The majority of learners' practical work is of high quality. Learners develop good industrial skills that enable them to make progress in the workplace. The quality of their written work is also good, particularly on the national certificate and diploma courses.

Quality of provision

42. Teaching and learning are good. Learning outcomes are specific and shared with learners. The checking of learners' progress and understanding is sufficient. Practical sessions are well organised, realistic and carried out safely. Learners find these lessons stimulating and engaging. The use of ILT in lessons to support teaching and learning is insufficient. Specialist computer software is not used. Teachers have a lack of understanding of differentiation to meet individual learners' needs.

43. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and employers well. The college provides a wide range of courses that makes it possible for learners to progress. Learners on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes work for local employers who co-ordinate the on and off the job activities with the college. Links with eight local schools are effective.
44. Support and guidance are good. Full-time learners have initial diagnostic assessment. Induction programmes provide learners with advice on pastoral care, staying safe, being healthy and learning style assessment. Group tutorials are timetabled for full-time learners and part-time learners receive regular one-to-one reviews. Learners are well supported by teachers and, where appropriate, by the inclusive learning officers.

Leadership and management

45. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and identifies most strengths and areas for improvement. Course review reports have improved since the last inspection and are now sufficiently evaluative and standardised. Managers have developed good assessment tracking sheets to monitor learners' achievement and progress. These measures have helped improve learners' success rates on most courses. Staff development activities are mainly confined to programme updating and a few IT courses. Industrial updating of teachers over the last few years has been insufficient.

Information and communication technology

Good: grade 2

Context

46. The college offers a range of courses based at two main sites at Wigan and at Leigh with community provision based at several outreach centres. Courses range from levels 1 to 3 and include user skills courses for adults, NVQ IT and BTEC programmes.
47. There are 1,153 learners, of whom about 300 are full-time and 800 are part-time. Male learners constitute 56% and 31% of learners are from disadvantaged wards.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates on many courses
- much good teaching and learning
- good progression
- good monitoring and support.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- insufficient challenge in lessons
- poor facilities for teaching and learning in many classrooms.

Achievements and standards

48. Success rates on the majority of programmes are high. On NVQ and European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) programmes in particular, success rates are well above the national averages. The retention rate is satisfactory, except for a few programmes where it is below the national average. The standards of written work and attainment are satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

49. Teaching and learning are good. The best lessons are well planned and include a variety of activities and the use of innovative resources to challenge and engage learners. In the weaker lessons, learners were not encouraged to develop their skills and improve their overall performance. Alternative activities were not provided to challenge more able learners. Feedback in sessions and on completed coursework, did not include clear targets for improvement. Overall, the use of ILT was limited, partly by the lack of projection facilities in many classrooms.
50. The progression routes from level 1 to degree level are good. Learners can choose from several different courses at each level to meet their individual needs and interests. An NVQ programme that includes work experience is offered in addition to a full-time BTEC programme. Progression to other

courses is high with 80% of NVQ level 1 learners progressing to level 2 and 88% of first diploma learners progressing to level 3 courses.

51. The monitoring of learners' progress is good. Course team meetings review learners' progress. Individual reviews are held regularly. The student liaison officer works closely with the teaching team to monitor attendance and punctuality. Inclusive learning officers support individual learners and groups of learners. Study skills support for level 3 learners is provided at the end of a teaching session to make it easy for them to take advantage of the support on offer.

Leadership and management

52. Curriculum management is good. Communications are good and meetings are well conducted and recorded. Staff are suitably qualified. All staff are teacher trained or working towards a teaching qualification.
53. A wide range of computer software is available for learners to use and two specialist laboratories at Wigan allow learners to gain practical experience in computer networking and PC maintenance. Many rooms at Parson's Walk and at Leigh provide poor environments for teaching and learning. Over half of the rooms at Wigan have computer monitors that obscure the view of the whiteboard. There is little space in the majority of the rooms for learners to work away from the computers. There are insufficient interactive whiteboards and ceiling mounted overhead projectors to effectively increase the use of ILT in classrooms.
54. The self-assessment report is detailed and comprehensive. Staff make a useful contribution to the report through the course review process that is completed at the end of each academic year.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Outstanding: grade 1

Context

55. The college offers a range of full- and part-time courses from entry to level 3 in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. There is also a range of part-time courses in holistic therapies with progression through to a foundation degree.
56. Currently, there are 433 full-time and 319 part-time learners. Of these, 405 are aged 16-18 and 347 are aged 19 or over. About 2% are male and 1.5% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. About 60 learners are on modern apprenticeships. The section offers courses for 143 pupils from local schools.

STRENGTHS

- very high success rates on many courses
- outstanding pass rates on all courses
- much good and some outstanding teaching and learning
- varied and stimulating enrichment activities
- outstanding support for learners
- outstanding resources to support learning
- outstanding management of the curriculum area.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- lack of progression opportunities for level 2 hairdressing learners.

Achievements and standards

57. Success rates are very high on most courses, including hairdressing levels 1, 2 and 3 and beauty therapy levels 1 and 3. There are high pass rates on all courses, including the provision for learners aged 14-16. The standard of learners' work is high. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and well monitored.

Quality of provision

58. Much of the teaching and learning is good and some is outstanding. The use of IT in theory and practical lessons is good. In the best lessons, teachers use highly effective strategies to engage and inspire learners.
59. The assessment and verification processes are rigorous. Initial assessment and entry qualifications are used effectively and systematically to place learners on appropriate programmes and diagnose individual learning needs.
60. Enrichment opportunities are varied and stimulating and enhance learning and enjoyment. Activities include entry and success in local, regional and national

competitions, work placements in local hospitals and salons, visits to exhibitions and trips to Athens, Paris and Milan.

61. Support for learners is outstanding. Crèche facilities are good. Learners benefit from a student liaison officer who takes care of learners' pastoral needs, monitors punctuality and attendance and provides support where necessary. An inclusive learning team, consisting of well trained subject specialists, provides excellent support for learners. This team also supports teachers by adapting learning materials for particular learning styles or needs. There is insufficient opportunity for full-time hairdressing learners to progress beyond level 2. Level 3 hairdressing is offered on a part-time basis only, for those with salon experience; of the 89 learners completing level 2 hairdressing in 2004/05, only 8 learners enrolled to a level 3 course in 2005/06.

Leadership and management

62. Leadership and management are outstanding. Quality improvement systems are well established and effective. Challenging targets for success rates and improvements are set at course level and monitored effectively via regular team meetings. Course reviews are detailed and focus upon improvements for learners. The team of staff is highly qualified and includes several new teachers with relevant recent industrial experience. The mentoring system for all new staff is particularly good.
63. Staff feel valued and work well together as a team. They receive regular appraisals and agree targets for improvement. Staff regularly share good practice both formally, via team meetings and staff development sessions, and informally, in the staffroom.
64. The purpose built accommodation for hairdressing and beauty therapy is of a very high standard. It replicates closely the environment found in commercial salons and as such provides an excellent environment in which to learn and develop skills. Industry standard specialist equipment and resources are regularly replaced and updated. Managers maintain the building to a high standard and learners care for it well. Staff enjoy working in such an environment and learners are proud to be training there.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

65. The college offers literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses for adults from entry level 1 to level 2. Provision is on the 2 main college sites, 5 employers' premises and 16 off site locations.
66. There were 2,771 learners enrolled in 2005/06. Of those, 1,955 learners followed literacy and numeracy programmes; 1,185 were on ESOL courses and 155 were on foundation programmes. Sixty four per cent were female learners, 19% were from minority ethnic groups and 17% had a declared learning or physical disability.

STRENGTHS

- good development of learners' confidence
- well planned teaching and learning to meet the individual needs of literacy, numeracy and study support learners
- productive partnership work to widen participation
- good support for learners with literacy and numeracy needs
- particularly good staff development for skills for life qualifications.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low success rates on literacy and numeracy qualifications
- low attendance on literacy and numeracy programmes
- insufficient individual practical learning activities on foundation programmes
- insufficient access to ICT on ESOL programmes.

Achievements and standards

67. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Learners gain confidence on literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes. They are aware of their progress and apply their new skills in everyday life. ESOL success rates have been high at level 1 over the past three years, but have been low at entry levels during the past two years. Success rates are low and declining on literacy, numeracy and some foundation programmes. Attendance on literacy and numeracy programmes is low. Retention rates are high on most courses.

Quality of provision

68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In literacy, numeracy and study support, teaching is good and teachers plan individual learning, set targets and monitor learning well. In these lessons, learners enjoy practical learning activities and effective use of ICT. On ESOL programmes, the access to ICT in classrooms is insufficient. Accommodation is unsuitable due to poor acoustics or unsatisfactory furniture arrangements. Teaching and learning in foundation

lessons are not sufficiently well planned to meet the needs of individual learners. The frequency of practical and stimulating activities is insufficient and too much emphasis is on whole group discussions and paper-based activities.

69. The range of provision is good and partnerships are effective in helping to increase the numbers of learners who would not otherwise participate. Links with employers are good and community-based learning opportunities are valuable.
70. Support for learners with literacy and numeracy needs is good. Learning support staff are used effectively in lessons. Additional literacy and numeracy support is good for learners on courses across the college at levels 1 and 2, and has a positive impact on their success. Initial assessment is satisfactory and used effectively to set targets for learners. Induction is satisfactory, although there is insufficient formal induction for ESOL part-time learners. For some learners with physical disabilities, the provision of adapted technology is slow.

Leadership and management

71. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff development is good, particularly college internal training of skills for life support and teaching qualifications from level 2 to 4. Communication between managers and staff is satisfactory. The observation of teaching and learning and the self-assessment process are satisfactory and identify most of the strengths and weaknesses found on inspection. The formal sharing of good practice is insufficient.

Business, administration and management

Good: grade 2

Context

72. The full-time provision comprises a first diploma and national certificates in business and NVQ qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 in administration. The part-time provision includes management, trade union and NVQ accounting courses. The inspection excluded GCSE qualifications, GCE A level courses, and management and professional programmes at levels 4 and 5.
73. The business provision is offered in four centres in Wigan and Leigh. Currently, there are 94 learners aged 16-18 on full-time courses, 319 on part-time courses and 6 work-based apprentices. About 20 adults study full-time and 300 study part-time.

STRENGTHS

- high pass rates on administrative courses
- good recruitment and high success rates on the first diploma in business
- much good teaching and learning
- good learning support and pastoral care for full-time learners
- broad range of courses offering clear progression routes.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- insufficient challenge of learners
- poor accommodation and outdated equipment in a minority of areas
- improvement planning at course level lacks focus and clarity.

Achievements and standards

74. Achievements and standards for the provision inspected are good. Success rates are consistently high in administration qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3, although they have declined slightly since the last inspection due to falling retention. Learners in administration are confident in the use of ICT and take additional qualifications in text processing which they achieve well. The first diploma in business has been very successful; enrolments have steadily increased, success rates are consistently high and many learners progress to advanced level courses. Success rates on accounting, management and business courses are at least satisfactory and several are high. The pass rates on national certificates and awards in business have been high for the last two years. Learners enjoy lessons, and attendance is good.

Quality of provision

75. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are carefully planned with practical activities and group work to encourage participation and develop independent learning skills. The lack of digital projection facilities and interactive

whiteboards in many classrooms restricts learning. Learners in business have excellent enrichment opportunities through industrial visits, community projects and work experience. Since the last inspection, new courses have been introduced at levels 1 and 2 and internal progression rates are high. The broad range of courses now offers progression opportunities from level 1 to higher education.

76. Full-time learners receive good learning support and pastoral care. Good use of assessment, with timely feedback, builds learners' confidence. Very good guidance safeguards welfare, but some full-time learners are not sufficiently encouraged to achieve their full learning potential. Insufficient use is made of individual learners' prior attainment to set clear learning goals.

Leadership and management

77. Operational management of the curriculum is effective. Much of the provision has been recently relocated and this significant period of change has been well managed. Curriculum managers ensure that courses are planned well in advance and learners benefit from very well organised provision. Whereas the accommodation for business and accounting courses at Wigan has significantly improved, the accommodation and facilities at Leigh (Railway Road) are outdated and drab.
78. The self-assessment process is inclusive and systematic. The judgements are largely accurate but the significance and extent of the impact on learners is not sufficiently considered or quantified. Some action plans are vague and have insufficient targets.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	03/04	789	56.9	60.3	-3.4	2185	61.8	59.1	2.7
	04/05	710	61.1	64.2	-3.1	1911	59.8	61.6	-1.8
	05/06	726	70			1679	60		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	112	72.3	65.1	7.2	1			
	04/05	70	72.9	67.9	5.0	1			
	05/06	10	70						
NVQs	03/04	149	59.7	61.0	-1.3	325	77.5	62.3	15.2
	04/05	169	80.5	67.2	13.3	277	80.5	66.9	13.6
	05/06	156	87			331	73		
Other	03/04	528	52.8	60.0	-7.2	1859	59.1	59.0	0.1
	04/05	471	52.4	63.6	-11.2	1633	56.3	61.4	-5.1
	05/06	562	65			1348	56		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	03/04	1596	59.8	56.3	3.5	2049	48.7	53.6	-4.9
	04/05	1472	59.7	60.9	-1.2	2893	62.6	59.5	3.1
	05/06	1335	68			2418	69		
GCSEs	03/04	424	62.7	61.3	1.4	442	57.0	58.8	-1.8
	04/05	322	62.7	64.1	-1.4	397	63.0	62.3	0.7
	05/06	210	72			297	71		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	31	87.1	63.0	24.1				
	04/05	57	68.4	66.8	1.6	7	0	70.4	-70.4
	05/06	19	79			13	92		
NVQs	03/04	497	54.3	51.9	2.4	477	43.6	53.5	-9.9
	04/05	587	55	57.0	-2	614	58.3	59.6	-1.3
	05/06	517	70			908	79		
Other	03/04	644	60.9	54.1	6.8	1130	47.5	52.7	-5.2
	04/05	506	62.3	60.1	2.2	1875	64.1	58.8	5.3
	05/06	589	65			1200	61		

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	03/04	2722	63	64.1	-1.1	1111	62.7	53.5	9.2
	04/05	2415	66.8	67.5	-0.7	1206	64.7	57.3	7.4
	05/06	1915	67			1186	63		
A/A2 Levels	03/04	610	83	83.8	-0.8	99	76.8	65.5	11.3
	04/05	455	85.3	85.6	-0.3	86	73.3	69.1	4.2
	05/06	335	87			31	74		
AS Levels	03/04	1246	57.5	62.9	-5.4	231	45.9	49.6	-3.7
	04/05	892	58.3	65.5	-7.2	203	46.8	52.2	-5.4
	05/06	671	58			169	54		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	160	58.8	52.4	6.4	13	53.8	43.5	10.3
	04/05	134	68.7	60.2	8.5	9	88.9	52.9	36.0
	05/06	105	62			10	50		
NVQs	03/04	90	57.8	53.7	4.1	134	50.7	47.0	3.7
	04/05	85	72.9	62.4	10.5	193	66.3	53.9	12.4
	05/06	74	69			248	62		
Other	03/04	616	56.3	56.3	0.0	634	69.4	55.7	13.7
	04/05	849	64.9	60.0	4.9	715	68.0	58.3	9.7
	05/06	730	66			727	65		

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2003 to 2006.

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	25	24	32	40	47
	Advanced	52	13	31	42	48
2004/05	Apprenticeship	113	32	38	49	50
	Advanced	80	38	34	45	48
2005/06	Apprenticeship	216	48	53	49	58
	Advanced	68	57	44	63	54

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

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

b) Timely success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	53	11	16	21	24
	Advanced	67	7	19	30	30
2004/05	Apprenticeship	114	3	22	14	29
	Advanced	85	11	21	19	31
2005/06	Apprenticeship	279	14	33	15	38
	Advanced	87	24	27	31	34

* The number of learners who planned to complete their learning programme in the given year

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